

**Town Clerk | Swaffham Town Council**

---

**From:** Jane Delph <ssc@rcdea.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 07 January 2019 11:12  
**To:** Town Clerk | Swaffham Town Council  
**Subject:** Proposed New Catholic Primary School, in Swaffham: Consultation Document  
**Attachments:** SacredHeartConsultationLeafletFinal2.pdf  
  
**Importance:** High

Dear Mr Bishop,

I would appreciate it if you could disseminate this correspondence to Members of the Town Council.

The Catholic Diocese of East Anglia is consulting on the possibility of opening a voluntary-aided Catholic primary school in Swaffham from September 2019, using the site and buildings of the current independent Sacred Heart School. The attached consultation document provides further details about the proposal including dates of drop-in sessions at Sacred Heart School. However, if it would be helpful for town councillors, the Diocese would be more than happy to meet with all or some councillors, to explain the proposals further. Do let me know if this would be helpful.

There is a response form at the back of the consultation document, which we would urge all councillors to complete. This will enable us to see if there is sufficient support from the Town Council, for a new Catholic school in Swaffham and to decide whether to make a formal proposal to open the school to Norfolk County Council. We need these responses by **Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019**.

Further details about this proposal, including an online response form and answers to frequently asked questions, can be found at [www.rcdea.org.uk/sacredheartva](http://www.rcdea.org.uk/sacredheartva).

Yours sincerely,

*H. Bates*

Helen Bates  
Assistant Director (Schools' Service)  
Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia  
Tel: 01508-495509  
Mob: 07712-863050  
Email: [helen.bates@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:helen.bates@rcdea.org.uk)

The White House  
21 Upgate  
Poringland  
Norwich  
NR14 7SH

*Jane Delph*  
Secretary Diocesan Schools' Service  
The White House  
21 Upgate, Poringland  
Norwich  
Norfolk NR14 7SH  
(01508) 495509  
Website: [www.rcdea.org.uk](http://www.rcdea.org.uk)



# Proposed new Catholic Primary School in Swaffham

**We want to hear your views**



## Proposed new Catholic Primary School in Swaffham

■ The Catholic Diocese of East Anglia covers the counties of Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. It supports 27 schools, of which seven are in Norfolk. We want to increase the number of Catholic schools across the Diocese in areas where the general pupil population is growing. This will make more places available for parents who want a Catholic primary education for their children.

We are asking for your views on the possibility of a new non-fee paying Catholic primary school in Swaffham, Norfolk, to open on 1st September 2019, using the site and buildings of the Sacred Heart Convent School. Sacred Heart Convent School is due to close at the end of the summer term 2019.

Before we can make a formal proposal, we need as many views as possible to make sure we have a strong case for opening the school.

The final decision on whether the school can open will be made by Norfolk County Council.

This document sets out the basic elements of our proposal and why we think the school will provide an excellent education for all its learners, whether Catholic or not. This information can also be found on the Diocese's website at [www.rcdea.org.uk/sacredheartva](http://www.rcdea.org.uk/sacredheartva)

We would very much like to hear your comments on this proposal and there are a number of ways of doing this, set out at the back of this document and at [www.rcdea.org.uk/sacredheartva](http://www.rcdea.org.uk/sacredheartva)



You can also join us at drop-in sessions which are being held at Sacred Heart Convent School on:

- Thursday 17th January 2019, 3.30pm – 5pm
- Wednesday 6th February 2019, 6.30pm – 8pm

Sacred Heart Convent School is also holding an Open Day on Saturday 9th February 2019 between 10am and 12 noon when you can look around the school to see the current facilities which would be available to the new school.

