

Public Consultation on the Proposal to close St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bradford.

3rd October 2008

1. All Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to ensure that schools in their area are sufficient in number, character and resources to provide all pupils with access to a high standard of education. Bradford Metropolitan District Council continually reviews primary age provision to ensure that all primary phase schools are able to provide a high quality education in stimulating learning environments.

2. The Diocese of Leeds has a similar responsibility in ensuring the mission of the Church in education is fulfilled. As increasing numbers of non-Catholic children enter Catholic schools, planning for the future requires an increasing responsibility in relation to local authority area planning.

Why is there a need to reorganise the current federated schools arrangement?

3. When the schools of St Mary's and St Peter's were federated in 2006 it was anticipated that they would operate on their two respective sites with collaboration between the two staffs under one executive headteacher and one governing body. When it became clear to the federated governing body that the premises at St Mary's in Jermyn Street were in such a poor state that the HMI, visiting as part of the 'Special Measures' monitoring, expressed concern about the safety of the premises, it was decided to take urgent action.

4. With some rearrangements it was possible to accommodate all the St Mary's children on the St Peter's site in Upper Nidd Street, so in Sept 2006 pupils and staff from St Mary's moved to St Peter's site. Since that date the two schools have operated in the one building. This collaboration has been most successful. St Mary's school has improved to the extent that it has come out of special measures and has been now been favourably judged by HMI.

5. The collaboration and cooperation between the two schools is now so successful that they appear to operate as one school. While this is to be celebrated they are still being funded as two separate schools receiving two distinct budgets. Education Bradford are now of the view that the current arrangement is no longer in the spirit of what was intended by Federation and that the two schools should become one legal institution.

6. If the two schools were to *amalgamate* it would require the closure of the two schools and the opening of a new school. This would have significant consequences for the staff and governance of the schools. It has therefore been decided to propose the closure of St Mary's Catholic Primary School. If this takes place all pupils will transfer seamlessly to St Peters School. For Parents and children this will mean no noticeable change apart from the school name.

7. In order to 'keep alive' the link with the past history of the two schools the governors with the approval of the Diocese of Leeds will propose a name change which reflects the history of the two schools

8. All staff currently employed by the two schools will become part of the staff of the current St Peter's School with the same remuneration and conditions of service.

The Diocese of Leeds Response

9. Our intention is to take a realistic approach for the future, recognising the significance of a parish and its primary school but accepting our role in future provision. We support the actions of the governing body in seeking to bring together two schools which are operating in most respects as a single school.

10. The following table indicates the numbers of Catholic and non-Catholic children in two primary schools (**September 2008**) serving parishes where there is a decreasing Catholic population.

		Rec	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4	Yr5	Yr 6		Total Cath	Total N Cath
St Mary's	C	1	1	5	0	2	0	1		10	
	NC	4	8	9	6	5	5	2			39
St Peter's	C	9	11	9	6	7	11	11		64	
	NC	21	19	20	17	8	14	5			104

11. St Mary's children can be accommodated in St Peter's school which can also accommodate the future predicted baptised Catholics for that part of the new parish. It is expected that the planned admission for the school will be 30.

What evidence is there that re-organisation is necessary?

12. Since 2004, the Diocesan Council for Education has been constructing a number of reviews of Catholic school provision across the diocese of Leeds. In undertaking this activity, the Diocesan Trustee, and the Diocesan Council for Education recognise that school re-organisation should only be undertaken where there is very strong evidence that the education opportunities for children would be improved by re-organisation and that provision would be sustainable in the long-term. This provision must ensure the retention of a strong Catholic identity within the school system. In making recommendations to the Directors of the Trustee, members of the DCE and diocesan education officers have carefully balanced the review findings in relation to the following:

- The Mission of the Catholic school
- Reducing surplus places in a way beneficial to retaining our Catholic identity
- The role in evangelisation
- The relationship of a Catholic primary school to the parishes it serves

13. The intake of Catholics was 10 places across the two schools in September 2008. Baptismal figures do not predict an increase in this number. Surplus Catholic places at St Mary's and St Peter's amount to 182.

What other options have been considered?

14. The Governors of the federated schools of St Mary's and St Peter's and the Diocese of Leeds considered the one option of no change in relation to planning the future of its schools. Federation of the schools has certainly proved successful and would have been the preferred option had there not been financial consequences for Education Bradford and the Local Authority.

15. The option of closing both schools and opening a new school was considered but this would cause unnecessary concerns to staff and parents.

