

Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director - Children's Services

Report to:	Councillor Mrs P A Bradwell OBE, Executive Councillor for Children's Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration
Date:	10 March 2023
Subject:	Proposal for Fulstow Community Primary School to become a church school (Final Decision)
Decision Reference:	I028640
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

The proposal under consideration is for Fulstow Community Primary School to become a church school.

At the request of the Governing Body, supported by the Diocese of Lincoln, the Local Authority (as the decision maker) is co-ordinating the process following statutory guidelines published in the Department for Education (DfE) guide "Opening and Closing Maintained Schools. Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers" (November 2019) in accordance with the terms of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, as updated by the Education Act 2011.

On 26 September 2022 a five-week period of consultation commenced which closed on 31 October 2022 and is further referred to later in this report in the Consultation section. A summary of written responses received is also attached in Appendix A.

Following the pre-publication consultation period, a decision was taken on 28 November 2022 to publish the proposal in a Statutory Notice on 14 December 2022. This initiated a four-week Representation Period up to 11 January 2023 when further written objections and comments may be submitted. The next stage of this process is for the LA, as decision maker, to take the final decision regarding the proposal within 2 months from the end of the Representation Period which is by 10 March 2023.

The purpose of this report is to advise the Executive Councillor on making the final decision regarding Fulstow Community Primary School, Fulstow becoming a church school.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive Councillor for Children’s Services, Community Safety, Procurement and Migration approves the proposal for Fulstow Community Primary School, Fulstow to become a church school with effect from 1 September 2023.

Alternatives Considered:

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| 1. | <p>Alternatives Considered:</p> <p>For the LA to leave Fulstow Community Primary School as a non-church school, which would stop the process.</p> <p>The above alternative would have the following disadvantages:</p> <p>The school would miss out on the additional support offered by the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) and would remain as it is now. The benefits outlined in this report would not be realised.</p> |
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Reasons for Recommendation:

Fulstow Community Primary School federated with North Cotes Church of England Primary School in 2018 and since then the two schools have established good relations for the benefit of all pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.

As a result of becoming a church school, it would enable the further reinforcement of these relations as they strengthen their shared vision for all, continue to build upon the already strong bond between the two schools and ultimately help to secure the longer-term future of both.

The school’s academic provision is already good but could further improve as a result of converting to church status. The school would not only keep the support and challenge from the Local Authority but in addition would receive this from the Diocesan Board of Education too. This would include guidance and direction through being able to draw upon knowledge and learn from the good practices established in other church schools across the region. All of these will empower the school to build upon their provision and help to raise standards even further.

The LA considers the proposal to be the most appropriate course of action. This proposal has the support of the Headteacher, the Governing Body and the Diocese.

1. Background

At the request of the Governing Body of Fulstow Community Primary School, Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), in collaboration with the school and Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education (LDBE), commenced consultation on the proposal for the school to become a voluntary controlled church school.

Historically, Fulstow was established as a church school, and stands on church owned land. To work more closely with LDBE, and the church family of schools, the governing body and LDBE investigated the school becoming a church school, once again. Preliminary consultation with stakeholders in 2019 indicated that responders preferred the option of a voluntary controlled school, meaning –

- i) There would be a minority of foundation (church) governors
- ii) The Local Authority would continue to be the admissions authority
- iii) The Local Authority would continue to be the employer of school staff
- iv) The school would use the Locally Agreed RE Syllabus

As a Church of England School, it would have a religious character, but it would not be a faith school. The school would continue to be fully inclusive and serve all children regardless of faith, academic ability, race, or gender.

The Secretary of State for Education has given permission under section 10 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA), to establish a new Voluntary Controlled school and for proposals to be formally published; before that happens, it is important that the Local Authority (as the final decision maker) gather and consider all views prior to deciding on how to proceed.

As part of the process – if the proposal was implemented, the school will close, then immediately reopen the next day as a church school

Factors to be considered by Decision Makers:

Part 1 – closing the existing school

Implementation

It is proposed that Fulstow Community Primary School will close on 31 August 2023.

Reason for closure

In order for Lincolnshire County Council and the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education to open a new voluntary controlled Church of England school they must first close the existing school.

Pupil numbers and admissions

The existing school has a Pupil Admission Number (PAN) of 10 in Year R and has capacity for 70 pupils. As of October 2022, there were 39 pupils on roll.

Displaced pupils

No pupils will be displaced as all pupils currently on roll at Fulstow Community Primary School will automatically be on roll at the new school. Parents will have the right to apply for another school if they wish, although there will be no guarantee that a place at the school of their choice will be available.

Impact on the community

As a new school will open the day after the existing school closes, on the same premises, there should be no impact on the community.

Rural primary schools

No rural primary school provision will be lost in the Fulstow area as the new school will be based at the same address.

Maintained nursery schools

There is no nursery provision at the school.

Sixth form provision

There is no sixth form provision at the school.

Special educational needs provision

Consideration of pupils with SEND will continue to take place at the new school and the LA will continue to look to make improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the education provision for children with SEND.

Travel

As the new school will be established on the existing school site, travel arrangements will not be affected.

Part 2 – opening a new school

Implementation

It is proposed that the new school will open on 1 September 2023 at the existing school site.

The proposal to open a new voluntary controlled Church of England school will be implemented by Lincolnshire County Council and the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education (LDBE) each carrying out their respective statutory responsibilities.

Reason for the new school

Detailed above in the Reasons for Recommendation section. In order for Fulstow Community Primary school to become a church school the existing school has to close and the new school is opened the following day on the same premises.

Category

The new school will be a voluntary controlled Church of England school opened under Section 10 of the Educations and Inspections Act 2006.

Ethos and religious character

As a Church of England School, it would have a religious character, but it would not be a faith school. The school would continue to be fully inclusive and serve all children regardless of faith, academic ability, race, or gender.

Pupil numbers and admissions

The new school will accommodate the same number of pupils as the old school which is 70 pupils of statutory school age from Year R to Year 6. It will retain a Pupil Admission Number (PAN) of 10 in Year R.

Admission arrangements

All pupils currently on roll at Fulstow Community Primary School will automatically be on roll at the new school. Parents will have the right to apply for another school if they wish, although there will be no guarantee that a place at the school of their choice will be available.

