

PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE ST GREGORY'S VA  
(CATHOLIC) MIDDLE SCHOOL, BEDFORD

MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO  
DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL

**Extract of Schedule 4 to The School Organisation (Establishment and  
Discontinuance of Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended):**

**Contact details**

1. The name of the LA or governing body publishing the proposals, and a contact address, and the name of the school it is proposed that should be discontinued.

Chair of Governors  
St Gregory's VA (Catholic) Middle School  
Biddenham Turn  
Biddenham  
Bedford  
MK40 4AT

**Implementation**

2. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or, where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

St Gregory's Middle School will have no intake to Year 5 in September 2013 and will close on 31 August 2014. Year 5 pupils will stay at their primary schools in September 2013 and Year 6 pupils will stay at their primary schools in September 2014.

**Consultation**

3. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

All statutory consultees and other Interested parties have been consulted in accordance with Section 16 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and the Secretary of State's guidance.

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including:

- a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;
- b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;

- c) the views of the persons consulted; and
- d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

The Governing Body of the Federation of Bedford Catholic Schools issued a consultation paper to parents in 2007 and held a public meeting at St Thomas More Upper School on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2007. Following this consultation the Governing Body resolved to change the provision of the Catholic Schools from lower, middle and upper to a two tier system of primary and secondary.

On 27 April 2009 the Mayor of Bedford Borough Council determined that the Council should consult widely on a proposal for lower and upper schools in the Borough to become primary or secondary schools respectively covering the 4-11 and 11-18 age ranges. Consultation commenced on 20 May and closed on 24 July. A copy of the School Organisation Review public consultation is included at Appendix 1. 1947 paper and electronic responses to the consultation were received from parents, school pupils, staff and governors, as well as from other interested parties, together with four petitions. Details of the process, minutes of all public meetings and an analysis of the responses were included in a report to the Borough's Executive on 11 November 2009. This information is included at Appendix 2.

**Objectives**

- 5. The objectives of the proposal.

The Council's aim is to raise the standards of educational attainment and opportunity in the Borough. To that end it proposes to change 4 – 9 lower schools to primary schools covering the 4 – 11 age range and to change 13 – 18 upper schools to secondary (11 – 18) schools. The proposals are designed to allow the Council to provide all young people in the Borough with a first class learning experience and opportunity for life-long learning.

**Standards and Diversity**

- 6. A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

These matters are considered in detail in the report to the Borough Executive on 11 November 2009, particularly in sections 5.2 to 5.10 of the main report, and in Appendix 4. The full report is included at Appendix 2.

**Provision for 16-19 year olds**

- 7. Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on:

- a) the educational or training achievements;
- b) participation in education or training; and
- c) the range of educational or training opportunities,

for 16-19 year olds in the area.

Not applicable

**Need for places**

8. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

The Governors and the Local Authority will ensure that sufficient places are provided at the primary and secondary schools to accommodate the displaced children. Capacity will be created at feeder primary schools and at the secondary schools to take the displaced pupils.

9. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

Catholic provision will continue to be made for pupils in the 9-13 age range at the proposed primary and secondary schools within the Federation of Bedford Catholic Schools.

#### **Current School Information**

10. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

St Gregory's Middle School caters for day girls and boys in the 9 – 13 age range, including those with special educational needs. It has a net capacity of 449 and an admission Number of 90. Its current Number on Roll is 391.  
Special educational needs children attending the school: 1 pupil has a statement, 64 pupils are on school action, 13 pupils are on school action plus.

#### **Displaced Pupils**

11. Details of the schools or FE colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including:

- a) any interim arrangements;
- b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by LAs other than the authority which maintains the school.

Pupils in Year 5 will remain at their primary schools on 1 September 2014 and pupils in Year 6 will remain at their primary schools on 1 September 2015. Years 7 and 8 will transfer to a secondary school in September 2015

12. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or FE college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

Not applicable

#### **Impact on the Community**

13. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

Existing facilities at lower and upper schools will continue to be made available to the community so ensuring minimal impact.

The proposal is that the St Gregory's site will be used by the Federation of Bedford Catholic Schools for the primary school, so that years 5 and 6 will be joined by years 1-4 currently provided for at St Joseph's Lower School.

14. Details of extended services the school offered and what it is proposed for these services once the school has discontinued.

All services currently offered through the cluster of faith schools including St. Gregory's Middle School will continue to be delivered. The Governors working with the LA will ensure the extended services provision is delivered through the primary and secondary schools and continue to be developed to ensure that needs are met.

There is a varied range of extended services provision. To support the provision and ensure continued development there is an Extended Services Coordinator and a Parenting Support Adviser in place for the cluster.

Childcare is available and holiday provision is good. Parent Support and Family Learning Opportunities are provided. All schools in the cluster provide Extended Learning Opportunities.

**Travel**

15. Details of the length and journeys to alternative provision.

9 -11 year old pupils will have shorter journeys as they will remain in their local primary schools for two more years before transferring to secondary school. 11-13 year old pupils will be educated at secondary school which will entail a journey which may or may not be longer than they currently travel depending on their home locality.

16. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.

As indicated above, children of age 9-11 will remain at their local primary schools which should reduce travel. It is recognised that for some pupils in years 7 and 8 the journey to school will be longer than at present. It is expected that the school travel plans of secondary schools will address this issue with a view to reducing car usage.

**Related Proposals**

17. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the LA or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.

The proposed discontinuance of St Gregory's Middle School is related to several other proposals:

School	Proposed Alterations
St John Rigby VA (Catholic) Lower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend age range from 4 – 9 to 4 – 11</li> <li>Increase capacity from 300 to 420</li> </ul>
St Joseph's VA (Catholic) Lower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend age range from 4 – 9 to 4 – 11</li> <li>Increase capacity from 300 to 630</li> </ul>
St Thomas More VA (Catholic) Upper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend age range from 13 –18 to 11 – 18</li> <li>Increase capacity from 818 to 1300</li> </ul>

**Rural Primary Schools**

18. Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by

an order made for the purposes of section 15, a statement that the LA or the governing body (as the case may be) considered:

- a) the likely effect of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
- b) the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;
- c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,

as required by section 15(4)

Not applicable

### **Maintained nursery schools**

19. Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out:

- a) the consideration that has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and the grounds for not doing so;
- b) the LA's assessment of the quality and quantity of alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- c) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

Not applicable

### **Special educational provision**

20. Where existing provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the LA or the governing body believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

These proposals will lead to higher educational achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Research shows that all children's progress is disrupted by changing schools and for those with special needs the disruption is greater. Reducing the number of school transfers will help children with special needs to reach higher standards. Schools will also have responsibility for the whole of each Key Stage enabling improved planning and continuity for vulnerable pupils.

The Local Authority is committed to improving its provision for young people with special educational needs and has undertaken a consultation on the future organisation of special schools within the Bedford Borough; this consultation ended on 6 November 2009, and the responses will be considered by the Executive of the Council on 20 January 2010.

