

The Proposed

# Academy at Ashford

Consultation Information  
November 2009

Proposal to close Ashford Christ Church CE (Voluntary Aided) School and replace it with an Academy



[www.proposedacademyforashford.org](http://www.proposedacademyforashford.org)



**BENENDEN**  
SCHOOL

**Kent County Council is considering closing Ashford Christ Church CE (Voluntary Aided) School and replacing it with an Academy. We want to know what you think of this.**

Your views are important and will help to shape what happens. This document outlines what is being proposed, invites you to a public meeting to talk about the proposal and to ask questions. It also lets you know how you can contact us with your hopes, concerns and/or views.

There are two parts to this consultation process.

The first, led by Kent County Council (KCC), is about the proposal to close the school in order to make way for an Academy to replace it.

The second is a separate, but linked, consultation about the opening of an Academy. This consultation will be led by Project Management Consultants on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Sponsors.

Your views are important and will help to shape what happens.

KCC and the Project Management Consultants are working closely together and are running joint consultation activities, with the aim of making the process as straightforward as possible.

KCC would need to agree to close Ashford Christ Church School to make way for an Academy, but before it does so, it would like to hear your comments. To help you reach a view you need to know what the Academy will look like and this booklet contains further information about the proposal. Information can also be found on the proposal website [www.proposedacademyforashford.org](http://www.proposedacademyforashford.org) which will be updated on an ongoing basis throughout the process.

There is a reply form at the back of this consultation document for you to send us your comments. No decisions will be made until this consultation process is completed and your views will inform the outcome.

**Academies are Government-funded schools that provide a first class, free education to local students of all abilities.** Each Academy is unique, able to provide local solutions to local needs, drawing on the expertise of Sponsors to deliver a distinctive ethos. They have additional flexibility to be more creative in what they offer and how they are organised and run. All offer a broad and balanced curriculum, consistent with national curriculum requirements, and focus on one or more specialisms.

Academies are all-ability schools established by Sponsors from a wide range of backgrounds including

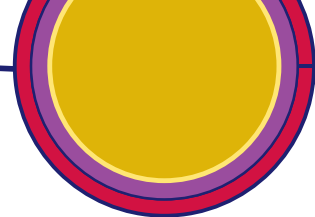
business, faith or voluntary groups working in highly innovative partnerships with central Government and local education and other partners. Should the proposal to open this Academy go ahead, the DCSF would fund the running costs at the same level as other specialist secondary schools in Kent.

Successful Academies share specialist experience and facilities with other primary, secondary and special schools, together with the local community. In this way, they play their part in the regeneration of communities, providing a focus for learning and raising aspiration.

Each Academy is unique, able to provide local solutions to local needs, drawing on the expertise of Sponsors to deliver a distinctive ethos.



# Why close Ashford Christ Church School and open an Academy?



A new Academy would provide an outstanding opportunity to improve confidence, facilities and student achievement.

**Ashford Christ Church CE School, a specialist school for Maths and Computing, is based in South Ashford**, providing secondary education for boys and girls aged 11-16 years old and admits up to 240 students to each year group. In September 2009, the school admitted fewer than 160 pupils in to its Year 7 classes.

The school offers specialist provision for students with special educational needs: it is a lead school for students with hearing impairment, physical disabilities and those with speech and language delays or disorders.

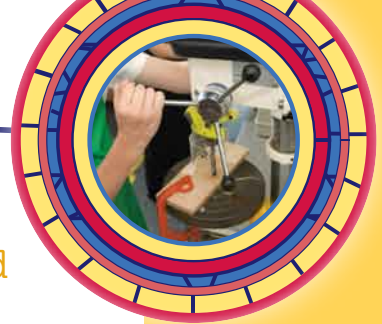
The school is one of the Government's National Challenge Schools as fewer than 30% of its Year 11 students achieve 5+ A\*-C grades, including English and Mathematics, in their GCSE exams, the minimum standard the Government has set all schools to reach by 2011. Ashford Christ Church CE School faces a number of challenges in being able to achieve this minimum standard for several reasons. As a result of the publicity

that has surrounded the school during the past two years, community, parental and student perceptions are poor, which has affected the school's progress, numbers of applications and the confidence of parents.