Parents who express a preference for Fulstow Community Primary School for admission for a reception class for September 2023 should note that if the proposal is agreed, a place allocated at that school would become a place allocated at the newly established school.

The 2023/2024 admissions arrangements adopted for the new school will be those determined by Lincolnshire County Council for Fulstow Community Primary school for 2023/2024). An extract of the oversubscription criteria taken from the admissions policy is shown below. The only change made to the admissions policy will be to reflect the change in the school name. Any future changes to the existing criteria would be subject to the requirements of the DfE's Admissions Code and therefore would be consulted upon.

In accordance with relevant legislation, the allocation of places for children with an

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) where the school is named on the plan will take place first. Remaining places will be allocated in accordance with this policy and are shown below:

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
2. Children with a brother or sister attending the school at the time of application, or who will be attending the school at the expected time of admission.
3. Children for whom this school is the nearest school to their home address.
4. Distance of the home address to the school. Places will be allocated to those living nearest the school first.

The complete admissions' policy can be accessed at [Fulstow Primary School – Lincolnshire County Council](#) or requested from the School Organisation Planning Team, Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, 51 Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ or by emailing schoolorganisation@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Early years provision

There will be no early years provision at the school.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Provision

The new school is not likely to have any impact on SEND provision. Consideration of pupils with SEND will take place and the LA will continue to look to make improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the education provision for children with SEND.

Curriculum

The curriculum currently being taught will be unaffected by this proposal.

Relevant experience of proposers

Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education (LDBE) is the religious authority for 141 Church of England schools and academies in the diocese of Lincoln. The schools include infant, junior, primary and secondary schools in very different contexts – urban, rural and coastal serving communities with high and low deprivation. Most church schools are small and rural with less than 100 pupils on roll.

In September 2023, it is proposed that the LDBE will be the religious authority for the school in Fulstow.

The LDBE will work collaboratively with the Local Authority to support the school to provide an inclusive high-quality education for pupils of all faiths and none.

The school will become a voluntary controlled church school and therefore continue to be maintained by the Local Authority (LA). The LA will continue to be the employer and the school will continue to follow all LA policies as required.

The LDBE's role will be to support school leaders to develop a distinctive and effective church school. The LDBE will help the school develop a Christian vision which will enable all adults and pupils to flourish academically, physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

The LDBE has a successful record of supporting Church of England schools over the centuries. The current LDBE team consists of educational professionals with expertise in school leadership, governance, school improvement, Religious Education, Collective Worship, Spiritual Development, finance and administration.

The LDBE works very closely with the LA and other key partners such as the Teaching Schools to improve the quality of provision in schools. The vast majority of church schools are judged as 'good' or better by Ofsted. The LDBE has also supported a high proportion (98%) of church schools to achieve an 'excellent' or 'good' grade in the church school inspection.

Effects on standards and contributions to school improvement

The new school will continue to be led and managed by an experienced school leader, responsible for appointing skilled staff who share a strong commitment to continually improving pedagogical strategies around teaching and learning. The incumbent Senior Leadership Team already has high expectations of staff and pupils, and this will continue in the new school. The new school will maintain a robust approach to measuring pupil performance. The expectation is that all pupils will make at least expected progress from EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) to the end of KS 2 (Key Stage 2). Equality of opportunity for all pupils will be central to the curriculum offered at the new school. A continuous process of assessment will be used including: the use of formal and informal tests and self-assessment / moderation, drawing upon a range of evidence including observations, speaking, and listening and written learning. The new school will work in close partnership with local schools and established local professional networks; it will also work as part of the Lincolnshire diocesan family of schools where it will both contribute to and receive support around school improvement. Already established local networks will provide support for benchmarking and moderation, including sources out of the County's geographical area. Expertise from staff will be identified and used as professional support to other local schools as appropriate. Staff have the opportunity for joint working in collaboration with the new school's partner school, North Cotes C of E Primary. This provides additional capacity into the school improvement model. Staff have the opportunity for joint training, moderation, and subject leadership which in turn will drive forwards educational standards and school improvement across the local pupil community. Governance will ensure that expectations and standards are high, school leaders will be held to account.

Location and costs

The new school will be established on the existing school site at Churchthorpe, Fulstow, Louth LN11 0XL. No provision is being made by Lincolnshire County Council or the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education for capital costs to implement the proposal because there will be sufficient space in the new school to accommodate the pupils of the predecessor school.

Travel and Accessibility

As the new school will be on the site of the existing school, pupils will be travelling the same distance as before.

Federation

Fulstow Community Primary School federated with North Cotes Church of England Primary School in 2018. This arrangement will continue.

Equal Opportunity Issues

The LA must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations and should consider whether there are any sex, race or disability discrimination issues that arise out of the proposal. There should be a commitment to provide access to a range of opportunities which reflect the ethnic and cultural mix of the area while ensuring that such opportunities are open to all.

There are no sex, race or disability discrimination issues arising from this proposal.

Community Cohesion

The impact on the community must be considered and schools have a key part to play in providing opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to learn from and respect each other and gain an understanding of other cultures, faiths and communities. The decision-maker must take account of the community served by the school and the views of different sections of the community.

An enhanced relationship with North Cotes Church of England Primary School through a strengthened federation will support community cohesion. The community has had the opportunity to express their views through the representation and consultation period and those are captured and taken into account within this report.

The Consultation and Representation Period

The Executive Councillor must be satisfied that the appropriate consultation and representation periods have been carried out and that all of the responses received have been given due consideration.

Although there is no longer a prescribed consultation period prior to the publication of the Statutory Notice and Complete Proposal the DfE's guidance states "*a strong expectation on schools and LAs to consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to publication*". The list of interested parties was therefore compiled comprising as wide a range of consultees as practicable to ensure that all interested parties were included and incorporated parents of current pupils, the District Council, as well as individual County, District and Parish Councillors as appropriate, along with the Diocese. The LA conducted a five-week period of pre-publication consultation to fulfil this expectation and also to operate a fair and open process and ensure all views were considered. A Statutory Notice, and Complete Proposal (Appendix C), initiating a four-week Representation Period, were published in accordance with current statutory requirements.

Responses submitted during both the Pre-publication Consultation and Representation Period have been made available to the Executive Councillor for consideration when taking the final decision.

