



Pupils centre stage at new school opening

BISHOP Jonathan helped to open a brand new Isle of Wight primary school – as the pupils took centre stage.

The new £4.5m Freshwater and Yarmouth C of E Primary School building was formally opened with an act of collective worship led by pupils. They sang lively worship songs, recited poetry, and showcased a video that revealed their favourite bits of the new building.

Dignitaries – including the Lord Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight Susie Sheldon – joined politicians, community leaders and parents in the school hall for the celebration, which included an explanation of the school’s new logo, values, slogan and name.

The Rev Leisa Potter, team vicar of Freshwater, Yarmouth and Totland, led the school community in prayers before a short talk from the bishop.

The new one-form entry school was created when All Saints C of E Primary in Freshwater closed. Its pupils joined Yarmouth C of E Primary, which has now moved into this new building on the former All Saints site. It is part of a federation

which includes Shalfleet C of E Primary.

The new building was designed by Hampshire County Council architects and built by Morgan Sindall Construction with support from government funding. The project took 54 weeks, and was finished four weeks early. It includes new hard and soft play areas, a library, music room, a technology suite and a special needs resource base.

Among the items to ensure continuity are a beautiful stained glass window and a safe used by Lord Tennyson, from All Saints Primary. Some of the stone from the original Victorian building has been incorporated into the new frontage. And the display boards showing the winners of the annual Effie Pitman award have been transferred from the former Yarmouth building.

“I want to say thank you to the staff,” said headteacher Lizzie Grainger. “Your care for these children astounds me every day, and you performed miracles to have this school ready.

“We did consult staff and children about the new name for our school,

and in the end we decided it was best to keep it simple – Freshwater and Yarmouth Primary, which reflects where we are and where we have come from.”

Among those performing during the collective worship were pupils from the West Wight Dementia-Friendly Choir. Other year groups read out poems, held up artwork and led their visitors in songs. Year 6 pupils created a comedy video to show off the best bits about the new building.

Andrew Parker, principal architect for Hampshire County Council, who designed the building, said: “We wanted to create spaces where pupils could learn that were well-ventilated, allowed free flow, and were lit well. Each of the classrooms also has an outside space.”

The former Victorian building that housed All Saints’ C of E Primary in Freshwater needed to be demolished as it was suffering from subsidence and structural problems. The new school is purpose-built and more appropriate for modern education needs.

See www.portsmouth.anglican.org/freshwaterschool for more photos.