Kent County Council believes that South Ashford would be better served by an Academy, with new facilities and a new start; Ashford Christ Church CE School is struggling in the current circumstances to reach the expectations Kent County Council, and the Government, has for it.

Sponsors and the local authority firmly believe that a new Academy, serving the local community, would provide an outstanding opportunity to improve confidence, facilities and student achievement.

The Sponsors' vision for the new Academy is to achieve a big improvement in opportunities available to the community and to work with staff, students, parents and the community to develop a genuine pleasure in achievement.



An innovative curriculum would extend would extend opportunities to enable students to develop the skills and knowledge to progress into further or higher education, training and work.

- **Students would be offered a full range of subjects, including an expanded vocational offer**, enabling them to develop creatively through art, music, drama and dance, physically through competitive sport and physical recreation and spiritually through religious, moral and citizenship education.
- The Academy would specialise in Mathematics and Technology.
- The Academy would ultimately have places for 950 students aged 11-16 years old, including 200 post-16 places from 2011.
- The Academy would open in 2010 within the existing buildings, with a new multi-million pound purpose built facility by 1 September 2013.
- Comprehensive and innovative extra-curricular activities would motivate and encourage higher achievement and build a strong sense of community, as well as extend opportunities to enable students to develop the skills and knowledge to progress into further or higher education, training and work.
- It would have a fully inclusive Admissions Policy, providing places for local students who wish to take up a place.
- The Sponsors would work closely with local schools and business partners to develop opportunities for young people.
- The Academy would have an ethos and expectation of personal responsibility and self-discipline, excellent behaviour, high levels of attendance and punctuality and a natural and positive respect for others.
- The Academy ethos would be based on the Christian values of respect, loyalty, truth, trust and integrity.

Academy Sponsors are committed to building and developing an Academy that is truly at the heart of its local community and is a resource for it, providing opportunities for learning, sport, leisure, entertainment, performance and worship.

# What would the Academy offer?

## What benefits would the Academy bring?

**The Sponsors - the Diocese of Canterbury, Benenden School, Canterbury Christ Church University and Kent County Council - believe that the proposed Academy would play an important role in the local community.**

Specialising in Mathematics and Technology, the Academy would place ICT/e-learning at the centre of learning, opening up a wide range of opportunities for students of all abilities.

In addition, the Academy would offer excellent progression routes to further and higher education and support both academic and vocational choices for students. The development of the Mathematics and Technology specialisms would be supported by the expertise available at Benenden School.

There are a number of distinctive and distinguishing features of the Academy, the most important of which are:

- An ethos based firmly upon Christian principles and values.
- A commitment to serving and engaging with parents/carers and the community.
- A strong focus on improving literacy and numeracy within a full, broad and exciting curriculum.
- A focus on the five outcomes of Every Child Matters - through the curriculum and pastoral provision.
- A commitment to raising aspirations by offering a broader, more vocationally based curriculum, suited to routes into locally relevant employment.

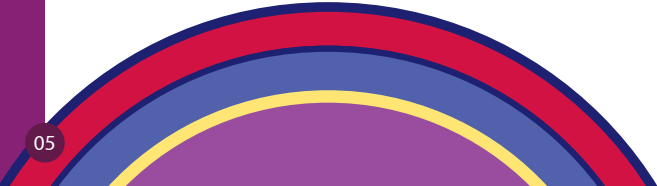
Sponsors believe that the Academy proposal offers a unique opportunity to transform education in South Ashford.

## Why is KCC proposing this change?

**KCC considers that the Academy proposal would provide an opportunity to:**

- raise standards and aspirations to prepare young people for a rapidly changing world;
- transform education provision and to provide a sustainable curriculum which stimulates and engages students;

- establish a Sixth Form (from 2011) providing good role models and raising the aspirations of all students and, in particular, those in Key Stage 4 at a critical time in their GCSE preparation;
- develop extended services to the community;
- support community regeneration;
- benefit from the skills and experience of Sponsors;
- release additional funding and resources.





