

---

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 1 April 2009

SUBJECT: Proposals for changes to primary provision in the Richmond Hill Area

---

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1 The report informs Executive Board of the outcome of consultation undertaken on linked proposals to expand Richmond Hill Primary School by one form of entry, add new community specialist provision for children with special educational needs (SEN), and close neighbouring Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary School. Permission is sought to publish statutory notices.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2 At its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 the Executive Board agreed that formal consultation be undertaken on proposals affecting future primary school provision in the Richmond Hill area of the city.
- 3 Richmond Hill Primary School had been identified through the Primary Capital Programme Strategy for Change (PCPSfC) as a high priority for investment. High scoring against the asset management criteria qualify it for rebuilding rather than simple refurbishment.
- 4 The nearby Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary School is currently housed entirely in temporary accommodation, on a constrained site with limited outdoor play space, and adjacent to the A64 dual carriageway. The Catholic Diocese have indicated that there is no long term need for the Catholic places provided by the school, and they are therefore unwilling to invest in improvements on this site, beyond maintaining it for health and safety issues.
- 5 Data supports the development of better community provision for primary age children with severe communication difficulties, including autism, across the city. There is currently no resourced provision in the east of the city. The PCPSfC identified SEN provision as a key priority in determining specific schemes for schools identified in the programme. Provision for up to 16 children at the rebuilt Richmond Hill Primary School to serve the east of the city would form part of the project.

- 6 Formal consultation commenced on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009 and concluded on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009 on linked proposals to expand Richmond Hill Primary School by one form of entry, add new community resourced specialist provision for children with SEN, and the closure of neighbouring Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary School. Meetings were held with the staff, pupils and governors of both schools, and a public meeting was also held. Eight written responses were received.
- 7 There has been almost universal support for a new state of the art primary school to be built in and serve the community and good support overall for the proposals, particularly from both governing bodies who are committed to working together to plan for and create the new school, with a collective identity and to overcome the transition issues during the construction phase. There has been good support and recognition of the need for the proposed SEN provision.
- 8 Some concerns have been expressed by parents about their ability to continue a Catholic education and about the potential disruption to pupils' education during a transition. Staff at Mount St Mary's were understandably concerned about the implications of closure, but were reassured both that posts at the enlarged Richmond Hill Primary would be ring-fenced to Mount St Mary's staff in the first instance, and also by the commitment to, and track record of, Education Leeds in securing suitable continuing employment for all staff affected by reorganisations. Some concerns were expressed about management arrangements during the transition period, when both existing sites will be retained until the new building is completed. These will be addressed in due course should the proposals proceed. Full details of the issues raised and responses to them can be found in the main body of this report.
- 9 Following careful consideration of the views expressed during the consultation period, Education Leeds remains of the view that the proposed enlargement of Richmond Hill Primary with the addition of new SEN provision, linked to the closure of Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary, is the most effective means of delivering a new, modern, fit-for-purpose school building in the community.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10 There would be annual revenue savings of approximately £140,000 associated with the closure of Mount St Mary's should this proposal proceed, once the new school is built and occupied. This would in part be offset by an increase in running costs at Richmond Hill Primary as a two form entry school.
- 11 The capital funding for the new build would be delivered through the Primary Capital Programme and would be the subject of subsequent reports to the Executive Board.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 12 Executive Board is asked to approve that a statutory notice is published on the linked proposals to:
- Enlarge Richmond Hill Primary School by one form of entry
  - Establish community resourced specialist provision for children with a statement of special educational needs at the new Richmond Hill Primary School
  - Close Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary School

---

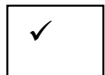
## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

EXECUTIVE BOARD: 1 April 2009

SUBJECT: Proposals for changes to primary provision in the Richmond Hill Area

### Electoral Wards Affected:

**Burmantofts and Richmond Hill**



Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

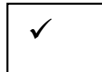
### Specific Implications For:

Equality & Diversity

Community Cohesion

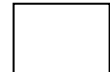
Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in



Not Eligible for Call-in

(Details contained in the Report)



