

**OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL
GARDENSIDE, LEASOWE, WIRRAL**

**Proposed
Joint-Church
Primary School**

**Consultation Document
November 2008**

**Mr F M Clarke
Director of Schools
Diocese of Shrewsbury**

**Mr J Turnbull
Director of Education
Diocese of Chester**

**Mr H Cooper
Director of Children & Young People's Department
Wirral Council**

INTRODUCTION

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School in Leasowe was established as a one form entry voluntary aided school for pupils aged 4 to 11. It rests within the Trusteeship of the Diocese of Shrewsbury and is maintained by Wirral Authority. The school has undergone a large investment in buildings and facilities to provide an improved working environment and further developments are planned for the near future.

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School was established to meet the education needs of Catholic children within the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes and a designated section of English Martyrs Parish. The school itself was originally built in 1963 with a further extension in 1967. It is well supported by applications on behalf of Catholic children from the Leasowe Estate, plus some entrants from that private housing which surrounds the estate.

The school provides full time education for pupils aged 4 to 11 years and nursery education on a part time basis. The 2005 OFSTED Report commented thus on the school:

"Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary School is providing a good education for its pupils. This is the result of the very good leadership of the Headteacher and the hard work and commitment of the teachers. The pupils make at least satisfactory progress and in the Foundation Stage they achieve well. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, reflecting an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust founded on the school's Christian ethos. The pupils benefit from visits and participate enthusiastically in an appropriate range of extra curricular activities".

There is no doubting that Our Lady of Lourdes is a distinctive believing and integrated Christian community with a culture where every child is encouraged to develop their talents to the full in a spirit of mutual trust and co-operation.

SO WHY LOOK TO CHANGE ...

In considering the creation of a Joint Church Primary School within Leasowe the Dioceses of Chester and Shrewsbury with the support of Wirral Authority see the opportunity to secure a range of benefits whilst maintaining the existing strengths and qualities of Our Lady of Lourdes. A Shared Church School will

- Build on and carry forward the recognised strengths and successes of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School; so seeking to achieve the highest possible quality of education and care.
- The planned capacity of one Form of Entry will strengthen and ensure the future of the school and, therefore, the enhancement of faith based education in Leasowe and its environs.
- Promote the formation of a flourishing Christian community in which unity and diversity can be celebrated.
- Offer major improvements in the school environment to further develop the quality of teaching and learning and enhance community cohesion.
- Retain the distinctive and special atmosphere and ethos enjoyed by the whole community.
- Meet the needs as yet unfulfilled, for Church of England primary education within North Wallasey.
- Bring the support of both Dioceses to the children, staff and community of the school.

BEFORE LOOKING TO THAT CHANGE

Though both Dioceses witnessed a positive response to the idea of a Joint Church School during Wirral Authority's Review of primary places in Leasowe, it was felt essential to research definite proposals to bring forward for consideration by parents and other stakeholders. To this end:

- Eight meetings have taken place so far involving diocesan officers ranging across issues associated with the establishment of Joint Church Schools including Trust Deeds, Governance, Admissions, Religious Education Schemes and Collective Worship
- External input to three meeting has been provided by David Rushton, Deputy Director of Schools for Salford Diocese; Frank Cogley, Director of Schools for the Archdiocese of Liverpool and Frank McDermott, formerly Director of Schools for Hallam Diocese, who has overseen the establishment of three Joint Church Schools.
- Visits have taken place to St Joseph's Catholic and Church of Wales College (Wrexham), Holy Family Catholic and Church of England College (Heywood), Faith and Emmaus Primary Schools (Liverpool).

Arising from this process the following proposals have been drawn together for consultation after being monitored by a Bishops' Working Party and finally approved by the Bishops of Shrewsbury and Chester.

PROPOSALS : JOINT CHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

It will remain a one form entry primary school with 30 places per year group and 210 pupils in total. In addition there would be 26 places in a maintained nursery on-site within the primary school.

The school will be a Voluntary Aided Primary School of a religious character in joint trusteeship of the RC Diocese of Shrewsbury and the Church of England Diocese of Chester, aided by Wirral Local Authority and its principles may be set out under the following headings.

Vision/Mission

The school will be a Christian Primary School, fully Roman Catholic and fully Church of England, serving at all times as a witness to Our Lord Jesus Christ and offering the highest possible quality of education. The wholehearted desire to emphasise what we hold in common should not lessen the commitment to the full expression of each tradition. The children must know and appreciate more not less of each tradition and have a respect for other Faiths.

Legal Matters

Property issues including Trust Deed will be dealt with by the relevant diocesan bodies and their solicitors. From April 2009 financing of build and maintenance at the new school will be undertaken by the Dioceses of Shrewsbury and Chester on a 60:40 ratio.

Governors

Foundation Governors will be appointed by the Bishop of Shrewsbury and by the Bishop of Chester according to an agreed 60:40 proportion reflecting the ratio of Catholic/Anglican admissions. At the appropriate time a shadow governing body for the new school will be formed. The role of the Foundation Governors will be to uphold the provisions of the Trust Deeds on behalf of the Bishops and thereby to safeguard and further develop the religious character of the school.

Staffing

The initial appointment of staff will be ring-fenced to the staff of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School. Thereafter vacancies for the post of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, and RE Co-ordinator will be reserved to 'practising' members of the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church. For all other future teaching posts priority will be given first to 'practising' members of the two churches whenever possible and thereafter to practising members of churches within Churches together.

