



## Proposal for the closure of St Teresa's Catholic Infant School and the expansion of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

This leaflet provides background information about the proposal for the closure of St Teresa's Catholic Infant School and the related enlargement of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School. It also answers some of the questions that parents, carers, pupils and members of the wider community might want to know.

## Introduction

Sefton Council wishes to seek the views of interested parties regarding the related proposals for Sefton Council to close St Teresa's Catholic Infant School as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 and enlarge Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

## Background

St Teresa's Catholic Infant School is a single form of entry school with a published admission number of 30 situated at Everton Road in Birkdale. Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School is a two form of entry school with a published admission number of 60 at KS1 and 90 at KS2 situated at Grantham Road, Birkdale. Both schools are voluntary aided schools being approximately 1.4 miles apart from one another.

As a result of the decline in requests for school places the Governors of St Teresa's have asked Sefton Council, as the local authority, to explore alternative opportunities for future provision. At a meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 the Council's Cabinet agreed to proceed with the request from the Governing Body of St Teresa's Catholic Infant School to commence the statutory consultation process.

**It is extremely important to note that at this point in time no definitive decision has been made about the future of the school.**

The chart below outlines the four-stage statutory process that the local authority must adhere to when making decisions concerning the potential closure or significant changes to schools.

<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Consultation</b> <b>21<sup>st</sup> October 2019 – 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019</b>	This is the start of the process when the Local Authority provides information about what is being proposed and gathers the views of interested parties to help them develop the proposals. This period usually lasts for a minimum of six weeks.
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Publication – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020</b>	A legal notice is published in the local paper (usually the Champion) and on the Council website which sets out brief details of the proposal and where more information can be found. It also gives details of where objections and comments can be sent and the closing date for these. It marks the start of the representation period or formal consultation.
<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>Representation</b> <b>5<sup>th</sup> February – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020</b>	This is a four-week period from the date the notice is published to allow interested parties the final opportunity to send objections and comments to be taken into consideration by the decision maker. It is classed as the formal part of the consultation process.
<b>Stage 4</b>	<b>Decision</b> <b>Cabinet to make final decision – April 2020</b>	All the objections and comments gathered during the representation period are provided to the decision maker to enable them to make the final decision.

There will be a consultation period which will run from 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019 – 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

As part of the consultation process for the proposal, we will be holding meetings with staff, governors, and parents/carers of pupils at the school. It is important that we hear the views and opinions of as many people as possible.

### **Date and Time of Meetings:**

Meetings have been arranged to provide an opportunity for interested parties to make their views known.

#### **St Teresa's Catholic Infant School**

Meetings for parents will be held on 5th November 2019 at 6pm at the school to enable as many parents to attend as possible.

A meeting for staff will be held at 3.30pm and governors at 5pm on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

#### **Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School**

Meetings for parents will be held on 6th November 2019 at 6pm at the school to enable as many parents to attend as possible.

A meeting for staff will be held at 3.30pm and governors at 5pm on 6th November 2019.

Alternatively, if you are unable to attend the meeting, you may wish to comment on the proposal via an online comment form at [www.sefton.gov.uk/stteresas](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/stteresas)

This area of Sefton Council's website, where comments can be submitted, will also be used as a dedicated web page to provide details about the proposal and will be used to keep members of the public fully informed about the consultation process.

### **Parents and Staff Voice**

The formal consultation process will provide parents and staff with the opportunity to respond to the proposal.

All parents and staff are actively encouraged to give their views during the consultation period.

### Other Consultees

Other organisations who must be consulted will be written to as part of the process and be invited to submit their views.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation process, the Local Authority intends to publish a statutory notice setting out the proposals for St Teresa's Catholic Infant School and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School. It is the Local Authority's intention to publish this notice in the local newspapers during February 2020, and this will be followed by a four-week representation period – during the period all interested parties will be invited to make their representations and comments in writing. At the end of the four-week period, the matter will be considered by the Council's Cabinet, who will make the final decision on the proposal.

### Reasons for the Proposal

#### Pupil Numbers at St Teresa's

- Pupil numbers have been falling over a number of years at St Teresa's and this trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The school had 39% surplus places in May 2019 when the last census was undertaken.

#### School Finances at St Teresa's

- School finances are highly dependent on pupil numbers for their funding and as pupil numbers fall schools are unable to maintain staffing levels and the funding available to support each pupil is reduced. This compromises the ability to provide the best education for pupils attending the school.
- There is a projected financial deficit of £0.066m for 2019/20. This is forecast to increase to £0.122m in 2020/21.
- The governors and senior leadership have worked extremely hard to reduce costs and find savings but are now at a stage where they are unable to address the increasing deficit. As a result, the school is not financially viable for the longer term.

#### Expansion of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School

- The expansion of Our Lady of Lourdes will allow for all pupils at St Teresa's to be automatically registered there.

- Upon closure, St Teresa's premises will transfer to the control of the governors of Our Lady of Lourdes which will then operate on a split site, from both Grantham Road and Everton Road; preserving the current arrangements.

In the short term both sites would remain open to allow pupils to continue to attend as before. However, in the medium term consideration will have to be given to the viability of operating the school from two sites. Efficiencies would need to be examined through the usual processes.