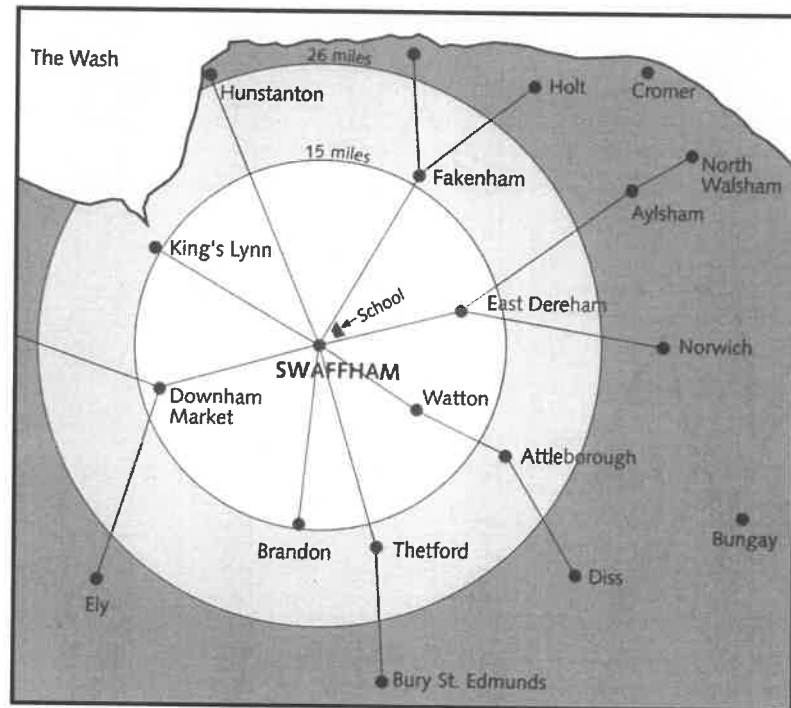
**We look forward to hearing your views, which must be received by Friday 15th February 2019.**

## A new Catholic primary school for mid-Norfolk

■ As Sacred Heart Convent School is due to close, the nearest Catholic primary schools to Swaffham are in King's Lynn and Costessey, on the western outskirts of Norwich. Both these schools have been successfully expanded in recent years. We think that a new Catholic primary school for mid-Norfolk, mid-way between these two existing schools, would be ideal to provide new opportunities for children and their families.

Catholic primary schools tend to serve a wide area and a school in Swaffham could serve the wide rural and market town area shown in the central part of the map:

We think there is evidence to show that continued housing growth in towns such as Watton, Dereham and Swaffham itself justifies the increase in the number of primary school places that our proposal will provide.



Governors of Swaffham Church of England VC Infant School, Norfolk County Council and the Diocese of Norwich (Church of England) are proposing the reorganisation of schools in Swaffham to provide a further 30 places in each primary school year (Reception Year to Year 6). But we think that over time each primary year group in Swaffham will need to increase from the current two classes (60 places) to four classes (120 places).

The new Catholic primary school in Swaffham would have 30 places in each year group. That is 210 places overall for primary age pupils. It would also have a nursery class that builds on the current Little Pedlars Nursery. There are currently around 90 primary-aged pupils in Sacred Heart Convent School, so when the new school is full it would have 120 more pupils than currently. The existing senior school at Sacred Heart Convent School is due to close at the end of the summer term 2019.

The Sisters of Sacred Heart Convent, who own the existing school site and run the existing fee-paying school, have agreed to make the school site available to the new school free of charge. The new school would be state-funded.

The new school would be locally-managed by a Governing Body appointed by the Diocese. The Governing Body would have experience of strategic planning,

a strong vision for Catholic education for children of all faiths and none, and a clear focus on school improvement.

The new school would be voluntary aided, which means that the Governing Body would be the employer of staff and would also decide on admissions to the school. Catholic children would get priority in admissions and then any places still available would be open to non-Catholic children. For September 2019, highest priority for admission to the new school would be given to all those pupils already on the roll of the current Sacred Heart Convent School on 31st December 2018, who continue to be at the school at the time a decision is made by Norfolk County Council on opening the new school.

