

Initial Consultation on the proposed closure of St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

Consultation period: 19th April 2021 to 28th May 2021

Consultation document

About the school

St Mary Magdalen's School, is a Roman Catholic voluntary aided, one-form entry primary school for boys and girls aged 4-11 located in Brockley in the London Borough of Lewisham. The Pupil Admission Number (PAN) for each year group is 30. The school is part of the educational provision of the Archdiocese of Southwark and the London Borough of Lewisham. The school is situated at Howson Road, Brockley, London SE4 2BB.

The Proposal

The governing body, in agreement with Lewisham Council and the Archdiocese of Southwark have agreed to commence the statutory process for the proposed closure of the school on the 31st December 2021.

Reason for the proposed closure

The school currently has a significant budget deficit. The number of children on roll makes clear that this financial position cannot be rectified and will, over the coming years deteriorate. There are currently 142 children on roll and this does not include a significant number who have requested a Section 9 letter, for an in-year transfer. The fact that the school is around 60 children below PAN, equates to around £250,000 shortfall in annual school budget income. The school received 12 first preferences for a place in Reception for September 2021. This situation places additional pressure on numbers as 22 children will transfer to secondary school, at the end of this academic year. The falling birth rates across Lewisham and London will mean that the current reduction in demand for school places will continue in the coming years, exacerbating the current issues. School funding is directly driven by pupil numbers, the more pupils a school has, the more funding it receives. Unfilled school places have an immediate cost for schools through a reduction in their budgets, as well as affecting the overall viability and quality of education standards at the school.

Statutory requirement

In line with the Department for Education's (DFE) guidance: *Opening and closing maintained schools, Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers, November 2019*, subject to approval, the Governing Body will be following the statutory process for closing a maintained school which consists of five stages:

Stage one: consultation - it is a statutory requirement to consult any parties the proposer thinks is appropriate before publishing proposals. It is for the proposer to determine the nature and length of the consultation.

Stage two: publication - A statutory proposal should be published within 12 months of the initial consultation period being completed.

Stage three: representation - The proposed representation period will start on the date of publication of the statutory proposal which is the 11th June 2021 and closes on the 9th July 2021.

Stage four: decision - The decision report will be presented to Mayor and Cabinet for decision as statutory decision maker. This will take place towards the end of July 2021

Stage five: implementation - The proposed implementation of the school closure will take place on 31st December 2021.

About pre-publication consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to seek the views and engage with those that will be directly affected by the proposed closure of St Mary Magdalen's Primary School on 31st December 2021.

It is also an opportunity for interested parties to suggest options for consideration on the proposed closure.

This consultation will be followed by the publication of the statutory notice and proposal, starting a 4-week representation period when any person can send objections or comments to the governing body of the school.

Impact of the closure

Pupils

There is a significant oversupply of Primary School places across Lewisham, and the surrounding boroughs. Given this position, it will be possible to place all of the children in schools that are reasonably distanced from St Mary Magdalen's. There are also enough places in Catholic schools in Lewisham to allow parents to access a Catholic education. Taking into account transport links, there are around 139 places available at four Catholic primary schools, all within 30-minute travel time. There are also a considerable number of Catholic places available in other schools, further afield. There are currently almost 700 spare places in Lewisham schools within a one-mile radius of St Mary Magdalen's. This being the position, there should be little difficulty in ensuring parents have the opportunity to find a suitable school for their children.

Staff

Efforts will be made to ensure that staff currently at the school will be offered support and assistance in finding alternative employment. The Diocese will liaise with the leadership of the school to inform staff of vacancies that arise, within the Catholic sector.

Community

Local residents will have the opportunity to express their views during this consultation and the representation period.

Who we are consulting:

Those to be consulted with on the proposed closure of the school are; the school, parents/carer, prospective parents/carers, staff and the local community. In addition, we would welcome the views of:

- all schools / admission authorities in Lewisham – governing body / academy trust
- neighbouring Admission Authorities;
- Ward members;
- The Parish community via the newsletter
- anyone else who has an interest or may be affected by the proposed closure of the school.

This consultation will run from 19th April to 28th May 2021, during this time you are invited to respond to the governing body of St Mary Magdalen’s Catholic Primary School on their proposal to close the school.

| Timeline of statutory process | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Date | Stage of Statutory Process |
| 19 April 2021 – 28 May 2021 | Stage 1 – Consultation period. Any comments to be sent to the Governing Body |
| 11 June 2021 | Stage 2 – Proposed Publication of the Proposal to close the school |
| 11 June 2021- 9 July 2021 | Stage 3 – Governing Body Representation period commences. Any comments to be returned to the Lewisham Education Authority |
| w/c 12 July 2021 | Draft decision report to be produced by the Lewisham Education Authority, for consideration by Mayor and Cabinet. |
| Late July 2021 | Stage 4 - Decision report to Mayor & Cabinet |
| Autumn term 2021 | Bespoke admissions round for those pupils still at the school |
| 31 December 2021 | Stage 5 – Proposed Implementation of School Closure |

How to give your views

This consultation period allows anyone with an interest to comment or raise any concerns about the proposal to close St Mary Magdalen’s Primary School by 31st December 2021. We welcome you to join a consultation meeting and/or complete the questionnaire as detailed below.

| Consultation Meeting | Date | Location |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Thursday 22 nd April 2021 at 7:00 pm | Zoom Click to register |
| 2 | Wednesday 5 th May 2021 at 5:30 pm | Zoom Click to register |

Responses must be submitted or, completed and returned by 5 pm on 28th May 2021

In writing to:
 Consultation Response,
 St Mary Magdalen’s Catholic Primary School
 Howson Road
 Brockley
 London
 SE4 2BB

By Email: educationconsultation@rcaos.org.uk
 Alternatively responses can be submitted online by [clicking here](#)

Questionnaire

Proposed closure of St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

1) Please tell us whether you support/do not support the proposed closure of St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

I support the proposed school closure

I do not support the proposed school closure

Not sure

I am not affected by/do not want to answer questions about the proposed closure

2) If you do not support the proposed change, please tell us why.

3) We are keen to understand how the proposed school closure may affect you. Please use this space to tell us if you are impacted by the proposed school closure and how. What can we do to address any impacts you have mentioned?

4) Do you have any alternative suggestions to any part of the proposal?

About You

We are endeavouring to receive comments from a broad range of people reflective of our community. In order to enable us to assess the degree to which this has been successful, it would be helpful if you could take a moment to complete the section below.

The governing body will take all reasonable measures to ensure that any data provided will be protected against loss or misuse. Your information will not be retained or shared with any other parties and will be destroyed in line with relevant destruction policies and processes.

4) Please tell us who you are.

Member of staff at St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

Member of staff at another school

School Governor at St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

School Governor at another school

Parent/carer of a child/ren at St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

Parent/carer of child/ren at another school

Pupil at St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School

Local resident

Prefer not to say

Other (Please specify) _____

5) Gender:

Male

Female

Transgender

Prefer not to say

6) Age:

Under 15

16-18

19-25

26-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65+

Prefer not to say

7) Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

- White British
- White Irish
- White European
- Other white
- Mixed white and black Caribbean
- Mixed white and black African
- Mixed white and Asian
- Other mixed background
- Asian or Asian British: Indian
- Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British: Chinese
- Other Asian or Asian British Background
- Black or Black British: Caribbean
- Black or Black British: African
- Other Black or Black British background
- Arabic
- Prefer not to say
- Other Please specify _____

8) Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- No
- Yes
- Prefer not to say

9) Please specify

- Mobility
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Mental Health
- Learning disability
- Prefer not to say
- Other (Please specify.) _____