---

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 The report informs Executive Board of the outcome of consultation undertaken on linked proposals to expand Richmond Hill Primary School by one form of entry, add new community specialist provision for children with special educational needs (SEN), and close neighbouring Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary School. Permission is sought to publish statutory notices.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009, the Executive Board considered a report which outlined options for the future pattern of primary provision in the Richmond Hill area. At this meeting, the Executive Board granted Education Leeds permission to undertake public consultation on linked proposals to expand Richmond Hill Primary School by one form of entry, add new community specialist provision for children with special educational needs, and close neighbouring Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary School. A six week period of consultation ran from 5<sup>th</sup> January to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009.
- 2.2 Richmond Hill Primary School had been identified through the Primary Capital

Programme Strategy for Change (PCPSfC) as a high priority for investment. High scoring against the asset management criteria qualify it for rebuilding rather than simple refurbishment.

- 2.3 The nearby Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary School is currently housed entirely in temporary accommodation, on a constrained site, with limited outdoor play space, and adjacent to the A64 dual carriageway. The site does not meet current guidance for a new school. The Catholic Diocese have indicated that there is no long term need for the Catholic places provided by the school, and they are therefore unwilling to invest in improvements on this site, beyond maintaining it for health and safety issues. There is however a need for the places as community provision.
- 2.4 Data supports the development of better community provision for primary aged children with severe pragmatic difficulties (autism) across the city. There is currently no provision in the east of the city but data suggests a rising trend in the identification of children with such difficulties. The PCPSfC identified SEN provision as a key priority in determining specific schemes for schools identified in the programme. Provision for up to 16 children at the rebuilt Richmond Hill Primary School would form part of the project, to serve the east of the city.
- 2.5 The opportunity exists, through the PCP funding and these linked proposals, to secure a brand new, state of the art school, which can accommodate the pupils of both existing schools and provide a secure long term future for primary provision to serve the whole community.
- 2.6 The proposal is to close Mount St Mary's from August 2010, and use the facility initially as part of a split site, two form of entry Richmond Hill Primary School. This helps bring the two communities together to form a collective identity and plan the transition to the new building as early as possible. It also minimises any confusion for parents applying for reception places at a school they would know to be closing, and it also mitigates some of the risks associated with co-ordinating the revised admissions arrangements and the new building project. It is anticipated the new building will be available for use in 2012.

### 3.0 THE MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 Public consultation on these linked proposals commenced on 5<sup>th</sup> January and ended on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009. A consultation document with the agreement of the Diocesan authority and notice of the public meeting was widely distributed to parents, staff, governors and agencies working in the area and was made available through a number of outlets, including the neighbouring schools, post offices and libraries and online. The consultation document included a pro-forma response form to encourage written responses. During this period meetings were held with a range of stakeholders and minuted for the purposes of recording the views expressed. A copy of all written responses and the minutes from the consultation meetings are available for inspection at [www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation](http://www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation) or on request from School organisation team, 9<sup>th</sup> floor West, Merrion House, 110 Merrion Street, Leeds LS8 2DT.
- 3.2 The timetable of consultation meetings was as follows:
- 14<sup>th</sup> January Pupils at Richmond Hill Primary
  - 14<sup>th</sup> January Staff at Richmond Hill Primary

20<sup>th</sup> January Governing Body at Richmond Hill Primary  
22<sup>nd</sup> January Pupils at Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary  
22<sup>nd</sup> January Staff at Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary  
22<sup>nd</sup> January Governing Body at Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary  
29<sup>th</sup> January Public meeting at the Irish Centre  
5<sup>th</sup> February Inner East Area Committee (cancelled due to inclement weather)