## Emphasising the unique value of each individual.

**The Lead Sponsor, the Diocese of Canterbury,** is committed to the education and care of young people. It has a long history of involvement in schools, with a track record of high standards and a commitment to building an ethos based on Christian values, which emphasise the unique value of each individual.

There are 105 Church of England schools and colleges in Canterbury Diocese, which serve the community around them and can be thought of as community schools with a Christian religious character. The Diocese is also a significant provider of voluntary activities for children and young people and expects to contribute expertise in this area to the Academy.

**Benenden** is a high achieving local independent girls' school with a long tradition of academic success. It has a large sixth form and - as a Sponsor, would help to develop the curriculum of the Academy. Through partnerships with the staff at the Academy, Benenden would help to strengthen teaching, learning and attainment.

**Canterbury Christ Church University** is a modern, friendly university, with a reputation for academic excellence, a welcoming atmosphere and strong community spirit. Based in the historic city of Canterbury, with four other campuses throughout Kent, the University offers excellent teaching facilities in unique and inspiring locations.

As the largest centre of higher education in Kent for the public services - notably teacher training, nursing, policing, health and social care - and a significant provider of programmes in a wide range of academic and professional areas, the University offers more than a thousand academic and professional study opportunities at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

**Kent County Council (KCC)** will continue to guide the proposed Academy as a Sponsor. The Council is the maintaining education authority and oversees state education in the county, including around 100 secondary schools. KCC is rated nationally as an excellent authority, and is regarded as innovative and forward thinking.

**The process to establish an Academy is regulated by Government.** To date, Sponsors have completed an Expression of Interest document that provides an overview of their proposals for the new Academy. If you would like to read or download a full copy of the Expression of Interest, it can be found at the following address: [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/foischeme/\\_documents/DfES\\_Fol\\_884.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/foischeme/_documents/DfES_Fol_884.pdf)

**This consultation seeks your views on the proposal to open an Academy in Ashford on 1 September 2010.** The Academy would open initially in the existing school, expanding to include a Sixth Form in 2011 and moving into new state-of-the-art buildings, scheduled for completion in September 2013.

The Sponsors invite you to complete the feedback form at the back of this booklet to let us have your views and to help shape the proposal.

At the same time Kent County Council is consulting you about the proposed closure of Ashford Christ Church CE School. The closure would need to happen in order for the Academy to open.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has agreed that the proposal should enter the next phase, referred to as the Feasibility Stage. This includes wide consultation with staff, governors, parents, students, the local community, neighbouring schools and other interested parties. This booklet is part of that process.

The Academy would provide an outstanding learning environment which would:

- provide a wealth of opportunities for students to achieve their full potential, with a curriculum that engenders a love of learning;
- promote high attainment, ensuring students are qualified, skilled and adaptable;
- deliver a personalised learning approach, offering outstanding tutorial support;
- have high expectations of all its students;
- provide a strong ethos of security, care and warmth for one another;
- increase students' self esteem and confidence;
- develop a partnership between adults and students so that they understand, respect and empathise with each others' roles and responsibilities;
- provide stepping stones to and from the community it serves.



The Academy specialisms would drive transformation.

**All learning, academic, vocational and work related, would be driven by the Academy specialisms of Mathematics and Technology, underpinned by a strong Christian, values-based pastoral system and a curriculum designed to promote the future of all its students in education and employment.**

The Academy specialisms would drive transformation. As the 21st century global economy brings its challenges to new generations, Sponsors believe it is vital that students leave the Academy equipped to make the right decisions, for the right reasons, about their future role in the world. The distinctive values and ethos that would be offered to support students and equip them for adult life would underpin their learning experience.

It is proposed that the new Academy would open in the existing buildings in September 2010, with the Sixth Form opening in 2011.

Completion of the Academy's new buildings, including new post-16 facilities, is anticipated to be ready for September 2013. The building of the Academy would be managed in a way that would minimise disruption to students' learning.