16. The Governors and the Diocese will continue to cooperate with the Local Authority and Education Bradford in the organisation and maintenance of the schools. While the schools have benefitted from the current funding levels it is recognised that this arrangement was formulated on the basis of the two schools being operated on separate sites. Some changes have been made to reflect the schools operating on the one site.

What happens if the proposal proceeds?

17. St Peter's is able to offer places to the pupils presently on the roll of St Mary's.

How will the transition arrangements be managed?

18. The transition will require no action on the part of pupils, parents and staff. The foundation governors of the two federated schools will become governors of St Peter's School. It is expected that staff, parent and Local Authority governors will continue on the governing body of St Peter's school until their terms of office expire

What about staff?

19. All staff to continue to be employed on the site by the governing body of St Peter's. Their remuneration and conditions of employment will remain unchanged.

When is the proposed date for closure?

20. The proposed date for closure is **31st March 2008**. This recognises the need for time to complete the statutory process required when schools are closed.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

What happens next?

21. The governors of St Mary's and St Peter's Federated Catholic Primary School, are consulting parents, staff and the community between 6th October 2008 and 17th November 2008. At the end of this period, the Governing Body will receive a report summarising the views expressed during the consultation (November 2008). The governors will be asked to consider whether, in the light of these views, they still wish to proceed with these, or amended proposals. If the Governing Body does wish to proceed

then they must publish a statutory notice setting out their proposal formally. At the end of the statutory notice period, a further report will be submitted to the Governing Body summarising the representations received (January 2009) and all documentation is submitted to the Local Authority, who must decide whether or not to finally approve the proposal.

22. If no objections are received then the proposal does not proceed to the Local Authority and the Governing Body will make a final decision.

When would these proposals take effect?

23. Set out below is the timetable of key dates currently envisaged, although this may be subject to change:

What are your views?

October 08	The Governing Body of St Mary's and St Peter's Federated Catholic Primary School publish proposal
6 th October 08 – 17 November 08	Public consultation (6 weeks)
November 08	Governing Body receives report and decides whether to publish a statutory notice
24 th November 08 - 17 th January 09 (school holidays no included)	Publish statutory notice giving 6 weeks for representations to be made
19 th January 09	Statutory notice expires
26 th January 09	Submit documentation to Bradford Local Authority (LA) - or Governing Body to make final decision if no representations
28 th February 09	Deadline for LA decision
March 31 st 09	Implementation

24. Whether you agree or disagree with the proposals, or aspects of them; whether you have concerns that you feel have not been addressed; or there are factors that you think the Governing Body have not taken into account, please let us know. We would like to hear your views.

You are invited to a public meeting at 6.00pm on Wed 15th Oct 2008 at St Peter's Catholic Primary School, where your views will be noted. You may also wish to put your views in writing – either by letter or by completing the attached pro forma – to arrive no later than 17 November 2008.

Send all correspondence to: The Chair of Governors
 St Mary's & St Peter's Federated Catholic PS
 Upper Nidd Street
 Leeds Road
 Bradford
 BD3 9ND

You can also reply by email to: stmarystpeterschair@live.co.uk

Timetable for Consultation Meetings

Date	
October 08	Governors Meeting with staff of St Mary's & St Peter's Federated Catholic Primary Schools at St Peter's Catholic Primary School at 3.15pm
15/10/2008	Public meeting at St Peter's Catholic Primary School at 6-00pm

Appendix 1

Table 1: Projections for St Peter’s Catholic Primary School

St Peter’s Catholic Primary											
	REC	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	YR 6	TOTAL	AD LT	CAPACITY	SURPLUS
2009\10	30	35	40	45	30	22	30	232	30	210	
2010\11	30	30	35	40	45	30	22	232	30	210	
2011\12	30	30	30	35	40	45	30	240	30	210	
2012\13	30	30	30	30	35	40	45	240	30	210	
2013\14	30	30	30	30	30	35	40	225	30	210	
2014\15	30	30	30	30	30	30	35	215	30	210	
2015\16	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	30	210	
2016\17	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	30	210	
2017\18	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	30	2100	
2018\19	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210	30	210	

Pro-forma Consultation Response

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Please read the consultation documentation and tell us what your views are on the proposal to close St Mary's Catholic Primary School. You can use this form if you want or alternatively you can put your views in a letter.

All responses should be sent by 17th November 2008 to: The Chair of Governors, St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Upper Nidd Street, Leeds Road, Bradford, BD3 9ND

Comments/Views:

Your personal details (so that your responses can be formally acknowledged):

Name:

Address:

Which school/parish are you associated with?.....

(Please tick which apply):

Parent/Carer of present pupil(s)

Other adult relative

Pupil

Governor

Staff member

Parishioner

Other

Please specify _____