- 3.3 A total of eight written responses have been received. All of the responses received, both written and oral, have been analysed in detail. A summary of the written responses is in Appendix 1. A full listing of all the issues raised and Education Leeds' responses is in Appendix 2, with a summary of the key issues below.
- 3.4 **Staffing issues – what will happen to teaching and non teaching staff?**
- 3.41 If the proposal proceeds, staff at Mount St Mary's Catholic primary school will be made redundant in August 2010. Education Leeds and the Diocese will assist them in finding new roles, either in Catholic or community schools according to their preference.
- 3.42 Staff at Richmond Hill will retain their jobs, as that school is not closing, and the head teacher at Richmond Hill will remain in post. There is no substantive headteacher in post at Mount St Mary's.
- 3.43 Richmond Hill will need to take on additional staff to support the additional form of entry. It will be for the governing body and leadership team of Richmond Hill to establish the new staffing structure. Once this is established, the new jobs will be ring-fenced for the staff at Mount St Mary's in the first instance, on a like for like basis.
- 3.44 Where new posts involve promotions, staff from both schools will be able to apply. Because the proposal is to close one school and expand the other, if it goes ahead it is not possible to make all staff from both schools apply for all the posts at the larger Richmond Hill school.
- 3.45 It is hoped that through this consultation process and subsequent dialogue and communication Education Leeds can promote the benefits of the new school, so that it will be a desirable place for most of the staff at Mount St Mary's to work, accepting that some individuals may prefer to stay within the Catholic sector. This will provide continuity for staff and children alike. Both the Diocese and Education Leeds have a strong track record in securing alternative acceptable employment for staff affected by reorganisations.
- 3.5 **What happens to the children?**
- 3.51 The children at Richmond Hill Primary remain on roll at Richmond Hill Primary. The children of Mount St Mary's will be guaranteed a place at the expanded Richmond Hill. However, all children in reception to year 5 at Mount St Mary's at the point of closure will be able to apply for a place at an alternative Catholic or other school of their choice.
- 3.52 The Diocese are confident that all children seeking a place at an alternative Catholic school will be able to secure one. Legislation allows the receiving schools to exceed their published admissions numbers to accommodate pupils of closing schools, and each one will look at the requests received, and attempt to accommodate as many as possible, whilst taking account of physical and teaching

capacity.

### **3.6 Why were other options discarded?**

3.61 The first alternative, of closing both schools, and establishing a new school through a competition, would make this a more 'equal' proposal, in that neither school would stay open. All staff would have to reapply for their jobs equally, and a whole new governing body be established. All pupils would automatically be allocated a place at the new school. However, much of the feel of a merger can be created without the need for a competition. The existing governing body at Richmond Hill have indicated their willingness to welcome Mount St Mary's governors with immediate effect, and reconsider details such as the school name and uniform to make this feel like a fresh and united start for all. A competition to establish a new school would only increase uncertainty and delay to the process for everyone.

3.62 Another alternative, of creating co-located community and Catholic provision at the Richmond Hill site, with shared central facilities, and using PCP funding to secure new buildings, was also considered. However, there is no need for the Catholic places provided and so this was not pursued.

### **3.7 How will the transition be managed (including the timetable for change and governance arrangements)?**

3.71 If the proposal goes ahead, Mount St Mary's will close in August 2010, and Richmond Hill will expand to become a two form entry school from September 2010. However, the new buildings will not be available until 2012, as the design and build phases will take 12 - 18 months each. For up to two school years Richmond Hill will therefore have to manage their combined population, as one legal entity, over the two existing sites.

3.72 This does present a number of logistical issues, but they can be managed with support from Education Leeds, and with careful consideration of the needs of pupils, staff and parents. It does mean that the two schools formally 'combine' to work together at the earliest opportunity. It also means that parents have a simpler choice for rising fives entering school in Sept 2010 or Sept 2011 where they know what is happening and do not face applying to a closing school and then moving children later. Finally, it reduces any risks associated with managing the timing of legal processes to change the admissions limits of the school if there are any delays to the new building. On balance, it is felt that these benefits outweigh the disadvantages of split site management.

3.73 A suggestion to relocate the Mount St Mary's accommodation on the Richmond Hill site was received, in the belief this could reduce some of the difficulties of managing a split site. This option will be explored as part of the transition planning. However, it may not be cost effective and could interfere with building the new school. It would not require any additional statutory process.

3.74 The governing body of Richmond Hill Primary will remain in place should the proposal proceed. They could choose to expand to reflect their larger school size or could also consider adding associate members with a specific remit. The governing body and leadership team will be responsible for managing the details of the transition. They will wish to consider how the school will effectively utilise both sites during the transition. These details can only be developed fully once the decision is made, and the preferred destination of Mount St Mary's children established., Education Leeds will work with the governing body and staff with

immediate effect to start preliminary planning for the transition.

### **3.8 What are the details of the SEN provision?**

3.81 There is currently no provision for primary age children with severe communication difficulties, including autism, in the east of the city. The provision based at Richmond Hill would be accessible to the whole east Leeds community, and for up to 16 children. Although notionally this equates to around 2 per year group, admissions will be for Education Leeds, in partnership with the school, in accordance with the agreed criteria.

