

## **A new church primary school for Monksmoor Park** **Feedback following consultation**

This proposal is for the new primary school at Monksmoor Park to be a Voluntary Aided Church of England school run in partnership with and maintained by Northamptonshire County Council. The original proposal at the start of this year was to open a free school (ie an academy within Peterborough Diocese Educational Trust or PDET, a multi-academy trust) but it would also have been a school with a designated religious character. Due to changes in funding arrangements (the government withdrew free schools funding Wave 13 due to the election and has not opened this route since) NCC and the diocese agreed to go down the VA school route as the only mechanism to open the new school in time for September 2018. Daventry District Council is responsible for building the school using section 106 money.

NCC officers contacted the diocese initially during September and then details about the consultation were sent by email on 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Due to the short timescales involved the diocese used the original consultations regarding the free school as the basis for the proposal document. A new public notice was published on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017 in the local paper and the consultation document was published on the diocesan website. The full proposal document was sent to Daventry District Council, the Town Council and Northamptonshire County Council representatives as well as all local schools affected (list provided by NCC) and the DfE. A contact from the original public meeting (which had been advertised in the local press) gave the details of the new proposal on our behalf to the Monksmoor Park Residents Steering Committee and subsequently sent his support.

As Deputy Diocesan Director of Education, I met with the local clergy in the town on 7<sup>th</sup> November in order to ascertain support from all the churches in the town. There were the ministers and priests from Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic churches in the town present at that meeting. I was asking them for support as the new VA school would need a majority of foundation governors, likely to come from their congregations. As a result of our meeting I believe they shared information on their own newsletters. They also agreed to ensure 3 governors from their congregations in addition to a clergy representative for the interim governing body. Bishop John, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education, would be Chair of Governors in the first instance and a retired Headteacher of a church school has agreed to be vice chair. The full governing body of the new school once opened would be made up of the interim board as well as staff and parent governors. The diocese would welcome a representative from the community or local council to complete the full board.

By the end of the consultation period, 24<sup>th</sup> November, a total of 22 email responses were received. These are attached in full to this document. Of these 2 were objections to the proposal. The main objections are around;

- Disproportionate number of C of E schools in the Daventry area
- Consultation process not demonstrating a credible level of support
- Inappropriate awareness for the C of E proposal by residents
- Concerns about the funding arrangements
- Confusion regarding the two consultations (Free school proposal and this VA proposal)
- Declining church attendance
- Concerns about the curriculum to be taught and 'forcing' faith on children

The main issues raised by supporters of the proposal were;

- Good addition to the infrastructure of the new community
- Benefits in educating children in a 'well-structured Christian ethos while respecting the secular nature of the national curriculum'
- No VA primary school in Daventry (only one church school in the town for KS2 children)
- 90% of church schools in the diocese are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted
- Open admissions (no church criteria for oversubscription)

- Churches in Daventry welcome and support the proposal
- High demand for places from families in the town

In conclusion I would add the following points;

- The Church of England does not run faith schools (for the faithful) but is a provider of education with a designated Christian character or ethos.
- 25% of primary schools nationally are church schools. The provision of church school places within Daventry is well below this figure as the majority of Daventry schools do not have a designated Christian character. We have not received any objections from local schools.
- As a local authority maintained school the curriculum taught will be the national curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for RE in line with other schools in Northamptonshire. Academies have more freedom over their curriculum.
- The aim of church schools is to provide education of the highest quality within a framework of the Christian values that have shaped our nation's development over time.
- There is a proven track record of successful church schools across the diocese and nationally.
- Church schools are very often over-subscribed and are popular with parents. The Diocesan Board of Education is committed to an open admissions policy for this school.
- The issues regarding lack of awareness raised through this consultation were out of our control due to short timescales and changes to government funding. (We had removed the free school proposal from the internet earlier in the year as the details about PDET do not apply to this proposal but they were found by those objecting).
- There is a need for a school in this area to open in September 2018 due to pupil numbers and housing development in Daventry. The church locally and the diocese have the capacity to supply enough governors to run the school in partnership with community/LA representatives.
- The diocesan education team have strong, well-developed working relationships with NCC officers demonstrated in opening the new school at Hayfield Cross in Kettering, a school that is proving very popular and is full in many year groups, as well as ongoing collaboration; for example regarding school improvement and Headteacher appointments.

We look forward to working together to ensure the provision of an excellent church school for Monksmoor Park.

Liz Youngman  
Deputy Director of Education  
Diocese of Peterborough

24<sup>th</sup> November 2017

## Public Notice

The Diocese of Peterborough Board of Education has today published a proposal to establish a Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School to open in September 2018 on the new housing development in Daventry known as Monksmoor Park.

Full details of the proposal can be viewed at:

[www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/churchschools/](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/churchschools/)

Copies of the proposal may be obtained from the Diocesan Board of Education (01604 887060, [education@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:education@peterborough-diocese.org.uk))

Any person may object to or comment on this proposal. Objections or comments should be sent to Liz Youngman, Deputy Diocesan Director of Education, at the email address above or by post to Unit 1, Bouverie Court, The Lakes Bedford Road, Northampton NN4 7YD by November 24<sup>th</sup> 2017.

Miranda Robinson

Diocesan Director of Education

Dated October 12<sup>th</sup> 2017