To briefly summarise, in the stage one pre-publication consultation there were 6 valid responses in total with 3 against the proposal, 3 for the proposal and 0 neither for nor against.

During the stage one pre-publication consultation there were a few concerns raised, which are addressed below.

The concerns raised are in *italics* with collated responses below provided by the school and the diocese.

- *Education is compulsory, and school places are limited. Young people should not be obliged to attend a school with a faith character, and that will be the effect of this proposal. Religion and state education should be separated. It's not just a matter of religious education, but of the whole culture of the school and what kind of thoughts and behaviours it fosters towards those of different faiths and none.*

At primary level, when children are too young to make informed decisions of their own, they shouldn't be steered towards one way of thinking. I am against this proposal because of how exclusionary it will be. Religion belongs outside of the school system, not within it.

- *We are not a religious family and would have never chosen to send our children to a church school. We did not marry in a church, nor were our children baptised. We would prefer our children to be taught unbiased knowledge about religion and feel that it is important, particularly in our modern-day, multi-cultural society for our children to gain an oversight of all religions and faiths. My worry is that our children will be indoctrinated with Christian beliefs, which can often be very old-fashioned and often teach exclusivity and intolerance. I believe that the history of Christianity is taught from a distorted angle and that in any other subject, science would take prevalence over mythology. Before any decision is made, I would*

propose that parents are given the opportunity to see any changes in school policies.

- *I do not believe single faith-led schools have a place in a modern education environment.*

Church schools do not serve the whole community and would dissuade families from diverse backgrounds from sending their children to those schools. This would lead to reduced diversity at the school which is already overwhelmingly comprised of children from a similar demographic.

Only 7.4% of adults in England go to church on average on a Sunday, our family is not one of them. My fear is that a church school would not respect the autonomy of children in the matter of choosing their own religious values. The focus on Christianity in Religious Education concerns me greatly. It assumes that Christianity is of greater importance than any other religious or spiritual beliefs and that the Christian God is above reproach.

We live in a small village with one school. School choice is not feasible. I would not choose to send my child to a church school but would have little-to-no choice if Fulstow Primary School was to become a church school.

If the number of church schools increases, individuals and families from other religious backgrounds will feel excluded and are more likely to find a faith school which aligns with their particular beliefs, creating division, isolation and divided communities.

Schools should fairly represent the society we live in without breaking it up further into minority groups. It is not the job of publicly funded schools to instil a religious faith in children.

It is one thing for families in private to raise their children to believe what they think is true. It is quite another for schools to undertake the role of transmitting such a belief.

Teaching moral education is not dependent on faith or religion, school values can be based on shared human values and moral decency without being based around the mythology of religion

A Singular culture and belief system can be taught at home. There is no need for a religious approach to education in a modern society. Young people are thirsty for knowledge of different cultures and beliefs, the danger is that young people trust that the education they are provided with is above reproach or question. If it is directed or even suggested that one God sits above others, they are likely to believe that and become entrenched in the mythology of the same.

Becoming a church school does not necessarily lead to greater academic results. The National Foundation for Educational Research found that looking exclusively at achievement, there is no evidence at all to suggest that increasing the number of faith schools will improve the level of achievement-.

Schools should teach about religion in an objective and critical manner without being controlled by one particular religious group.

My children have both the right to an education and the right to freedom of thought and expression under the Human Rights Act. I fear that having a church school as the only available school in my village would hinder both of these rights.

The response from the school and the diocese to address these concerns is as follows:

Church schools pride themselves on welcoming those of all faiths, and none. As a family of schools, church schools offer a nurturing, spacious environment within which to learn, grow, and explore. Church schools have a Christian foundation that is inclusive, where there is no indoctrination of a Christian world view, but instead invites pupils to explore all faiths, and equips them with a religious literacy so they are able to engage in balanced discussions and express their own views in a respectful way.

Fulstow hopes to become a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school and will not be altering any part of the Religious Education (RE) curriculum – indeed, there will be no changes made to any part of the curriculum, or school policies. This includes the admissions policy. The RE curriculum will continue to teach about a variety of world religions and views. RE will continue to be objective, critical, and taught in line with regulation and statute. Church schools celebrate diversity through the curriculum. Church schools are inspected by Ofsted, as are all schools.

Collective worship will continue in school – inclusive and invitational. As the school continues to be a publicly state funded school it will continue to comply with the Equality Act 2010, and legal requirements relating to the nine protected characteristics.

It is the view of the school leadership, and the diocese – that becoming a church school would lead to closer working with other church schools – as a supportive, challenging relationship, and non-church schools. There are 141 church schools in the Diocese of Lincoln – proudly serving c.27 000 pupils, their families, and communities.

Fulstow remains a school in limbo, without conversion to church school status. The land the school is upon is in church trusteeship – and at present, the site trustees are in breach of trust. To rectify this breach, conversion to church school status would be needed. The future of schools is likely to be academy conversion – to achieve this smoothly, the question of church school status needs to be answered. The move to make Fulstow a VC school answers this question.

Most church schools in the diocese are the only school in the village/town; overwhelmingly Ofsted reports show that parents are happy with their school, as it enables all pupils to flourish.

Following the completion of the pre-publication consultation period all feedback was considered with a full report (which is referred to in the Background Papers section below and will also be re-considered along with this report) by the Executive Councillor and a decision was taken on 28 November 2022 to proceed to Statutory Notice. A statutory 4-week Representation Period was entered into on 14 December 2022 commencing with the publication of the Statutory Notice (in the local press, on the Lincolnshire County Council's website and at the school gates. The Complete Proposal, available in paper and electronic format (Appendix C) to which the Statutory Notice refers, was sent to interested parties as detailed in the statutory guidance and was also published on the website at www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/fulstow The Representation Period provided a further opportunity for people and organisations to express their views and ensure that they are taken into account when the final decision is taken. There was 1 response, which was for the proposal. This respondent had also responded positively in the consultation period.

The LA, as decision maker, must be able to show that all relevant issues raised are taken into consideration in the decision-making process. Points raised can be considered unpersuasive but must not be ignored altogether.

The last stage of the statutory process would be the implementation of the proposal for Fulstow Community Primary school to become a church school on 1 September 2023.

2. Legal Issues:

Equality Act 2010

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- * Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- * Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- * Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- * Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic

- * Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
- * Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

The duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision making process.