3.82 Education Leeds has been developing good inclusive practice, and specialist inclusive learning centres (SILCS) have developed partnerships with mainstream schools to enable children with complex needs to be educated full or part time in their partner schools. The provision at Richmond Hill would benefit from such resourced arrangements with existing SILCs with experience of children with severe communication difficulties including autism.

3.83 Training needs for existing and specialist staff will be assessed, and arrangements for training made. Likewise, Education Leeds will support the governing body as required with the development and running of the SEN provision.

## **4.0 LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There would be annual revenue savings of approximately £140,000 associated with the closure of Mount St Mary's should this proposal proceed, once the new school is built and occupied. This would in part be offset by an increase in running costs at Richmond Hill Primary as a two form entry school.

4.2 The capital funding for the new build would be delivered through the Primary Capital Programme and would be the subject of subsequent reports to the Executive Board.

4.3 Leeds City Council Executive Board, will need to make a decision within 2 months of the end of the statutory notice period.

## **5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Executive Board is asked to approve that a statutory notice is published on the linked proposals to:

- Enlarge Richmond Hill Primary School by one form of entry
- Establish community resourced provision for children with a statement of special educational needs at the new Richmond Hill Primary School
- Close Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary School

## **6.0 BACKGROUND REPORTS**

Options for changes to primary provision in the Richmond Hill Planning Area - 3 Dec 2008 Executive Board

Primary review: Richmond Hill Planning Area – 6 July 2005 Executive Board

## APPENDIX 1

### Summary of written responses.

A total of 8 written responses were received, 6 broadly supporting the proposal and 2 requesting more information.

<b>Staffing issues</b>	Clarification of impact on Richmond Hill staff needed	1
<b>Effect on children</b>	Positive (long term) future	3
	Provides some continuity	1
	Disruptive for Mount St Mary's children	1
	Benefits for Richmond Hill pupils are unclear	1
<b>Transition &amp; timescale</b>	Minimise time as split site school	1
	Proposed timescale is too slow (question economic impact)	1
	More detail about dual site operation needed, including impact for parents	4
	Proposed timescale is too fast	1
	Run two schools on one site until new building ready	1
<b>Governance</b>	Support governors from Mount St Mary's joining Richmond Hill governing body	2
<b>Community impact</b>	New building / proposal generally is positive opportunity	3
	Welcome opportunity for staff, children and governors to work together	1
	Proposals weighted against Mount St Mary's	1
	Can't stay in current Mount St Mary's buildings	1
<b>SEN issues</b>	Want more provision than currently proposed	1
	Would need support & training for staff and governors & experienced staff	2
	Need to share current good practice	2
	Needs to be adequately funded / resource implications noted	3
	Support inclusion	1
	Requires further details (resources, staffing, training, nature of provision)	1
	Concern about negative impact on perception of school by parents	1
	Autism provision needed	1
	Logical to consider as part of new building	1
<b>Buildings</b>	Specific new facilities / retention of existing facilities requested (see below)	5
	Details of new building / site maps requested	2
<b>Choice and Diversity</b>	Ensure this decision is remembered when considering any future applications to open faith schools	1
<b>Process</b>	Increase response rates with prepaid SAEs	1
<b>Other</b>	Further detail of pupil numbers needed	1
	Further detail of resource implications needed	1
<b>Specific new facilities</b>	gym, swimming pool, race track, studios, community rooms/training, more toilets, creche/nursery/children's centre, better parking & access, eco friendly / sustainable design, public sports hall, public art rooms, public library, public ICT facilities, good security, EAL/ESOL provision, separate community access, one stop provision, extended services, well designed and varied play areas	
<b>Retain existing facilities</b>	Community rooms, school dinners, ICT provision, interactive whiteboards, good book supply	
<b>School Council suggestions</b>	Swimming pool, separate play areas for different age groups and activities, including indoor play areas, bike shed, garden / natural habitat area & greenhouse, library, computer games / games consoles, individual desks with flip tops to store your own stuff, lockers, art gallery, school bus, all weather football pitch, framed pictures, toilet and cloakroom area in each classbase, outdoor access from each classbase, tennis court, trampoline, outdoor equipment eg swings and bikes, musical instruments/area/lessons, bigger classrooms, outdoor playbricks, sand and water area, bigger main hall, healthy tuck shop / cafe, paint the school bright welcoming colours	



## APPENDIX 2

### Issues raised during consultation, and Education Leeds' response to them.

**A1 Who is making this proposal?**

Legally, Leeds City Council is making this proposal. However, the Catholic Diocese are in full support and have created the opportunity by identifying that they no longer need the Catholic places provided at Mount St Mary's.

