

Hopes closing school will have future community use

Suffolk Free Press Friday 30 May 2014

The future of a village primary school is to be determined after pupil numbers dwindled following a poor Ofsted report.

The last student at Monks Eleigh Primary School left along with the remaining teachers shortly after Easter.

Although there has been no official notice from Suffolk County Council that the school is to close, equipment has been catalogued for disposal. A consultation into the possible closure of the school in Churchfield ends on Saturday.

Jenny Maynard, a member of SaveMe – a group made up of former governors, teachers and residents attempting to save the school – said it was clear hopes of continuing the school had ended.

“The last pupil got a place at another school a week after Easter and parents were told to move their children out,” she said.

“The consultation document came out after the school was practically closed and people are angry about what has happened.”

Problems began when the school was judged inadequate by education inspectors Ofsted in July. This resulted in the number of children falling from 37 to 16, although many parents protested that teaching standards were good.

Despite bringing in interim headteacher Karen Harman, Suffolk County Council was criticised for a lack of support and before the Easter break only a handful of pupils remained.

Mrs Maynard said the aim now was to ensure some kind of educational facility continued in the village.

“The next step is the building has to be considered for another educational use before it could be sold,” she said.

“We would like it to be a pre-school or after school club, but the council has no money for feasibility studies so it will be up to the community.

“We strongly feel it should be kept and want the council’s help.”