**A key aim and expectation of the proposed Academy is that all students would continue with their studies beyond the age of 16, either in the Academy Sixth Form or in another school or college more suited to them.**

Post-16 provision would be established from September 2011, with new facilities forming part of the new build. Sponsors are committed to the value of the Sixth Form and the opportunities it would provide to develop qualities such as leadership, responsibility, self-motivation and self-confidence.

The Academy's post-16 curriculum would include a range of subjects with strong provision for applied and work-focused learning, offering a mix of A Level and Diploma qualifications. Preparation for university access, particularly in the specialist subjects, would be a key focus.

As part of the Ashford family of schools, the Academy would work closely with co-sponsors, the local council and with other schools and colleges on the development of the 14-19 curriculum.



**The Academy would promote a positive approach to personalised learning and give high priority to meeting the needs of individual learners throughout their schooling.** Sponsors believe that every young person has the right to be valued and respected as an equal member of the learning community.

Working alongside Sponsors and partners, the Academy would provide opportunities for students who showed ability and talent in a particular area, while those experiencing difficulties with learning would be supported and helped to succeed.

The Academy would continue to be a lead school for students with physical disabilities, hearing impairment and speech and language needs. It would provide access for students with disabilities, including wheelchair users and would work within the framework of the Local Authority's special educational needs policies to offer an inclusive education. The design of the building and the Academy's use of new technology would maximise access to the curriculum and promote learning for all.

The Complex Communication Disorders Unit would continue to be situated within the Academy site and supported by the local authority, ensuring continued support in familiar surroundings.

**All students attending, or who have been offered, a place at Ashford Christ Church CE School prior to the opening of the Academy, would have an automatic right to transfer to it on 1 September 2010. Sponsors are committed to an Admissions Policy that provides education for all children.**

The Academy would fully comply with the School Admissions Code of Practice and the School Admission Appeals Code of Practice as these apply to maintained schools. In the event that there were too few places available to satisfy all applications, places would be allocated according to the following oversubscription criteria:

- Looked after children in Local Authority care
- Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs

- Siblings of children attending the Academy at the time of the applicant's proposed admission

In addition, it is likely that the following criteria will be agreed:

- A majority of places for children of families living inside the area served by the Academy
- A minority of places for children of families who can show 'Christian Commitment'

The final Admissions Policy will be made available as soon as it has been confirmed.

Entry to the Sixth Form would be based on students' suitability for the courses available and would give priority of places to students in the catchment area, subject to their meeting a minimum level of attainment.



The Academy would work closely with the community, providing a focus for learning and access to a range of facilities. During the consultation period Sponsors will be keen to hear from members of the community to ensure that they identify what extended services are needed and how best to provide them.

## The opportunities for professional development and sharing of best practice would be outstanding.

**Sponsors recognise and value continuity with good teachers and strong support staff as a key factor of a successful school and would seek actively to engage staff in shaping the Academy proposal.**

We are keen to minimise disruption and to develop a culture of continuous improvement that offers all staff the opportunity to improve their professional and personal skills, creating an environment that attracts, supports, develops and retains the best people at all levels.

Committed to ensuring the Academy would be fully staffed with appropriately qualified teachers in specialist areas, Sponsors would provide the necessary time and support to achieve this. The opportunities for professional development and sharing of best practice would be outstanding and a great incentive for the recruitment and retention of high quality staff.



**Further information about Academies can be obtained from the following websites:**

Department for Children, Schools and Families  
[www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/academies](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/academies)

Every Child Matters  
[www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/)

**Sponsors' websites:**

Diocese of Canterbury  
[www.canterburydiocese.org](http://www.canterburydiocese.org)

Benenden School  
[www.benenden.kent.sch.uk](http://www.benenden.kent.sch.uk)

Canterbury Christ Church University  
[www.canterbury.ac.uk](http://www.canterbury.ac.uk)

Kent County Council  
[www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)

**The Public Meeting, chaired by Kent County Council, will take place on Tuesday 17 November from 6.30 – 8.00pm at Ashford Christ Church CE School.** Additional meetings will be organised to offer as many members of the Ashford community as possible the opportunity to attend. The meetings will give you the chance to find out more about what the changes could mean for you. It is also your chance to ask questions, as well as suggest what you would want from your new Academy. Details of the meetings will follow.