**A2 What is the proposal? Is it an amalgamation or not?**

The proposal consists of three linked parts:

- To close Mount St Mary's Primary School
- To expand Richmond Hill Primary School
- To add SEN provision as part of a rebuilt Richmond Hill Primary School.

**A3 What other options were considered, and why were they rejected?**

The first alternative, of closing both schools, and establishing a new school through a competition, would make this a more 'equal' proposal, in that neither school would stay open. All staff would have to reapply for their jobs equally, and a whole new governing body be established. All pupils would automatically be allocated a place at the new school. However, much of the feel of a merger can be created without the need for a competition. The existing governing body have indicated their willingness to welcome Mount St Mary's governors with immediate effect, and reconsider details such as the school name and uniform to make this feel like a fresh and united start for all. A competition to establish a new school would only increase uncertainty and delay to the process for everyone.

Another alternative, of creating co-located community and Catholic provision at the Richmond Hill site, with shared central facilities, and using PCP funding to secure new buildings, was also considered. However, there is no need for the Catholic places provided and so this was not pursued.

**A4 What will happen to the staff at Mount St Mary's and when? Will they be treated equitably with the staff at Richmond Hill? Is this a judgement about the teaching at Mount St Mary's?**

If the proposal proceeds, staff at Mount St Mary's primary school will be made redundant by August 2010. Education Leeds and the Diocese will assist them in finding new roles, either in Catholic or community schools according to their preference. Staff at Richmond Hill Primary will retain their posts as that school is not closing. However, Richmond Hill will need to take on additional staff to support the additional form of entry. These new posts will be ring-fenced for the staff at Mount St Mary's in the first instance. Ring fencing means they will be offered to Mount St Mary's staff first, before being advertised externally. It is likely the new staffing structure could be worked up in the autumn term of 2009 if the decision goes ahead, as early planning would assist in the transition for everyone. It is hoped that through this consultation process and subsequent dialogue and communication, Education Leeds will sufficiently promote the benefits of the new school so that it will be viewed as a desirable place for most of the staff at Mount St Mary's to work, accepting that individuals may prefer to stay within the Catholic sector. This will provide continuity for staff and children alike. It is not possible to guarantee all Mount St Mary's staff a job, as this will depend in part on the new structure, and also on the preferences and choices of the staff. However, the

Diocese and Education Leeds have a strong track record in securing alternative acceptable employment for staff affected by reorganisations.

The headteacher at Richmond Hill will remain in post. There is no substantive headteacher in post at Mount St Mary's. Where new posts on the structure involve promotions, staff from both schools will be able to apply.

This proposal does not reflect any negative judgement about the teaching at Mount St Mary's. The excellent results and Ofsted reports have been acknowledged in the consultation, and have been achieved despite challenging circumstances.

**A5      The uncertainty created about the future of the school previously is causing the challenging circumstances now.**

It is very likely that the long term uncertainty over the future of the school has been destabilising. However Education Leeds is heavily supporting the school, including working to ensure all staff vacancies are filled. We are now trying to end that uncertainty, and believe this proposal offers a positive way forward.

**A6      Mount St Mary's needs more permanent staff / Can you guarantee permanent staff.**

The school is currently being supported to ensure all staffing vacancies are filled and staff turnover is minimised, however staff are free to make their own career choices. This does not alter the basis of the proposal.

**A7      Why isn't a new Catholic school being proposed?**

There are currently very few Catholics entering Mount St Mary's each year, and they do not justify the places being maintained in the area. The Diocese have looked at baptismal numbers in the area and concluded they no longer need the Catholic places .

