

# A New Primary School for Ventnor You Need to Know the Facts!

Proposals for a new 420 place, 4-11 primary school for Ventnor to be built on the existing 520 place Middle School site have been announced. This will replace Ventnor's three primary schools, which have a capacity of between 90 and 150 each. Crucially the new school will be a voluntary aided ecumenical school, meaning that it will be, effectively, controlled and run by both the Church of England and Roman Catholic Churches. Currently, only St Wilfred's is voluntary aided. The local Governing Bodies are in consultation regarding these proposals. However, this is not a decision for them alone. They and the Church say that they will welcome a response from you the parents and the local community. They have a statutory duty to give all the facts to allow intelligent and informed responses. The following table gives information on voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools. **Respond before the consultation period ends at 5pm on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008:**

| FAQ:   | Voluntary Controlled  | Voluntary Aided – As Proposed   |
|--|---|---|
| What are our schools now?  | St Boniface & St Margarets are currently both voluntary controlled  | St Wilfred's is currently voluntary aided   |
| How are such schools funded for running costs?   | The Isle of Wight Council (from Government funding) provides 100% funds repairs and capital projects*<br>Donations are not required.  | The cost of repairs and capital projects is raised (through voluntary donations usually from parents) by the governing body with a 90% grant from the DCSF (Government)*  |
| How would a new school building be funded?   | 100% funded by the Council  | 90% funded by the Council<br>10% funded by the Churches   |
| Who runs the new school?   | The Isle of Wight Council   | The Churches, jointly   |
| Who sets the admissions criteria?  | The Isle of Wight Council according to statutory rules but this is on a first come first served basis. There is no right to a place even now.   | The governing body. If there is space after fulfilling local needs then they may offer places to those from other area's and can be selective in terms of religious criteria. They should not select according to ability to pay. |
| Who appoints the Governors and who has the majority?                                       | The Church appoints governors, but there is no Church majority on the governing body*   | A majority of the governors are appointed by the Church.  |
| How are places determined?   | Families in the priority area (formerly the catchment area) get priority over those from outside who will get places if there is space.   | Families in the priority area (formerly the catchment area) get priority over those from outside but governors may grant places to others too if they meet certain criteria.  |
| Who selects and employs the staff?   | The teachers and other staff are employed by the Isle of Wight Council  | the teachers and other staff are appointed and employed by the governing body,  |
| Who sets the religious education curriculum?   | religious education follows the normal local authority syllabus   | For the new school religious education and worship will be set jointly by the local bishops   |
| Other Questions and Answers:   |   |   |
| How big could the new school be?   | The current proposal is for a 420 place 4-11 primary school. The school can take children from outside the area and could therefore be expanded.  |   |
| What evidence is there that this will raise standards?                                     | There is no evidence that this will raise standards. The Diocese and the Council have not provided any and you need to ask why?   |   |
| Are big schools like this better than small ones?  | There is no evidence to show that big schools are better. Most of the evidence shows that small schools produce better results than large ones  |   |
| What evidence is there regarding the long term success or otherwise of ecumenical schools? | There has been no information on this. We need to know about any success stories and whether there are any failures.  |   |
| What are costs of new uniforms?  | There has been no information on this.  |   |
| Why not a Voluntary Controlled school?   | There has been no information on this   |   |
| Are there alternative proposals?   | There has been no alternative proposal such as an amalgamated CE school.  |   |
| What about transport?  | There has been no information on this, including transport to any alternative or information on walking to the new school   |   |
| What if I don't want my child to attend the new school? What choice do I have?             | Alan Wells Cabinet Member for Education says that parents can send their children to Wroxall (scheduled to close when the new Godshill Primary school is built) or Niton Primary (is there Room?) |   |

\*source Church of England

**To respond, write to Alex Moffat, Schools Reorganisation Project Manager, County Hall, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1UD and Urszula Topp, Diocese of Portsmouth, Park Place Pastoral Centre, Winchester Road, Wickham, Hampshire, PO17 5HA.** You should get a letter back acknowledging your response. If you wish, you can send a copy of your response to SNT at the address below or email: [everychildmatters@btconnect.com](mailto:everychildmatters@btconnect.com). Visit our website [www.yourschoolneedsyou.com](http://www.yourschoolneedsyou.com) Issued by Standards-Not-Tiers, 33 Dudley Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, PO38 1EH. This does not necessarily represent the views of The Chronicle.