If you are unable to attend the meetings, but have questions you would like answered or would just like to make your views known, please complete the feedback form included in this booklet. The form can be returned by post, or placed in the Academy letterbox at the reception of Ashford Christ Church CE School.

**Please return the consultation reply form by: 5pm on Monday 14 December 2009.**

Find out more about  
what the changes  
could mean for you.



## KCC Consultation on Statutory School Closure

- Following this consultation, all views received, either in writing, by email or at the Public Meeting, will be reported to Members of the School Organisation Advisory Board of Kent County Council.
- A Cabinet Member decision will be made on whether to take the proposal forward.
- If so, a Public Notice will be published in a local newspaper, at the school and in public places like the library. The Public Notice will run for six weeks. Representations about the proposal can be made.
- A decision will then be reached on whether to close the school subject to the Secretary of State agreeing to open an Academy.
- In certain circumstances this could include referral to the statutory Schools Adjudicator.
- All views will be considered before a decision is made.

## Come to the public meeting at:

**Ashford Christ Church CE School, Millbank Road, Kingsnorth, Ashford TN23 3HG**  
**Tuesday 17 November from 6.30 – 8.00pm**

An elected member of Kent County Council will be present at this meeting, at which all interested parties will have an opportunity to put forward their views.

Officers from the Local Authority will also be present to clarify points of detail.

### **Complete and return the response form to:**

Mr David Adams, Area Children's Services Officer, (Ashford and Shepway)  
Mid Kent Office, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park  
Ashford, Kent TN24 8XU

**(Your comments must reach us by 5.00pm on Monday 14 December 2009)**

### **Email your comments to: [school.consultations@kent.gov.uk](mailto:school.consultations@kent.gov.uk)**

(We will note all you say, but will not be able to respond individually to response forms, letters or emails.)

## Consultation & decision making timetable

Public Consultation Period	2 November 2009 – 8 December 2009
Public Meeting	Tuesday 17 November from 6.30 – 8.00pm
Report back to Members of the Kent County Council School Organisation Advisory Board	w/c 14 December 2009
Public Notice Issued (subject to Cabinet Member decision)	w/c 4 January 2010
Public Notice Expires	19 February 2010
Decision by Local Authority	By end of February 2010
Adjudication (if required)	March 2010 – May 2010
Opening of the new Academy	1 September 2010



Consultation & decision  
making timetable

**Affix  
stamp  
here**



**Proposed Academy in Ashford**

Mr David Adams Area Children's Services Officer  
(Ashford and Shepway)  
Mid Kent Office, Kroner House  
Eurogate Business Park  
Ashford  
Kent TN24 8XU



The proposed closure of Ashford Christ Church CE (Voluntary Aided) School and its replacement with a Government-funded Academy

## PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN 5.00pm on Monday 14 December

**To:** David Adams, Area Children's Services Officer, Mid Kent Office, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, Kent TN24 8XU Fax: (01233) 898500

You can also email your views to: [school.consultations@kent.gov.uk](mailto:school.consultations@kent.gov.uk)

### Do you agree with the proposal to close Ashford Christ Church CE (Voluntary Aided) School in order to replace it with an Academy?

Yes  No

I am: (please tick as appropriate)

- The parent/carer of a student at Ashford Christ Church CE School
- A member of staff at Ashford Christ Church CE School
- A governor of Ashford Christ Church CE School
- A student at Ashford Christ Church CE School
- Parent/carer at another local school
- Staff at another local school
- Local resident
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Kent County Council is a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will comply with the requirements of the Act at all times. We will ensure that your personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and in this instance used only for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.

### PLEASE WRITE YOUR COMMENTS BELOW

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This document is available on:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning/about-education-service/consultations/>

If you have difficulty reading this document and require it in another format please contact:  
Interpreting and Translation Service: 08458 247 100  
or by writing to [info@proposedacademyforashford.org](mailto:info@proposedacademyforashford.org)

# Academy Consultation Response Form



[www.proposedacademyforashford.org](http://www.proposedacademyforashford.org)



**BENENDEN**  
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