**A8      How many Catholic children are on roll at Mount St Mary's?**

At the last School Census (2008), 55 of the 135 children on roll were Catholic (ie 40%), with smaller numbers in the lower year groups. Only 6 out of 39 children (17%) in reception and year 1 were Catholic.

**A9      Where will children who want to continue a Catholic education go? Will the Diocese guarantee a Catholic place for all children currently at the school? How do we get advice on contacting other schools?**

The closest alternative Catholic school is St Patrick's, and Corpus Christie is less than a mile away. If Mount St Mary's closes, parents will be able to indicate their preference for these or any other Catholic Primary schools. The receiving schools are able to accept over their published admissions limit to accommodate the pupils of a closing school. Each school will need to consider the number of applications by year group, and their ability to accept more children class by class. The Diocese believe they have sufficient capacity in the other Catholic schools in the area to absorb any Mount St Mary's children wishing to stay in the Catholic sector and will work with all Catholic schools to secure this. This may not mean getting their first choice alternative Catholic school, but they will be offered an alternative Catholic place. If this proposal proceeds the Diocese and Education Leeds will provide all the information necessary to help make choices about where the

children continue their education. The Diocese has agreed to write to all the parents at Mount St Mary's making their commitment clear.

**A10 My child at Mount St Mary's can't get a place at an alternative Catholic school now, why can't they move now rather than later?**

At present they have a place in a Catholic school. Until a decision is made about this proposal all other schools have to stick to their admissions limits. Once the decision is made there is the legal flexibility to admit more children as part of an agreed transition. Parents have a right to apply to move their children at any time, however this must be within the current admissions arrangements. Moving children now will be more disruptive than waiting for the decision and whether transferring to the enlarged Richmond Hill Primary or transferring to another Catholic school in a planned move, risks further undermining the existing school.

**A11 Will the receiving schools exceed the class size pledge, and will the children be properly funded?**

Funding is based on pupil numbers at each school, so it follows the child to whatever school they attend. Receiving schools will be funded for all their pupils and will remain bound by the class size legislation.

**A12 Will the receiving schools have temporary classrooms?**

The receiving schools will assess their physical and teaching capacity to assess how many children they could accept by year group. We expect that the vast majority of pupils will wish to transfer to the enlarged Richmond Hill Primary.

**A13 Have other Catholic schools in the area been consulted?**

All neighbouring schools have been provided with information on the consultation, irrespective of their status as community, Catholic or Church Of England schools.

**A14 You are not allowing for parental choice because we chose Mount St Mary's for the quality of education not its religious character.**

The fact remains that it is Catholic school, and there is no longer a need to provide Catholic places in that area. This same good quality of education will be provided in the new enlarged Richmond Hill Primary and be complemented and enhanced by a state of the art learning environment. Parents are free to select from the available alternatives to best meets the needs of their child.

**A15 Will the new school have any form of religious provision?**

There is no proposal to have a Catholic or any other religious dimension at Richmond Hill. Any specific provision such as prayer rooms etc would be considered alongside all the other requirements at the design stage.

**A16 I feel this is disruptive for my child and will be removing my child now / at the end of the year.**

Any school closure will inevitably cause some disruption for the children in school at that time. However, Education Leeds and the Diocese will work with the schools directly and indirectly affected to minimise the disruption should the proposal proceed. Parents have a right to move their children if there are alternative places available, and it is inevitable some will do so, but it is hoped it can be seen that

this proposal offers many benefits. Furthermore, waiting until a decision is made would be less disruptive, and the offer of provision at an expanded Richmond Hill school provides for continuity of relationships between staff and pupils and in pupil peer groups, which will be less disruptive in the long term. Current year 5 and 6 pupils will leave the school and progress to high school as normal without any disruption.

**A17 If lots of parents choose to move their children out of Mount St Mary's now will that bring the closure about any more quickly? How will the school manage dwindling class sizes?**

No, it will not affect the timescale, which is driven by the legal process, the new building timetable and the need to manage transition effectively. The school will continue to manage staffing and meet the needs of all the pupils on its roll.

**A18 Will Education Leeds provide additional places at any other schools to accommodate children not wishing to go to Richmond Hill?**

There are currently no other plans to expand other local schools. Parents will be able to apply for spare places at other schools, and will be assisted in making their choices if the decision is made to close the school.