## **A Catholic school offering the best to every pupil**

■ The new school would build on the best of the long tradition of excellent education at Sacred Heart Convent School, focussing on the needs of the individual child and on service to the community. The new school would also offer the full range of opportunities and challenge in accordance with the National Curriculum and Ofsted requirements. The first-class facilities already at the school would be available to support these opportunities.

It will be a clear ambition that the new school achieves a Good or Outstanding OFSTED rating at its first inspection. Nationally, and in Norfolk, Catholic primary schools perform well.

The school will be supported by the extensive and proven experience of current senior leaders in Catholic schools. The strengths of the new school will be used in support of other schools. We hope that the new school's leadership team will be able to draw support from leaders in other local schools.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development will be at the heart of the school's work, ensuring that pupils are well prepared for their future lives in modern Britain.

The school will meet the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities through a range of strategies which put the needs of the child first. There will be a clear line of communication between parents/carers and staff that enables issues about a child's development to be identified promptly and actions to meet these needs put in place.



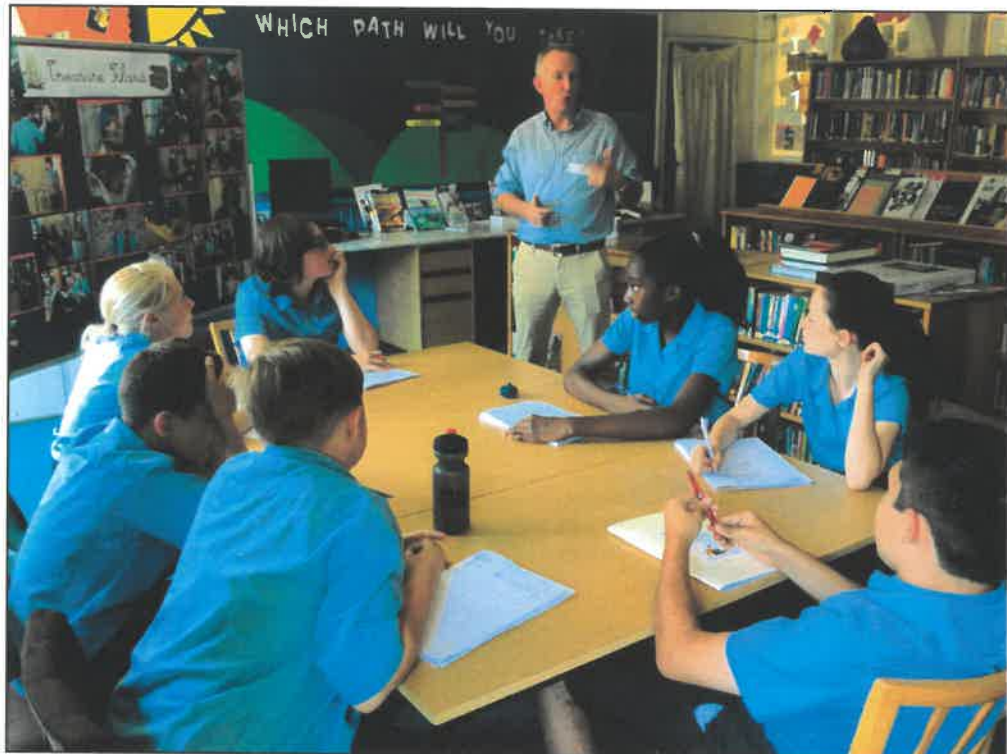
There will be strong liaison between nursery leaders and school staff and engagement with local high schools to ensure smooth transition to secondary education.

Safeguarding of children will be an absolute priority, with local policies and strategies backed up with wider support where required.

## **A Catholic school rooted in its local community**

■ Sacred Heart Convent School was established in 1914 and has been a strong physical and spiritual presence in Swaffham ever since. Generations of local families have benefited from its education, its pastoral support and its facilities. Our proposal will maintain this tradition of community benefit, widening access to families for whom previously fees may have been a barrier.

The school's facilities, which include a full-sized sports hall, a lecture theatre, an outdoor swimming pool and a multi-use games area, have often been used by the local community. This will continue in the new school, with access widened even further than it is now, wherever possible.