An Impact Equality Assessment (Appendix B to this report) has been carried out.

A positive impact in relation to age is that the school's membership of the church school of families will offer the school support, which will, in turn, benefit children.

The school will have access to support from the DBE to help with capacity building and standards.

No groups of people will be adversely affected by this school becoming a church school. It will continue to serve the whole community under the same leadership and Governing Board. The staff will continue to be employed by the Local Authority. As a voluntary controlled school, the school will continue to follow all LA policies.

Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA), the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)

The Council must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health & Well Being Strategy (JHWS) in coming to a decision.

Fulstow Community Primary School becoming a church school would support both the JSNA and the Lincolnshire Health and Well Being Strategy as follows:

- Helping to secure the future of the school and providing a supportive environment for the children, with the additional support of the diocese and a strengthened federation with the nearby North Cotes Church of England Primary School should provide a stable environment which will enhance the emotional wellbeing of the children whilst allowing them to continue their education at a rural school that can be accessed on foot or on bicycle which will help to combat childhood obesity.
- As stated previously in the report, “Staff have the opportunity for joint training, moderation, and subject leadership which in turn will drive forwards educational standards and school improvement across the local pupil community.”
- Factors which support children reaching their full potential will also promote their ability to achieve economic well-being and the positive contribution they can make.

Crime and Disorder

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and re-offending in its area

The proposal will have no impact on Crime and Disorder.

3. Conclusion

A final decision is required from the Executive Councillor to determine whether to approve the proposal for Fulstow Community Primary School, Fulstow to become a church school as detailed in this report. The factors to consider in making this decision are within this report and all valid written responses received during pre-publication consultation and the Representation Period must be considered.

The LA believes this proposal to be in the best interests of local children and parents, as well as educational provision in the area.

It is recommended that the proposal is agreed to ensure the best educational opportunities for the children in the Fulstow and surrounding areas. The advantages of implementing this proposal are detailed earlier in this report in the “Reasons for Recommendations” section.

4. Legal Comments:

The Council is the decision-maker for school alteration proposals of this type by virtue of the Education and Inspections Act ("EIA") 2006 as amended by the Education Act 2011 and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 made pursuant to the EIA. The decision-maker may reject the proposal, approve the proposal without modification or approve the proposal with such modifications as the Council considers desirable but only after consultation on those modifications with the governing body.

The Council as decision-maker may make the approval of the proposal conditional but only on specified matters contained in the Regulations.

The proposal is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive Councillor.

5. Resource Comments:

There are no financial implications for the recommendation to approve the proposal for Fulstow Community Primary School, Fulstow to become a church school with effect from 1 September 2023.

A schools delegated budget through the national funding formula makes no distinction relating to the status of the school, such as this recommendation.

6. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

Yes.

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes.

c) Scrutiny Comments

This report will be considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 3 March 2023, the comments of the Committee will be reported to the Executive Councillor prior to the decision being taken.

d) Risks and Impact Analysis

An Impact Assessment has been completed and in summary the analysis indicates that there will be no significant impact, positive or negative, arising out of the Executive Councillor's decision.

7. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report.	
Appendix A	Summary of written responses from interested parties during consultation.
Appendix B	Equality Impact Analysis.
Appendix C	Complete Proposal.

8. Background Papers

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
The DfE guide "Opening and Closing Maintained Schools. Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers" (November 2019).	Opening and closing maintained schools (publishing.service.gov.uk)

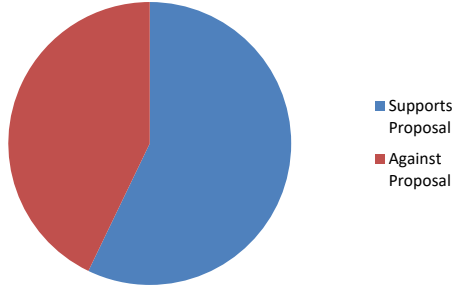
This report was written by Matthew Clayton, who can be contacted on 01522 555353 or matthew.clayton@lincolnshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX A

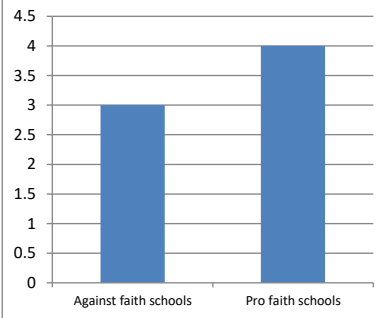
Written Responses in the Consultation and Representation Period on the proposal for Fulstow Community Primary School to become a church school

