

Newcastle Diocesan Education Board Response to Coquet Partnership Consultation

1. The Newcastle Diocesan Education Board (NDEB) as always wishes to ensure the best local solutions are carefully looked at for the education of an entire local community, not just the church schools within a community. We wish to encourage church schools and non-church schools working effectively and well together for the benefit of all children within that locality. Our aim is for our church schools to educate the community as a whole including those of all faiths and none, and we are committed to working with our partners in community schools. In the current consultation two of the schools in the partnership are Church schools, Grange View Church of England First School and NCEA Warkworth Church of England Primary (which is an academy as part of NCEAT and is already a primary school).
2. We understand that this consultation has arisen from discussions across the partnership leading to the agreed vision for the Coquet partnership as set out on page 8 of the consultation documentation. We also note that the majority of the schools supported consultation on a 2-tier option for the partnership.
3. In light of the above context, the NDEB have considered the wider information presented in the consultation documents and, following discussion with our schools within the partnership we are supportive of Model B in the consultation documents and agree with the proposal to a move to a fully primary/secondary structure across the partnership. Should this proposal be accepted by Council's Cabinet following the consultation process we would support the proposal set out in the Model B implementation timeline and would anticipate appropriate investment and works to be carried out to the affected school buildings, including work to enable Grange View Church of England First School to transition effectively to a primary school.
4. We also note the information about the number of children across the partnership travelling lengthy distances to access specialist SEN provision outside of their local communities. In light of the growing numbers of children in need of specialist SEN provision in the local area the NDEB is also supportive of the proposal that a much-needed local specialist provision be developed and managed within the partnership and located within the current JCSC building.
5. The NDEB hopes that the outcome of the current consultation will provide a clear direction for the future of the schools going forwards, ensuring the best educational interests of all of the children across the Coquet partnership can be met.

Paul Rickeard
Secretary to the Board
23rd June 2022