The new school will foster a strong sense of community through educational project work, fund-raising for good causes and links with other local schools. Through this, as well as through the strong Catholic commitment to ethnic, racial and cultural diversity, the school will seek to be an active player in fostering good community cohesion locally.

We would hope that members of the local Catholic parish, together with the wider local community, will play an active role in supporting the new school, including becoming school governors.

## **A school in the Catholic tradition – joining our school community**

■ Our vision for all our schools is that they are centres of educational excellence rooted in Catholic values. The Catholic ethos will permeate all areas of the curriculum in the new school and underpin the school's work and objectives.

The Catholic ethos will be articulated clearly in the admissions criteria for the school. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria in the Governors' published admissions policy. First priority will be given to all those children currently on the roll of Sacred Heart Convent School on 31st December 2018 and who continue to be at the school at the time a decision is made by Norfolk County Council on opening the new school.

We think the new school will keep travel distances to Catholic schools as low as possible. Norfolk County Council's home to school transport policy will apply for any pupil attending the new school. Pupils will be entitled to free school transport where the school is more than two miles away (three miles for over eight-year-olds) and the new school is the nearest state primary school.

## What Happens Next

■ We will be holding drop-in events at Sacred Heart Convent School during this consultation period where you can come and find out more about these proposals. The dates are:

- Thursday 17th January 2019, 3.30pm – 5pm
- Wednesday 6th February 2019, 6.30pm – 8pm

To make comments outside these events you can use one of the following:

- complete the attached form and hand it to the office at Sacred Heart Convent School
- email it to: [sacredheartva@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:sacredheartva@rcdea.org.uk)
- post it to: Diocesan Schools' Office, 21 Uppgate, Poringland, Norwich, NR14 7SH
- or complete our online survey at [www.rcdea.org.uk/sacredheartva](http://www.rcdea.org.uk/sacredheartva)

***We need all responses by Friday 15th February, 2019***

### Here is our timetable - all dates 2019:

- Consultation opens Monday 7th January
- Consultation closes Friday 15th February
- Decision on whether to proceed to publish a formal notice by Friday 1st March
- Publication of formal statutory notice: Monday March 11th
- Closure of notice period: Friday 5th April
- The decision on the proposal is expected by the end of April.
- Opening of new school, if approved: 1st September 2019

# New Catholic Primary School in Swaffham - Response Form

---

Please let us know what you think of our proposal

1. How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to open a new Catholic Primary School using the site and buildings of the Sacred Heart Convent School in Swaffham?

Please tick one box

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know

2. Why do you say this? Please write in the box below.

3. Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to make to help us with this decision and our proposal? Please write in the box below.

PTO...



## Response Form continued

We will use the information below to understand how different groups of people feel about our proposal. Please tell us who you are (tick all that apply)?

- Pupil parent/guardian of child(ren) at Sacred Heart Convent School
- Member of staff at Sacred Heart Convent School
- Other member of Sacred Heart community (eg governor)
- Resident of Swaffham
- Resident of the wider area, shown on map on page three
- Member of local business community
- Town, District or County Councillor
- Other - please state .....

4. Would you like to be kept up-to-date with our proposal?

- Yes     No

If yes, please provide an email or postal address here:

.....  
.....

If you would like to send us an expression of interest in a place at the new school, you can obtain a form from:

■ email: [sacredheartva@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:sacredheartva@rcdea.org.uk)

■ web: [www.rcdea.org.uk/sacredheartva](http://www.rcdea.org.uk/sacredheartva)

■ post: Diocesan Schools' Office, 21 Upgate, Poringland, Norwich, NR14 7SH.

---

Data Protection: The information collected on this form will be subject to the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Personal information will be used to inform respondents of progress with the proposal and to invite parents to formally apply for school places if the proposal is accepted. All information given will be held in strictest confidence and maintained in accordance with data protection legislation.