Point of View	Supports Proposal	Against Proposal	Other comments/Notes
Other	Y		I am pleased this school is continuing within the County Council family of schools as a new Church of England school.
Other	Y		I am supportive of the Fulstow Primary School becoming a Church of England (Controlled) School. However, for this to be effective I would seek assurance that the number of pupils on roll, and those projected will sustain an economically viable setting. I would also suggest that the Governing Body apply for Fulstow and North Cotes Schools to become part of the LAAT for continued support, and development of the education presently offered.
Other LA/Parish Council		Y	<p>Education is compulsory, and school places are limited. Young people should not be obliged to attend a school with a faith character, and that will be the effect of this proposal. Religion and state education should be separated. It's not just a matter of religious education, but of the whole culture of the school and what kind of thoughts and behaviours it fosters towards those of different faiths and none.</p> <p>At primary level, when children are too young to make informed decisions of their own, they shouldn't be steered towards one way of thinking. I am against this proposal because of how exclusionary it will be. Religion belongs outside of the school system, not within it.</p>
Parent/Carer		Y	We are not a religious family and would have never chosen to send our children to a church school. We did not marry in a church, nor were our children baptised. We would prefer our children to be taught unbiased knowledge about religion and feel that it is important, particularly in our modern-day, multi-cultural society for our children to gain an oversight of all religions and faiths. My worry is that our children will be indoctrinated with Christian beliefs, which can often be very old-fashioned and often teach exclusivity and intolerance. I believe that the history of Christianity is taught from a distorted angle and that in any other subject, science would take prevalence over mythology. Before any decision is made, I would propose that parents are given the opportunity to see any changes in school policies. Thank you.
Parent/Carer		Y	<p>I do not believe single faith-led schools have a place in a modern education environment.</p> <p>Church schools do not serve the whole community and would dissuade families from diverse backgrounds from sending their children to those schools. This would lead to reduced diversity at the school which is already overwhelmingly comprised of children from a similar demographic.</p> <p>Only 7.4% of adults in England go to church on average on a Sunday, our family is not one of them. My fear is that a church school would not respect the autonomy of children in the matter of choosing their own religious values. The focus on Christianity in Religious Education concerns me greatly. It assumes that Christianity is of greater importance than any other religious or spiritual beliefs and that the Christian God is above reproach.</p> <p>We live in a small village with one school. School choice is not feasible. I would not choose to send my child to a church school but would have little-to-no choice if Fulstow Primary School was to become a church school.</p> <p>If the number of church schools increases, individuals and families from other religious backgrounds will feel excluded and are more likely to find a faith school which aligns with their particular beliefs, creating division, isolation and divided communities.</p> <p>Schools should fairly represent the society we live in without breaking it up further into minority groups. It is not the job of publicly funded schools to instil a religious faith in children.</p> <p>It is one thing for families in private to raise their children to believe what they think is true. It is quite another for schools to undertake the role of transmitting such a belief.</p> <p>Teaching moral education is not dependent on faith or religion, school values can be based on shared human values and moral decency without being based around the mythology of religion</p> <p>A Singular culture and belief system can be taught at home. There is no need for a religious approach to education in a modern society. Young people are thirsty for knowledge of different cultures and beliefs, the danger is that young people trust that the education they are provided with is above reproach or question. If it is directed or even suggested that one God sits above others, they are likely to believe that and become entrenched in the mythology of the same.</p> <p>Becoming a church school does not necessarily lead to greater academic results. The National Foundation for Educational Research found that looking exclusively at achievement, there is no evidence at all to suggest that increasing the number of faith schools will improve the level of achievement-</p> <p>Schools should teach about religion in an objective and critical manner without being controlled by one particular religious group.</p> <p>My children have both the right to an education and the right to freedom of thought and expression under the Human Rights Act. I fear that having a church school as the only available school in my village would hinder both of these rights.</p>
Parent/Carer	Y		I think its a lovely idea instead of all the schools becoming academies
Other	Y		I feel strengthening relationships between schools is a good thing as part of the County Council family of schools

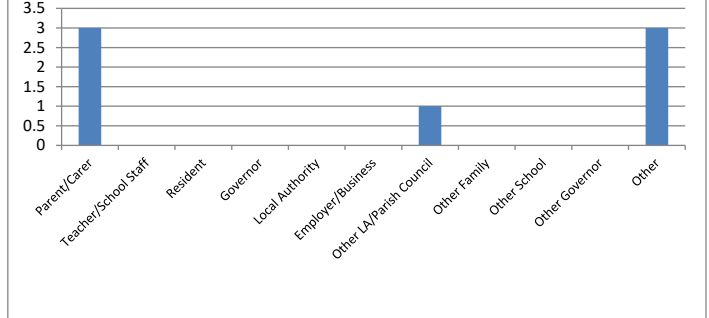
Consultation Responses Overview



Key Noted Reasons Given



Responding Consultees



Equality Impact Analysis to enable informed decisions

The purpose of this document is to:-

- I. help decision makers fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and
- II. for you to evidence the positive and adverse impacts of the proposed change on people with protected characteristics and ways to mitigate or eliminate any adverse impacts.

Using this form

This form must be updated and reviewed as your evidence on a proposal for a project/service change/policy/commissioning of a service or decommissioning of a service evolves taking into account any consultation feedback, significant changes to the proposals and data to support impacts of proposed changes. The key findings of the most up to date version of the Equality Impact Analysis must be explained in the report to the decision maker and the Equality Impact Analysis must be attached to the decision making report.

****Please make sure you read the information below so that you understand what is required under the Equality Act 2010****

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 applies to both our workforce and our customers. Under the Equality Act 2010, decision makers are under a personal duty, to have due (that is proportionate) regard to the need to protect and promote the interests of persons with protected characteristics.

Protected characteristics

The protected characteristics under the Act are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010

Section 149 requires a public authority to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by/or under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share those characteristics
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The purpose of Section 149 is to get decision makers to consider the impact their decisions may or will have on those with protected characteristics and by evidencing the impacts on people with protected characteristics decision makers should be able to demonstrate 'due regard'.

Decision makers duty under the Act

Having had careful regard to the Equality Impact Analysis, and also the consultation responses, decision makers are under a personal duty to have due regard to the need to protect and promote the interests of persons with protected characteristics (see above) and to:-

- (i) consider and analyse how the decision is likely to affect those with protected characteristics, in practical terms,
- (ii) remove any unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct,
- (iii) consider whether practical steps should be taken to mitigate or avoid any adverse consequences that the decision is likely to have, for persons with protected characteristics and, indeed, to consider whether the decision should not be taken at all, in the interests of persons with protected characteristics,
- (iv) consider whether steps should be taken to advance equality, foster good relations and generally promote the interests of persons with protected characteristics, either by varying the recommended decision or by taking some other decision.

Conducting an Impact Analysis

The Equality Impact Analysis is a process to identify the impact or likely impact a project, proposed service change, commissioning, decommissioning or policy will have on people with protected characteristics listed above. It should be considered at the beginning of the decision making process.

The Lead Officer responsibility

This is the person writing the report for the decision maker. It is the responsibility of the Lead Officer to make sure that the Equality Impact Analysis is robust and proportionate to the decision being taken.

Summary of findings

You must provide a clear and concise summary of the key findings of this Equality Impact Analysis in the decision making report and attach this Equality Impact Analysis to the report.

Impact – definition

An impact is an intentional or unintentional lasting consequence or significant change to people's lives brought about by an action or series of actions.

How much detail to include?

The Equality Impact Analysis should be proportionate to the impact of proposed change. In deciding this asking simple questions “Who might be affected by this decision?” “Which protected characteristics might be affected?” and “How might they be affected?” will help you consider the extent to which you already have evidence, information and data, and where there are gaps that you will need to explore. Ensure the source and date of any existing data is referenced.

You must consider both obvious and any less obvious impacts. Engaging with people with the protected characteristics will help you to identify less obvious impacts as these groups share their perspectives with you.