Admissions

Current children and siblings attending Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School to be automatically admitted – should they choose to be. Once the school is established, priority – after the legal commitment to children in public care– will be given to baptised members of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England on a 60:40 ratio from within the designated Roman Catholic parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, English Martyrs and the Anglican Parishes in Leasowe, Liscard, New Brighton, Poulton, Seacombe and Wallasey.

Uniform

Decisions on uniform rest with the Temporary Governing Body for the new school but it is accepted that all children can continue with the existing uniform until it needs replacing. In order to establish compatibility in dress the Diocese will propose to the Governing Body that it retains a similar style of uniform to that used at present.

Secondary Education

Given that parents of children currently at Our Lady of Lourdes applied there knowing that its partner secondary school was St Mary's Catholic College and, in the absence of a Church of England Secondary School in Wallasey, the new primary school will retain its partnership status with the College.

Building/Environment

As indicated earlier the Diocese of Shrewsbury has already spent considerable sums on accommodation at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School. The two Dioceses will continue to develop those improvements in order to provide that level of build appropriate to the deliver of educational priorities in the 21st Century. In addition and to reflect the distinctive nature of a joint Catholic/Church of England School a new Joint Church School Centre will be established within the Parish Church of Our Lady of Lourdes. Diocesan Building Officers to liaise with all appropriate stakeholders and partners.

Name of new school

To be determined.

Worship

The aim is to give expression to the Instrument of Government, being as inclusive as possible, concentrating on what unites within the Christian community not what divides, authentically expressing both traditions so learning from each other. The Bishops will decide on the appropriateness of the Eucharist within the life of the school.

Religious Education Curriculum

Governors will be requested to approve a policy that will reflect the joint nature of the school based on the 'Here I Am' programme. That policy will apply to children joining Reception in September 2009 and a curriculum time devoted to Religious Education will be ten percent

Section 48 Inspections

To be agreed jointly by the two Dioceses to focus on the distinctive nature of the school.

Parish Links/Chaplaincy/Pastoral Support

Close liaison will be maintained with both parties in order to bring children and families more actively into the life of the Churches. A team approach will be adopted to include where possible parish clergy and appropriate approved lay workers from parishes.

Neighbouring Schools

In drawing together the proposals the Dioceses have worked to ensure that these will not be detrimental to other schools in the local area. Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School was designated as a one form entry school and if the proposed Joint Church School is established the Admission Number will be 25 in September 2009. Thereafter the proposed school will be designated as one form entry and both Dioceses give categoric assurance that there is no intention to extend that figure beyond 30 pupils in the future. What the new school would allow however is the continued option for parents in the Leasowe area and beyond to express a preference for a Community school or a Denominational school. The Dioceses would also wish to build on the existing links between schools in the two sectors and so encourage a spirit of partnership to the benefit of all.

NOTES

HOW DO I COMMENT ON THE PROPOSALS

- You can complete the attached form or complete the on line version which can be accessed via the Council's website at: <http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces>. Emails can be sent to primaryplaces@wirral.gov.uk.
- Receipt of communications will be acknowledged and those with specific enquiries will be responded to in detail.
- Further information can be found on the website <http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces/Leasowe.asp>. You can also contact the Children and Young People's Department by email to the address above, or in writing to:
Joint Church Primary School Consultation
Children & Young People's Department
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead
CH41 4FD
- If you wish to make comments direct to the Dioceses these should be addressed to Mr F M Clarke, Director of Schools, Diocese of Shrewsbury, 2 Park Road South, Prenton, CH43 4UX, and/or Mr J Turnbull, Director of Education, Diocese of Chester, Church House, Lower Lane, Aldford, Chester, CH3 6HP.

WHAT NEXT?

After consideration of all responses by the Trustees to the Dioceses, the Governing Body and the Council a decision is made on whether to proceed with the proposals. If that is the case then the Dioceses and the Council make an application to the Secretary of State to publish statutory proposals and to waive the requirement for a competition when a new school is proposed. Should this request be granted the Council and the Dioceses jointly arrange the publication of Statutory Notices as per the prescribed regulations with the Authority proposing the closure of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and the Dioceses proposing the opening of a Joint Church Primary School.

Once proposals are published there follows a six week statutory period during which representations (e.g. objections or comments) can be made. These must be sent to the Local Authority. The representation period is the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposals and ensure that they will be taken into account by the Council as Decision Maker.

Following that, and after a decision to proceed, the proposals will be implemented with the intention of opening the school on September 1 2009.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

**Proposal to Close Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School
And Open a Joint Catholic/Church of England Primary School**

Consultation Response Form

Please tick the relevant boxes to indicate your views and add any comments you wish to make.

Do you agree with the proposal to close
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School and
open a Joint Catholic/Church of England Primary School
with effect from 1 September 2009?

Agree Disagree

Comments

Please tick the relevant box(es) to indicate any of the following that apply to you:

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School Neighbouring Schools/Community

Parent /Carer of Present Pupil(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms*
(*delete as appropriate)

ADDRESS

.....POSTCODE.....

SIGNED DATE

Please return this form to: Joint Church Primary School Consultation, Children & Young People's Department, Hamilton Building, Conway Street, Birkenhead, CH41 4FD by Friday January 16 2009. Alternatively, you can complete the online version which can be accessed on the Council's website at: <http://www.wirral-abc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces/Leasowe.asp>