**The following questions are based on previous school organisation proposals and the type of information and support that parents/carers, pupils, governors, staff, unions and the wider community might want to know.**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

#### **Q1**

##### **Who has responsibility for each of the schools?**

Both St Teresa's Catholic Infant School and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School are voluntary aided schools maintained by the local authority. Each is run by a governing body, the majority of which are appointed by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. They are responsible for the overall management of the schools within the statutory framework set out in current legislation.

#### **Q2**

##### **Why is the Council involved?**

Voluntary aided schools are maintained by the local authority and receive their revenue funding from them. Legislation sets out that local authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. To help them meet these duties and restructure local provision they have the power to close all categories of maintained schools. This involves following a statutory process to consult on any closure and

expansion proposals. Ultimately the Council is the decision-maker on these proposals.

**Q3**  
**When will the closure and expansion take place?**  
If the proposal to close and expand is agreed St Teresa's would close with effect from 31st August 2020 and provision at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary would increase with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

The closure of schools is governed by the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013. The proposals at this stage are still subject to consultation and the statutory publication process.

**Q4**  
**If St Teresa's does close, what will happen to the pupils?**  
If the proposal to close St Teresa's is approved, then current pupils at the school would be given the right to attend Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School. For future admissions Our Lady of Lourdes would have a planned admission number (PAN) of 90 and a single point of admission at Reception. There would be no need to apply at Year 3. If you require information about alternative schools in the area this is available on the Council's website in the Admissions Information Booklet at <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/school-admissions.aspx>

**Q5**  
**How would you ensure the continuance of a good quality education for all pupils?**  
The governors and staff at each of the schools, in partnership with both the local authority and the Archdiocese, would ensure the standards of education were maintained throughout the reorganisation process. All parties would seek to ensure that the transition to any new arrangements would not adversely impact pupils at either of the existing schools. Both schools would be led by a single headteacher, providing continuity and stability for both pupils and staff.

**Q6**  
**Are there any alternatives to closure and expansion proposals?**

The proposals put forward are considered to be the most efficient way of providing school places in the area. However, the point of the consultation is to seek the views of others who may have an alternative view. All viable options will be considered before a decision is made

**Q7**  
**Can a plan be proposed to prevent the school from closing?**  
Yes – we are currently in consultation and any proposals can be considered. If there is a proposal that would prevent the school from closing it should be presented to the Governing Body for them to consider in the first instance. For any plan to be seriously considered it would need to establish, in a sustainable way, an approach to setting a balanced budget.

**Q8**  
**What will happen to the staff at each school?**  
Subject to the results of the consultation, all staff will continue to deliver quality teaching and support to pupils. Those staff employed by the Governing Body of St Teresa’s Infant School would transfer to the employ of the Governing Body of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary school as at 1 September 2020 by virtue of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (referred to as TUPE). The Local Authority would provide dedicated support and guidance to all the staff with regard to this process.

**Q9**  
**What will happen to the governing body at each school if the result of the consultation is to close St Teresa’s and expand Our Lady of Lourdes?**  
St Teresa’s governing body would remain in place and continue to manage the school up until the school closure as at 31 August 2020. The Governing Body of Our Lady of Lourdes would manage the expanded school as from 1 September 2020. Support would be provided by both the local authority and the Archdiocese to both governing bodies throughout any reorganisation process.

**Q10**  
**What will happen to the school site and premises if the school closes?**  
The school buildings and their footprint are owned by the Archdiocese. Our Lady of Lourdes would operate on a split site basis, with pupils based at



both Grantham Road and Everton Road, being under the management and control of the Governing Body of Our Lady of Lourdes School.

### Q11

#### **If my child attends either school, what do I need to do?**

There is no need for parents to consider moving their child because of these proposals. At present they are merely at a consultative stage. If the proposals are progressed then pupils at St Teresa's would automatically be offered a place at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School as from 1 September 2020.

Pupils currently at Our Lady of Lourdes' would not be affected.

Parents seeking a place for their child in reception in September 2020 can still apply to St Teresa's or Our Lady of Lourdes as per the school's admission policy.

### Q12

#### **My child has Special Education Needs, (SEN) and the school is receiving extra funding from the Local Authority to support their needs. Will my child continue to receive this support if we move to another school?**

Yes. Any additional funding received by the school to meet the SEN of a pupil would transfer to their new setting to support their transition and help them settle into their new environment. This funding would then continue to be monitored and reviewed in the usual way.

The staff at St Teresa's would ensure that any information regarding the SEN of pupils is shared with their potential new school so that transition planning can take place. Parents of pupils with SEN will be included in this process.

If you would like to speak to a member of the Special Education Needs and Inclusion Service, they can be contacted at:

[SENIS@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:SENIS@sefton.gov.uk) or 0151 934 2347.

For further information about the proposal, please go to [www.sefton.gov.uk/stteresas](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/stteresas)

Please tell us what you think about the proposal.

You can return the form with your comments to the School Organisation Team, Education Services, Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle, L20 7AE or return to the Headteacher at St Teresa's Catholic Infant School and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School. You can also comment by email to [school.organisation@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@sefton.gov.uk)