A given proposal may have a positive impact on one or more protected characteristics and have an adverse impact on others. You must capture these differences in this form to help decision makers to arrive at a view as to where the balance of advantage or disadvantage lies. If an adverse impact is unavoidable then it must be clearly justified and recorded as such, with an explanation as to why no steps can be taken to avoid the impact. Consequences must be included.

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Proposals for more than one option If more than one option is being proposed you must ensure that the Equality Impact Analysis covers all options. Depending on the circumstances, it may be more appropriate to complete an Equality Impact Analysis for each option.

The information you provide in this form must be sufficient to allow the decision maker to fulfil their role as above. You must include the latest version of the Equality Impact Analysis with the report to the decision maker. Please be aware that the information in this form must be able to stand up to legal challenge.

Background Information

Title of the policy / project / service being considered	Consultation on the proposal for Fulstow Community Primary School to become a voluntary controlled church school	Person / people completing analysis	[Helen Hill]
Service Area	[School Organisation Planning Team, Children's Services]	Lead Officer	Matthew Clayton
Who is the decision maker?	[Cllr Mrs P Bradwell]	How was the Equality Impact Analysis undertaken?	Discussions with the Headteacher, Diocese and relevant LA officers
Date of meeting when decision will be made	10/03/2023	Version control	[V3]
Is this proposed change to an existing policy/service/project or is it new?	New	LCC directly delivered, commissioned, re-commissioned or de-commissioned?	Directly delivered
Describe the proposed change	Lincolnshire County Council, in collaboration with the school and Diocese, will consult on the proposal for Fulstow Community Primary School to be made a church school (VC) once again – requested by the governing body and headteacher, supported by Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education (DBE).		

Evidencing the impacts

In this section you will explain the difference that proposed changes are likely to make on people with protected characteristics. To help you do this first consider the impacts the proposed changes may have on people without protected characteristics before then considering the impacts the proposed changes may have on people with protected characteristics.

You must evidence here who will benefit and how they will benefit. If there are no benefits that you can identify please state 'No perceived benefit' under the relevant protected characteristic. You can add sub categories under the protected characteristics to make clear the impacts. For example under Age you may have considered the impact on 0-5 year olds or people aged 65 and over, under Race you may have considered Eastern European migrants, under Sex you may have considered specific impacts on men.

Data to support impacts of proposed changes

When considering the equality impact of a decision it is important to know who the people are that will be affected by any change.

Population data and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

The Lincolnshire Research Observatory (LRO) holds a range of population data by the protected characteristics. This can help put a decision into context. Visit the LRO website and its population theme page by following this link: <http://www.research-lincs.org.uk> If you cannot find what you are looking for, or need more information, please contact the LRO team. You will also find information about the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on the LRO website.

Workforce profiles

You can obtain information by many of the protected characteristics for the Council's workforce and comparisons with the labour market on the [Council's website](#). As of 1st April 2015, managers can obtain workforce profile data by the protected characteristics for their specific areas using Agresso.

Positive impacts

The proposed change may have the following positive impacts on persons with protected characteristics – If no positive impact, please state 'no positive impact'.

Age	Primary aged children – school's membership of the church school of families will offer the school support, which will, in turn, benefit children. The school will have access to support from the DBE to help with capacity building and standards. Adults of working age – Staff – the school will continue to be their place of work.
Disability	No positive impact
Gender reassignment	No positive impact
Marriage and civil partnership	No positive impact
Pregnancy and maternity	No positive impact
Race	No positive impact
Religion or belief	The school will continue to be inclusive and welcome pupils and their families from all faiths and none. There will be no faith criteria in the admission policy.

Sex	[No positive impact]
Sexual orientation	[No positive impact]

If you have identified positive impacts for other groups not specifically covered by the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 you can include them here if it will help the decision maker to make an informed decision.

The school will be fully inclusive and welcome all adults and pupils of different backgrounds, cultures, religion and ability.

Adverse/negative impacts

You must evidence how people with protected characteristics will be adversely impacted and any proposed mitigation to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts. An adverse impact causes disadvantage or exclusion. If such an impact is identified please state how, as far as possible, it is justified; eliminated; minimised or counter balanced by other measures.

If there are no adverse impacts that you can identify please state 'No perceived adverse impact' under the relevant protected characteristic.

Negative impacts of the proposed change and practical steps to mitigate or avoid any adverse consequences on people with protected characteristics are detailed below. If you have not identified any mitigating action to reduce an adverse impact please state 'No mitigating action identified'.

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Age	[No perceived adverse impact]
Disability	[No perceived adverse impact]
Gender reassignment	[No perceived adverse impact]
Marriage and civil partnership	[No perceived adverse impact]
Pregnancy and maternity	[No perceived adverse impact]

Race	[No perceived adverse impac]
Religion or belief	[No perceived adverse impac]
Sex	[No perceived adverse impac]
Sexual orientation	[No perceived adverse impac]

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If you have identified negative impacts for other groups not specifically covered by the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 you can include them here if it will help the decision maker to make an informed decision.

No groups of people will be adversely affected by this school becoming a church school. It will continue to serve the whole community under the same leadership and Governing Board. The staff will continue to be employed the Local Authority. As a voluntary controlled school, the School will continue to follow all LA policies.

Stakeholders

Stake holders are people or groups who may be directly affected (primary stakeholders) and indirectly affected (secondary stakeholders)

You must evidence here who you involved in gathering your evidence about benefits, adverse impacts and practical steps to mitigate or avoid any adverse consequences. You must be confident that any engagement was meaningful. The Community engagement team can help you to do this and you can contact them at engagement@lincolnshire.gov.uk

State clearly what (if any) consultation or engagement activity took place by stating who you involved when compiling this EIA under the protected characteristics. Include organisations you invited and organisations who attended, the date(s) they were involved and method of involvement i.e. Equality Impact Analysis workshop/email/telephone conversation/meeting/consultation. State clearly the objectives of the EIA consultation and findings from the EIA consultation under each of the protected characteristics. If you have not covered any of the protected characteristics please state the reasons why they were not consulted/engaged.

