

**PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF KINGSMEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL AND  
DIOCESAN & PAYNE SMITH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Summary of the Public Meetings held on 6 December 2010 at Diocesan & Payne Smith CE Primary School and 8 December at Kingsmead Primary School**

Both meetings were chaired by Mr Mark Dance.

The key issues raised are summarised below.

Approximately 43 people attended the public meeting held at Diocesan & Payne Smith CE Primary School and approximately 45 people attended the public meeting held at Kingsmead Primary School, including parents, staff, governors, and other interested parties.

**Diocesan & Payne Smith CE Primary School – 6 December**

- **Martyn Doole**, Area Education Officer
  - It had not been possible to continue with the proposal to amalgamate both schools into a new school building on the stadium site and now this new proposal of the two schools coming together in refurbished and remodelled accommodation on the Kingsmead site is coming forward.
  - Discussions have taken place over a number of years on replacing Kingsmead Primary School and Diocesan & Payne Smith CE Primary School with a new school.
  - Both schools are accommodated in buildings that are no longer fit for 21st Century education.
  - At Diocesan & Payne Smith the conditions are cramped, there have been health and safety concerns and escalating maintenance costs.
  - The Kingsmead accommodation is desperately in need of refurbishment and the site in need of redevelopment.
  - Both schools serve the Northgate community.
  - There is a need to raise and maintain standards for all pupils.
  - The proposal is to amalgamate Kingsmead Primary School and Diocesan & Payne Smith Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School and open a new school to replace them on the Kingsmead site with effect from September 2012.
  - The proposed new school would be a two form entry (60 pupils in each year group) Church of England Voluntary Controlled school.
  - The new school would include a 26 part-time place maintained nursery unit.
  - Both schools would close on 31 August 2012
  - A new school would open on the Kingsmead site on 1 September 2012
    - One governing body
    - One headteacher
  - Once the decision is made, a shadow governing body would be established consisting of governors from both schools. The shadow governing body would recruit a headteacher, agree staffing structure and oversee transition to the new school.
  - KCC would want to preserve the best of both schools for the community. At the present time, both schools are vulnerable - this proposal would establish a new school that would provide robust provision for the future.
  - MD advised that there were two possible timetables for this public consultation process and explained both timetables.

1. The Canterbury Diocese would apply to the Secretary of State for exemption from competition
  2. The Local Authority would invite interested parties to submit proposals to run the new school as part of a competition process.
- **Revd Nigel Genders**, Director of Education, Canterbury Diocese
    - Diocesan & Payne Smith is historically a successful school for two reasons; it has a strong leadership and management and has a distinct Christian ethos.
    - Diocesan & Payne Smith serves its local community and he would want this to continue in the new school.
    - Voluntary Controlled status gives assurance that the school would continue to serve its local community as the admission arrangements would be the same as for a community school; therefore no child would be precluded from applying for a place at the new school on grounds of faith or no faith.
  - **Carol Wakelin**, Headteacher
    - The Diocesan & Payne Smith building was given in 1845 to be used as an education establishment and has been accessible to the children of Northgate to receive a good education.
    - A school is not a building; it is just where everyone meets.
    - A school was created for the community and it is the community that makes a school.
    - The Diocesan & Payne Smith building is not providing what our children need. There is a limit on space and this proposal should be looked at in the broadest sense for the children of Northgate to get the level of education they need.

**The following points were made at the meeting:**

- An issue about the new school offering church services and whether this would be agreeable to everyone.
- Concerns were raised about the staffing of the new school, when the staff at the current schools would know about their jobs and staff leaving because of the uncertainty.
- Concerns were raised about the current condition of the Kingsmead school buildings, the site and available space.
- Concerns were raised about the refurbishment project and how it would be managed in order to minimise the impact on the children's education
- Concerns were raised about the available funding to complete the project.

These concerns were addressed at the meeting.

**Kingsmead Primary School – 8 December**

- **Martyn Doole**, Area Education Officer – gave the same presentation as above.
- **Revd Nigel Genders**, Director of Education, Canterbury Diocese
  - Gave background information about the Church of England and stated that in Kent there are 103 Church of England schools – 100 primary schools and 3 secondary schools. In Kent a third of all primary schools are Church of England schools.
  - Diocesan & Payne Smith parents are concerned about losing their Christian ethos and he was sure that Kingsmead parents had concerns about becoming a faith school.
  - Everyone has a set of values that they live by and the values the Church of England are peace, love and faith.
  - A Voluntary Controlled school has the same admission arrangements as a community school; therefore no child would be precluded from applying for a place at the new school on grounds of faith or no faith.

- **Michelle Anderson**, Headteacher

- Meetings held about pupils' progress illustrate the key strengths of the school and also highlight what could be improved. The school knows the children well and how they work
- A maintained nursery would mean that the new school would be able to work with children over a longer period.
- It would be an advantage for the children to have more peers.
- Kingsmead has good links with other churches in Canterbury and the new school having a Church ethos would not be very different to now.
- There is a need to think about the future as well as the children currently attending the school.

- **Martin Vye**, Chair of Governors

- All the children attending the school at the time of its closure and requiring a place for September 2012 would have a place at the new school if parents wished.
- The admissions criteria would be the same as it is now for this school - based on nearness of the child's home to the school.
- Managing a small school financially can be very difficult.
- A headteacher of a larger school can employ teachers with wider skills.
- The refurbishment of the Kingsmead site would need to address the problems of the approach to the school.
- The headteacher has been very keen to have a nursery here.
- The children would be taught within their year groups in the new school. Currently Kingsmead has a mixed class for Years 5 and 6.
- The governors of Kingsmead have said that they would like to investigate this proposal.
- The governors would be involved in the planning of the new school and would want parents to be involved as well.

**The following questions were asked and points made at the meeting:**

- Why does it have to be a Church school? Is it because the Diocese will be contributing to the cost of the new school.
- Not everyone wants a Church school education for their children.
- We like the intimacy of a smaller school.
- The access to the school would need to be improved, taking into consideration the larger number of pupils.
- Parents questioned how the refurbishment would impact on their children's education and were reassured that the Local Authority would work very closely with the headteacher to minimise any impact. Any noisy work would be undertaken out of school time.
- Concerns were raised about integrating the children from both schools and reassurance were given by Officers that an integration strategy would be developed to bring the children together before the amalgamation in order to build relationships.
- Concerns were raised about communication and parents were advised that the governors would ensure that information is channelled and concerns fed back to the County Council.
- The new school can bring the whole community together.