



Diocesan and Payne Smith
Church of England (VA) Primary School

Appendix 3

Broad Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2LU

Tel: 01227 462158

Fax: 01227 462205

Nursery tel: 01227 781228

Email: headteacher@diocesan-canterbury.kent.sch.uk

Web: www.dps-primary.co.uk

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11th January 2011,

For the Attention of Martin Doole,

The Governors of Diocesan and Payne Smith CEP School have long recognised the need for an improved educational primary setting in the Northgate Ward.

We are disappointed that this setting cannot be new build but accept that, under the circumstances, refurbishment of the existing Kingsmead Primary site appears to be the only option available.

We have always appreciated the commitment to retaining Church involvement in the 'new' school and support the move from Voluntary Aided to Voluntary Controlled.

Many have spoken of the ethos and values of Diocesan and Payne Smith CEP School and the desire to retain them within any new school that is formed. Our ethos is built around high quality educational provision, community and serving. We are the trusted representation of wrap around care for all of our families and this ethos should be central to any new school that is formed.

We do not feel that there is, as yet, a strong and effective means by which this amalgamation can be achieved with confidence. It is the primary proposal of this Governing Body that there should be immediate involvement, by a small body of people who have personal knowledge of, and commitment to, the residents of Northgate Ward, in the planning and development of the Kingsmead site for a new school. It is our opinion that we should be developing a school that forms the hub of the community and not just a refurbished building that can house a two form entry school with a maintained Nursery.

We consider it to be vital that an interim body is formed that appoints a person with vision to lead and manage this development so that the outcome meets the needs of the community and sooner, not later. Together this interim body could shape a vision for the future of Northgate that is educationally uplifting and the centre for community needs. Clearly this interim body would need a mandate to make decisions in the best interests of



stakeholders. Diocesan and Payne Smith CEP School and Kingsmead Primary are both heavily involved in supporting the local community and we feel that this level of support could be enhanced for the benefit of all current and future pupils.

The social, emotional and health needs of both schools are high. 80% of the families of Diocesan and Payne Smith CEP School access Health and Family services beyond the normal range of dentist, doctor or Early Years, 52% on a regular basis. The retention of highly effective services such as Kingsmead Family Support and MACs on the site will be vital to the smooth management of the future school. This would also keep important services within the city for the benefit of all residents. When Social Services left Stour Street for an industrial site in Chesterfield the most vulnerable families in the city suffered because of the inaccessibility of the site without transport.

We appreciate that the funding currently referred to is specifically for the school but there would be considerable benefit in talking to health and social services to consider how the school site could be enhanced in partnership to deliver a whole remit of support such as is welcomed by the Dfe. and referred to within the Kent Primary Strategy.

As governors we feel that if we are to truly consider Best Value and commit to the raising of standards then getting grass roots decisions right is imperative. We truly hope that any decisions or planning that have already taken place will not be to the detriment of what the new school could deliver.

Secondly, the new school will need the right balance of personnel and the existing schools need to continue to provide excellence for all pupils. You will appreciate that any school is not just a building housed with people; it is a living community that is at its most effective when working in harmony with a clear focus on the desired outcomes. Diocesan and Payne Smith CEP School have a staff that is highly motivated and strives to give every pupil not only excellent learning opportunities but within a context that develops the whole person. Ofsted on three separate occasions since 2008 has recognised that staff are highly motivated, all good or better, and provide a learning environment that enhances outcomes for all. We must not lose outstanding staff because of the lack of job security whilst the amalgamation programme grinds on. That would be to the detriment of current pupils as well as future.

The interim body should make an early decision on staffing needs producing a proposed staffing structure thus allowing current staff to make informed decisions when considering their future and preventing loss of staff because of uncertainty.

Another matter for consideration now are the changes in schools funding and the delivery of historically core services necessitating joined up thinking by both schools. Commitment to future contracts needs in both Kingsmead Primary and Diocesan and Payne Smith CEP School would be best dovetailed so that they are mutually beneficial and facilitate a smooth transition in the future.

Finally, parents will feel reassured if they understand that this project is being properly prepared with solid foundations from the off-set. It gives all parties the best opportunity to exceed statutory education, health and safety requirements and provide the very best wrap around care for the child.

Yours sincerely,

The Governing Body of Diocesan and Payne Smith CEP School.

Graham Duplock Chair
Margaret Wells Vice Chair
Revd. Michael Stace
Revd. Mark Ball
Heather Radcliffe
Jonathan Christopher
David Smith Wallace
Tamsin Peacocke
Chris White
Jo Warnock
Carol Wakelin

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