Objective(s) of the EIA consultation/engagement activity

To ensure that all interested parties are made fully aware of the process and have the opportunity to take part in the consultation process and that their views are taken into consideration before a final decision is taken

Who was involved in the EIA consultation/engagement activity? Detail any findings identified by the protected characteristic

Age	Details of the proposal and how to respond were sent to a wide range of interested parties in line with statutory guidance, and details were also made available on the local authority's website. All responses were recorded and analysed to be taken into consideration by the decision maker
Disability	Details of the proposal and how to respond were sent to a wide range of interested parties in line with statutory guidance, and details were also made available on the local authority's website. All responses were recorded and analysed to be taken into consideration by the decision maker
Gender reassignment	I
Marriage and civil partnership	I
Pregnancy and maternity	I
Race	I
Religion or belief	Details of the proposal and how to respond were sent to a wide range of interested parties in line with statutory guidance, and details were also made available on the local authority's website. All responses were recorded and analysed to be taken into consideration by the decision maker

Sex	I
Sexual orientation	I
Are you confident that everyone who should have been involved in producing this version of the Equality Impact Analysis has been involved in a meaningful way? The purpose is to make sure you have got the perspective of all the protected characteristics.	Yes. Details of the proposal and how to respond were sent to a wide range of interested parties in line with statutory guidance, and details were also made available on the local authority's website. All responses were recorded and analysed to be taken into consideration by the decision maker
Once the changes have been implemented how will you undertake evaluation of the benefits and how effective the actions to reduce adverse impacts have been?	If the decision is made for Fulstow Community Primary School to become a church school then the statutory guidelines will be followed.

Further Details

Are you handling personal data?	<p>Yes</p> <p>If yes, please give details.</p> <p>Consultation responses incorporated name and first part of postcode of respondent, however providing a name was optional and these details will remain confidential. All responses are stored on an area in Sharepoint which is restricted to the School Organisation Planning Team</p>
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Actions required	Action	Lead officer	Timescale
Include any actions identified in this analysis for on-going monitoring of impacts.	[N/A]	[N/A]	[N/A]

Version	Description	Created/amended by	Date created/amended	Approved by	Date approved
[V1]	[Lincolnshire County Council, in collaboration with the school, will consult on the proposal for Fulstow Community Primary School to be made a church school (VC) once again – requested by the governing body and headteacher, approved of by Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education (DBE), with a proposed implementation date of 1st September 2023.]	[Helen Hill]	[12/01/2023]		

V2	Added in some additional references to the DBE and the additional support to the school which will be available if the proposal is implemented.	Matt Clayton	16/09/2022		
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Complete Proposal

For the

**Proposal to establish a new Church of England
Voluntary Controlled School on the site of
Fulstow Community Primary School.**

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 (1) AND 10 OF THE EDUCATION
AND INSPECTIONS ACT 2006, AS AMENDED BY THE EDUCATION ACT 2011

14 December 2022

Contact details

This proposal has been published by Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ regarding the proposal for Fulstow Community Primary School to become a church school.

In order for a new church school to be established we firstly have to close the existing school. This is proposed to take place on 31 August 2023 with the new school opening at the same premises on 1 September 2023.

Part 1 – closing the existing school

Implementation

It is proposed that Fulstow Community Primary School will close on 31 August 2023.

Reason for closure

In order for Lincolnshire County Council and the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education to open a new voluntary controlled Church of England school they must first close the existing school.

Pupil numbers and admissions

The existing school has a Pupil Admission Number (PAN) of 10 in Year R and has capacity for 70 pupils. As of October 2022 there were 39 pupils on roll.

Displaced pupils

No pupils will be displaced as all pupils currently on roll at Fulstow Community Primary School will automatically be on roll at the new school. Parents will have the right to apply for another school if they wish, although there will be no guarantee that a place at the school of their choice will be available.

Impact on the community

As a new school will open the day after the existing school closes, on the same premises, there should be no impact on the community.

Rural primary schools

No rural primary school provision will be lost in the Fulstow area as the new school will be based at the same address.

Maintained nursery schools

There is no nursery provision at the school.

Sixth form provision

There is no sixth form provision at the school.

Special educational needs provision

Consideration of pupils with SEND will continue to take place at the new school and the LA will continue to look to make improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the education provision for children with SEND.

Travel

As the new school will be established on the existing school site, travel arrangements will not be affected.

Part 2 – opening a new school

Implementation

It is proposed that the new school will open on 1 September 2023 at the existing school site.

The proposal to open a new voluntary controlled Church of England school will be implemented by Lincolnshire County Council and the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education (LDBE) each carrying out their respective statutory responsibilities.

Objections and Comments

Any person or organisation may object to or make comments on the proposal by completing and submitting a short online survey at www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/fulstow or in writing to the School Organisation Planning Team, Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, 51 Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ or by emailing schoolorganisation@lincolnshire.gov.uk All responses must be received by the deadline of 11 January 2023.

Reason for the new school

Fulstow Community Primary School federated with North Cotes Church of England Primary School in 2018 and since then the two schools have established good relations for the benefit of all pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.

Historically, Fulstow was established as a church school, and stands on church owned land. To work more closely with LDBE, and the church family of schools, the governing body and LDBE investigated the school becoming a church school, once again.

As a result of becoming a church school, it would enable the further reinforcement of these relations as they strengthen their shared vision for all, continue to build upon the already strong bond between the two schools and ultimately help to secure the longer-term future of both.

The school's academic provision is already good but could further improve as a result of converting to church status. The school would not only keep the support and challenge from the Local Authority but in addition would receive this from the Diocesan Board of Education too. This would include guidance and direction through being able to draw upon knowledge and learn from the good practices established in other church

schools across the region. All of these will empower the school to build upon their provision and help to raise standards even further.

Category

The new school will be a voluntary controlled Church of England school opened under Section 10 of the Educations and Inspections Act 2006.

Ethos and religious character

As a Church of England School, it would have a religious character, but it would not be a faith school. The school would continue to be fully inclusive and serve all children regardless of faith, academic ability, race, or gender.

Pupil numbers and admissions

The new school will accommodate the same number of pupils as the old school which is 70 pupils of statutory school age from Year R to Year 6. It will retain a Pupil Admission Number (PAN) of 10 in Year R.

Admission arrangements

All pupils currently on roll at Fulstow Community Primary School will automatically be on roll at the new school. Parents will have the right to apply for another school if they wish, although there will be no guarantee that a place at the school of their choice will be available.

