

Cabinet

18 March 2021

Change of Status of Dunchurch Infant School

Recommendation

That Cabinet approves that Dunchurch Infant School, a Foundation school, be closed and simultaneously replaced by a new Voluntary Aided school (with no change to pupils, staff or buildings).

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Dunchurch Infant School is currently a Foundation School, federated with Dunchurch Boughton Junior School, which is a Voluntary Aided (Church of England) School supported by the Diocese of Coventry.
- 1.2 The Governors of the Federation and the Diocese of Coventry have decided, following a public consultation, that the Infant school would benefit from becoming a Voluntary Aided (Church of England) School to align with the Junior school.
- 1.3 The change of status will require the closure of Dunchurch Infant School as a Foundation School, which is proposed by the Governing Body. The simultaneous opening of Dunchurch Infant School as a Voluntary Aided School is proposed by the Diocese of Coventry. The decision maker for both proposals is Warwickshire County Council, as the Local Authority.
- 1.4 A public consultation was run by the Governing Body of the Dunchurch Schools' Federation, between 14th December and midday on 29th January 2021. The consultation document is provided as Appendix 1, the consultation results report is at Appendix 2.
- 1.5 Parties consulted via email and paper copies of the consultation document were:
 - School staff
 - All primary schools in Rugby Rural and East consortium area
 - All schools in the Rugby Town consortium via the chair of that consortium
 - All secondary schools in Rugby via the chair of the Rugby Secondary Consortium
 - Rugby Children's Centre and DISN's biggest feeder nurseries, Montessori, Bizzy Tots and Nature Trails
 - St. Peter's Church
 - Dunchurch Baptist Church
 - The Diocese of Coventry
 - Warwickshire County Council

- Dunchurch Boughton Educational Trust
- Bilton Grange School

1.6 Online meetings were held for staff and the wider community and the consultation document was published on the school's website.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The change to Voluntary Aided status will allow Dunchurch Infant School to access financial support from the Boughton Educational Trust.
- 2.2 The Diocese of Coventry will provide 10% of the capital costs of the school under the new arrangement, rather than WCC.

3. Environmental Implications

None.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 Governors believe that the proposed change of status would strengthen the federation of schools by removing one of the most significant differences between them.
- 4.2 The Infant school was originally built as a Church school. When the Junior school was built in 1974, the Infant school became a Foundation School and the Junior school a Church School, for unknown reasons.
- 4.3 When the Infant school ceased to be a Church School, it became ineligible to access financial support from the Boughton Educational Trust. This is a charity which supports Church schools in Dunchurch and currently this is limited to the Junior school. A change in status of the Infant school would allow them to benefit from this additional funding.
- 4.4 The governors undertook a public consultation regarding this proposal, the details of which are included as Appendix 1. The results of this consultation are included as Appendix 2.
- 4.5 To summarise the result of the consultation:

Staff

	Yes	No	Not sure/indifferent	Didn't respond
Number	7	10	8	69
Percentage	7%	11%	9%	73%

Parents and the wider community

	Yes	No	Not sure/indifferent	Didn't respond
Number	38	42	67	659
Percentage	4.7%	5.2%	8.3%	81.8%

Appendix 2 provides details of the results of the consultation that was undertaken by the Federation, including a breakdown of voting patterns. There was a noted increase in responses from parents and the wider community against the proposal in the last 24 hours of the consultation although difficult from the responses to draw any particular conclusions as to why that was the case other than the insight provided in the consultation report provided by the Federation.

After consideration of the results of the consultation, Governors voted to approve the proposal. This was supported by the Diocese of Coventry (see Appendix 3).

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 Subject to approval of the proposal by Cabinet, the Governing Body and Diocese of Coventry intend changing the status of Dunchurch Infant School effective from September 2021.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Dunchurch Consultation Document for parents and wider community
2. Appendix 2 – Dunchurch Schools' Federation Consultation Report (results)
3. Appendix 3 – Diocese of Coventry approval of proposal (email)

Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): Cllr Howard Roberts (he needs to be sent this report)
Other members: Cllrs Dahmsh, P.Williams, C.Davies, Chilvers and Skinner