

Consultation on the proposal to close Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls

21st September 2016

Chair of Governors

Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls
Holland Walk,
Duncombe Road,
London
N19 3EU

Proposal to Close a School

Contact Details:

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How and when would the closure take place?

Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls is secondary aged, 11-16 Catholic Girls School. It is proposed to close the school by 31st August 2017, with the intention that a new non-denominational co-education secondary academy will open on the site on 1st September 2017. The new secondary academy will automatically accept all existing pupils from Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls. All the existing staff will be employed by the new secondary academy trust. Pupils who transfer from Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls will remain in girls only classes until they complete their education in the new academy

Why is the governing body proposing that the school be closed?

The governing body is proposing the closure of the school because the number of children at Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls has been falling gradually over the past few years. Specifically;

1. There are now 388 pupils on roll. The school is designed to accommodate up to 700 pupils. Forecasts indicate that these numbers will not recover significantly in the longer term but are projected to reduce still further within five years.
2. In these circumstances it is difficult to preserve the quality and breadth of education as the school has a significant and increasing budget deficit.
3. Were the school to reduce staffing to the point at which the deficit could be eradicated, there would be insufficient staff to be able to deliver an appropriate curriculum to its pupils
4. The number of parents of current Year 6 pupils seeking a place at the school as their 1st choice is 49 (June 2016). Approximately 40% of the current roll are choosing the school because of their Catholic faith. The on-going decline in numbers of pupils attending the school will result in the school finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff and to deliver a broad based curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils across a wide range of subjects. This makes the school unviable in the medium term.
5. The catholic community in recent years have chosen not to send their children to Mount Carmel.

Pupil numbers and admissions

The numbers of pupils in the school within each year group is as follows:

Table1: Data in relation to Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls as at 21 September 2016

Year Group	Role	Actual Number	Deficit
Year 7	140	50	90
Year 8	140	73	67
Year 9	140	71	69
Year 10	140	63	77
Year 11	140	89	51

On the basis of currently known data, the number of pupils in the school in September 2016 would be approximately 346. This would be approximately 50% surplus capacity. Islington's place planning data indicates that all these places are required for our residents and therefore the proposal to close the school and re-open as a mixed school will support the additional places required to meet the population of both boys and girls in the borough. Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls, like all schools in Islington, is committed to meeting the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs and disabilities, and will continue to do so.

Breadth of Curriculum

The numbers at Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls have fallen more quickly than anticipated. As numbers fall, it is increasingly difficult to provide the remaining pupils with access to the full range of experiences they need.

The most recent Ofsted inspection judged the school as a good school in 2014, and the Ofsted team highlighted the following positive things which gave us a 'good' rating:

- Pupils make good progress. In 2013, the proportion of Pupils who gained five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, was above average
- Results dipped in 2012. The school took decisive action and consequently there was a 22% rise in the number of Pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, the following year
- Progress across the school is good for most groups of Pupils, and it accelerates in Key Stage 4
- Teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. Leaders have had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching in all subjects
- Pupils show a great deal of respect and care for each other. They mix well in this racially harmonious community. They feel safe and are polite and well mannered. Around the school their behaviour is thoughtful and friendly. They have very positive attitudes towards their learning and show great pride in their school.

- Leadership is strong across the school. Senior leaders work well in partnership with middle leaders and the local authority. Governors are effective in holding leaders to account

However, as numbers have fallen further since the Ofsted inspection in 2014, the school governing body, the Diocese of Westminster, and Islington Council have become increasingly concerned that pupils will not have access to the full range of experiences they need, and it is likely to become increasingly difficult to meet children's educational and social needs. These concerns about being able to preserve the quality and breadth of the curriculum, and the financial deficit, are the key concerns, arising from the rapid decline in pupil numbers. There is however a projected increasing demand for school places for boys in the north Islington area.

What would happen to the pupils? Where would they go?

The proposal is that a new non-denominational co-education secondary academy, already approved by the Department for Education for the area, will open on the Mount Carmel school site on 1st September 2017 after the existing school closes. The new academy will automatically accept all the present Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls pupils, with the intention these pupils will remain in girls' only classes until they complete their education in the new academy. The governing body of the new school will also retain governors from the Mount Carmel governing body as a commitment to keep the religious ethos in the school for all existing year groups.

The first co-education classes will be from Year 7 in September 2017. In relation to the school ceasing to be a Catholic school, the diocese will work closely with the City of London (as the sponsor of the new academy) to ensure the Catholic life and Religious Education of the current pupils is supported, nurtured and protected whilst the school community undergoes significant change. It will focus on managing expectations and delivering a service expected by parents and pupils alike. For any parent who wishes their child to continue being taught in a catholic school, the Diocese of Westminster has committed to support these parents to find places for their children at alternative catholic schools. A list of all secondary schools in Islington can be found [here](http://www.islington.gov.uk/services/schools-learning/5-16/cs-secondary-schools/Pages/default.aspx).

The proposed new secondary academy, City of London Academy Highgate Hill

Contact details

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The City of London Academies Trust, working closely with the Diocese of Westminster, and Islington Council, has applied to the Department for Education to open the City of London

Academy Highgate Hill in September 2017. The reason for the new academy is to meet the demand for school places, particularly places for boys, in the north Islington area, while at the same time providing the continuing education for the existing pupils of Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls. The new academy will be a non-denominational, co-education secondary school for 700 pupils so that there will be no change to the number of secondary school places in Islington as a result of the closure of Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls. The change to co-educational offer will redress the current shortfall in the differences between the numbers of girls and boys places offered across the borough. The admissions criteria will match those of other secondary schools in Islington, to meet the needs of the local community. It is proposed as the school grows and reaches full capacity; a sixth form provision will be added.

The City of London is an experienced academies sponsor already sponsoring academies across Hackney, Islington and Southwark which are all judged good or outstanding by OFSTED. As an academy sponsor it is ranked as amongst the top three academy chains in the country for pupil progress. The City of London is committed to providing access to excellent education and learning opportunities for children and young people

Impact of the Community

Community use of the building will continue to be the same after the closure of Mount Carmel as a school, with the new school continuing to work closely with community groups to encourage engagement with the local community.

Balance of denominational provision

There are surplus places in Catholic schools available in neighbouring boroughs, and many Islington residents already attend places in other boroughs. The Diocesan board have agreed that there are sufficient places available in Catholic schools in the vicinity. In addition, the Diocese of Westminster will work closely with the City of London (as the sponsor of the new academy) to ensure the Catholic life and Religious Education of the current pupils is supported, nurtured and protected whilst the school community undergoes significant change.

Special Educational Needs Provision

The school will continue to be committed to meeting the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The expectation is that pupils with SEN will receive an education that enables them to make progress so that they can achieve their best, become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training.

Travel

The current Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls school is serviced by good public transportation services which means Pupils who wish to attend other secondary schools can do so without any significant impact on their present journeys to school.

Response to closure proposal

If you wish comment on the proposal to close Mount Carmel Catholic College for Girls please complete the attached questionnaire and send this by **2nd November 2016**

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Alternatively you can complete the questionnaire on Survey Monkey via <http://schoolengagement.co.uk/mountcarmel/>

Or send your comments via email to Islington Council at

Mountcarmelconsultat@slington.gov.uk