



## **Arrangements for the proposed closure of St Pius X Catholic Primary School Withywood, Bristol**

On behalf of the governing body in partnership with Bristol City Council and the Diocese of Clifton I am writing to inform you that the **Governing Body** have made the substantive decision to proceed to closure of St Pius X Catholic Primary School.

This consultation is an opportunity for stakeholders and interested parties, including parents and staff, to be provided with more information about the proposed closure, including the reasons for closure and plans for managing the transfer of pupils to other schools. This is an opportunity for you to give your views and comments on the proposal. Following the consultation period and the analysis of all comments, governors will decide whether to proceed to a more formal proposal which follows a process prescribed by the Government Department for Education. Should this go ahead, the Cabinet for Bristol City Council will then be asked to formally approve the closure.

Please find below further details about the proposed process and how to submit your views.

### **Background to Proposed Closure**

St Pius X is a one form entry Catholic Primary school under the authority of Bristol City Council and in the trusteeship of the Diocese of Clifton as a designated Catholic School. Its total capacity is 210 pupils but currently the school only has 92 pupils on roll.

For a significant number of years St Pius X has faced educational challenges, resulting in the school moving between providing an “Inadequate” provision of education and “Requires Improvement”. It has currently been in Special Measures for a period of 2 years. (Ofsted Rating June 2018)

As a result of the above, the school has consistently admitted fewer pupils than the capacity which has had a significant impact on the school’s financial situation meaning a deficit budget has had to be set for the last 3 years. During this time the City Council and the Diocese of Clifton has provided both substantial financial support as well as advisory and educational support. From an analysis of pupil places across the area and projected number of pupils in future, it is apparent that there is a surplus of pupil places within the immediate area and this will continue for

the foreseeable future. This means that even should St Pius X come out of special measures the number of pupils would remain low and would result in the school continuing to have significant financial issues for the long term. Current reception figures stand at ten pupils. Regrettably therefore, this makes the school unsustainable and unable to provide at least a good quality Catholic education.

Owing to the school's financial situation and low numbers of pupils, the school is not viable to be taken on within a Multi-academy Trust, which has been an option consistently explored by the Diocese of Clifton.

Having talked to the City Council and Diocese of Clifton about the options available it is the Governors' view that the school should close from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021.

The Bishop of Clifton and his Trustees have looked at the impact that the closure of St Pius X will have on Catholic education within the area and the community it serves, and have concluded that there is adequate provision in the Catholic neighbouring schools; Holy Cross School, Bedminster and The School of Christ the King, Knowle, to accommodate those seeking a Catholic education. The current percentage of Catholic pupils currently in the school is only 16% and numbers have been low for several years. The Bishop and Trustees have been reassured that overall, pupils currently attending St Pius X and future pupils can be accommodated in local schools.

Whilst the Bishop recognises the school has had a long history within the community and is saddened to propose withdrawal of Catholic Education within the area it is felt that it is in the community's best interest to proceed to closure.

### **The proposed closure plans**

The School governors are working with Bristol City Council in-year admissions team in relation to the provision of places in alternative schools following a proposed closure. They are available on 0117 903 7694 or email [school.admissions@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:school.admissions@bristol.gov.uk)

The City Council has a number of staff who are able to provide in-depth information, advice and guidance on the school system and admissions processes.

Staff from the City Council will work with parents to find a suitable school from September 2021.

Please be aware that you may not be able to be offered a place at your first choice school, however you do have the right of appeal, and the in-year team will be able to explain this process to you and talk through any concerns or queries you may have.

If your child has an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), the school move will be dealt with by the City Council's SEND team.

## **The Consultation Period**

**The Consultation period will commence at 9am on 13 October 2020 and will close at midday on 17 November 2020**

Views on the proposed closure can be sent to the Chair of Governors in the following ways:

- **Via Email to [governor.admin@st-piusx.bristol.sch.uk](mailto:governor.admin@st-piusx.bristol.sch.uk)**
- **Via letter to:** Chair of Governors, St Pius X Catholic Primary School,  
139 Gatehouse Avenue, Withywood, Bristol, BS13 9AQ
- **Virtual Meeting**

Unfortunately, due to the current COVID restrictions it is not possible to hold a face to face meeting. A virtual meeting will be held on 10 November 2020 at 6.00 pm. If you wish to attend the Virtual meeting, please can you register your interest using the above email, and a link will be sent to enable you to join.