Parents who express a preference for Fulstow Community Primary School for admission for a reception class for September 2023 should note that if the proposal is agreed, a place allocated at that school would become a place allocated at the newly established school.

The 2023/2024 admissions arrangements adopted for the new school will be those determined by Lincolnshire County Council for Fulstow Community Primary school for 2023/2024). An extract of the oversubscription criteria taken from the admissions policy is shown below. The only change made to the admissions policy will be to reflect the change in the school name. Any future changes to the existing criteria would be subject to the requirements of the DfE's Admissions Code and therefore would be consulted upon.

In accordance with relevant legislation, the allocation of places for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) where the school is named on the plan will take place first. Remaining places will be allocated in accordance with this policy and are shown below:

1. Looked after children and previously looked after children including those children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
2. Children with a brother or sister attending the school at the time of application, or who will be attending the school at the expected time of admission
3. Children for whom this school is the nearest school to their home address.

4. Distance of the home address to the school. Places will be allocated to those living nearest the school first.

The complete admissions' policy can be accessed at [Fulstow Primary School – Lincolnshire County Council](#) or requested from the School Organisation Planning Team, Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, 51 Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ or by emailing schoolorganisation@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Early years provision

There will be no early years provision at the school.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Provision

The new school is not likely to have any impact on SEND provision. Consideration of pupils with SEND will take place and the LA will continue to look to make improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the education provision for children with SEND.

Curriculum

The curriculum currently being taught will be unaffected by this proposal.

Relevant experience of proposers

Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education (LDBE) is the religious authority for 141 Church of England schools and academies in the diocese of Lincoln. The schools include infant, junior, primary and secondary schools in very different contexts – urban, rural and coastal serving communities with high and low deprivation. Most church schools are small and rural with less than 100 pupils on roll.

In September 2023, it is proposed that the LDBE will be the religious authority for the school in Fulstow.

The LDBE will work collaboratively with the Local Authority to support the school to provide an inclusive high-quality education for pupils of all faiths and none.

The school will become a voluntary controlled church school and therefore continue to be maintained by the Local Authority (LA). The LA will continue to be the employer and the school will continue to follow all LA policies as required.

The LDBE's role will be to support school leaders to develop a distinctive and effective church school. The LDBE will help the school develop a Christian vision which will enable all adults and pupils to flourish academically, physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

The LDBE has a successful record of supporting Church of England schools over the centuries. The current LDBE team consists of educational professionals with expertise in school leadership, governance, school improvement, Religious Education, Collective Worship, Spiritual Development, finance and administration.

The LDBE works very closely with the LA and other key partners such as the Teaching Schools to improve the quality of provision in schools. The vast majority of church schools are judged as 'good' or better by Ofsted. The LDBE has also supported a high proportion (98%) of church schools to achieve an 'excellent' or 'good' grade in the church school inspection.

Effects on standards and contributions to school improvement

The new school will continue to be led and managed by an experienced school leader, responsible for appointing skilled staff who share a strong commitment to continually improving pedagogical strategies around teaching and learning. The incumbent Senior Leadership Team already has high expectations of staff and pupils, and this will continue in the new school. The new school will maintain a robust approach to measuring pupil performance. The expectation is that all pupils will make at least expected progress from EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) to the end of KS 2 (Key Stage 2). Equality of opportunity for all pupils will be central to the curriculum offered at the new school. A continuous process of assessment will be used including: the use of formal and informal tests and self-assessment / moderation, drawing upon a range of evidence including observations, speaking, and listening and written learning. The new school will work in close partnership with local schools and established local professional networks; it will also work as part of the Lincolnshire diocesan family of schools where it will both contribute to and receive support around school improvement. Already established local networks will provide support for benchmarking and moderation, including sources out of the County's geographical area. Expertise from staff will be identified and used as professional support to other local schools as appropriate. Staff have the opportunity for joint working in collaboration with the new school's partner school, North Cotes C of E Primary. This provides additional capacity into the school improvement model. Staff have opportunity for joint training, moderation, and subject leadership which in turn will drive forwards educational standards and school improvement across the local pupil community. Governance will ensure that expectations and standards are high, school leaders will be held to account.

Location and costs

The new school will be established on the existing school site at Churchthorpe, Fulstow, Louth LN11 0XL. No provision is being made by Lincolnshire County Council or the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education for capital costs to implement the proposal because there will be sufficient space in the new school to accommodate the pupils of the predecessor school.

Travel

As the new school will be on the site of the existing school, pupils will be travelling the same distance as before.

Federation

Fulstow Community Primary School federated with North Cotes Church of England Primary School in 2018. This arrangement will continue.

Consultation

The consultation originally began on 26 September 2022 with a letter, incorporating relevant information and reasons for the proposal sent to a wide range of interested parties, as required by guidelines issued by the DfE. Parents of the school were also informed of the consultation.

All parents/carers and other interested parties were given the opportunity to respond as part of the consultation process by 31 October 2022. A copy of the information from the letter commencing consultation and a simple online survey were also published on the County Council website under the website 'Let's Talk Lincolnshire www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/fulstow

All written responses received during consultation have been provided to the Executive Councillor for consideration in the decision-making process. To briefly summarise there were 6 valid responses in total with 3 against the proposal, 3 for the proposal and 0 neither for nor against.

Under current legislation the LA is the decision maker for the proposal and is co-ordinating the statutory process before making a final decision in March 2023. The LA, as decision maker, must be able to show that all relevant issues raised are taken into consideration in the decision-making process.

What will happen now?

Any person or organisation may object to or make comments on this proposal by completing and submitting a short online survey at www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/fulstow or in writing to the School Organisation Planning Team, Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, 51 Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ or by emailing schoolorganisation@lincolnshire.gov.uk. A consultation response form is available on request from the School Organisation Team or from Fulstow Community Primary School. Paper response forms should be returned by the deadline to either the school office or directly to the School Organisation Team using the contact details provided.

At the close of the 4-week representation period (statutory formal consultation) on 11 January 2023 responses will be collated and analysed and a further report will be presented to the Executive Councillor for a final decision in March 2023. The representation period is the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposal and ensure that they will be taken into account by the decision maker.

Copies of documents related to this proposal will be published online at www.letstalk.lincolnshire.gov.uk/fulstow.

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