**A19 I hope Leeds City Council will bear in mind the Catholic Diocese's abandonment of Mount St Mary's when any other applications for church schools are made.**

The Diocese have brought forward this proposal based on their assessment of local and city wide Catholic provision, and are clear that the Catholic places offered here are not needed. All decisions on other schools will be judged on their merits at the time of any proposal.

**A20 It's not clear what the benefit to Richmond Hill Primary pupils will be / Richmond Hill Primary works very well at the size it is.**

The main benefit to Richmond Hill pupils is of a modern, fit for purpose building, designed to meet the needs of the modern curriculum. This can only help to enhance educational outcomes for all children.

The opportunity to share this benefit and provide an excellent learning environment for the children currently at Mount St Mary's as well does require expanding Richmond Hill to two forms of entry. A two form of entry school does also provide benefits, in that with a larger infrastructure and economies of scale a broader offer can be provided.

**A21 Why choose Richmond Hill school to expand, it doesn't seem to be very popular at the moment?**

To some extent the numbers entering the schools are influenced by their existing size and facilities. The numbers do clearly show the need for a 2FE school in the community, and there is no need for Catholic places. The council already owns the land at Richmond Hill, it is a site suitable for expansion, and the current buildings justify the investment here, and so this is the best place to expand.

**A22 Are there enough children to fill the school as a two form of entry school (especially if not all the Mount St Mary's children transfer)? More detail needed on pupil numbers.**

It is hope that the vast majority of Mount St Mary's pupils will choose to move to Richmond Hill. This would result in year groups containing around 40-45 or so children per year group, or around 300 children in the school in total. However demographic projections suggest that there is a need for a full two forms of entry ongoing (ie 420 places overall, and 60 reception places each year), and that there will be no difficulty in filling 60 reception places per year. The school would become a full two form of entry school over time, and would have an admissions limit of 60 from September 2010.

If the proposal proceeds, the school may choose initially to organise its higher year groups more in line with a 1.5 form of entry school and plan the growth to a full 2FE, dependent on exactly how many pupils transferred.

**A23 The demographic projections suggest you may need more places in time**

Education Leeds will continue to monitor the need for places in the area and take actions to secure sufficient provision in the long term, bringing forward further proposals where needed.

**A24 Why is there an assumption that a new building equates to success and improvement? A good school is about more than buildings.**

Education Leeds fully recognises that a successful school is dependent on much more than the physical environment, and needs the continued contribution of good teaching, leadership and governance. A fit for purpose modern learning environment can only support this work.

**A25 What will the transport arrangements be for the children choosing to attend alternative schools? Some of the other Catholic schools are a long way away. Some journey times to Richmond Hill will be longer than to Mount St Mary's.**

The existing policy of Education Leeds will continue to be applied to all children, and transport assistance provided where children qualify.

**A26 The children from Mount St Mary's would have a busy road to cross to access Richmond Hill, will traffic patrols be available?**

Education Leeds notes the request and will support the school in the process of applying for a crossing patrol. Accessibility and highways issues will be considered during the design of the new school and will be addressed as part of the planning approval process.

**A27 What is the timetable?(comments that it was both too slow and too fast). Will it be affected if there are objections?**

If the proposal goes ahead, Mount St Mary's will close in August 2010, and Richmond Hill will expand to become a two form entry school from September 2010. However, the new buildings will not be available until 2012, as the design and building phases will take up to 18 months each. For up to two school years Richmond Hill will therefore have to manage their combined population, as one legal entity, over the two existing sites.

The next stage of the process is to record all the responses to this consultation, for and against, and report them back with Education Leeds' responses to Executive

Board in April 2009. If they decide to proceed, statutory notices would be published and again the responses fed back, for a final decision in July 2009. This decision making timetable is subject to variation, and the Executive Board may ask that alternative proposals be explored if serious concerns or alternatives emerge.

**A28 Will the decision itself be affected if there are objections?**

All comments and concerns, be they for or against the proposals, will be carefully considered in reaching a decision. The objective of this consultation is to ensure all relevant issues are identified, so a decision can be made on an informed basis. It is the ability to answer and resolve issues that will affect the decision, rather than the existence of any objections.

**A29 Why not wait until the new building opens before closing Mount St Mary's? The time as a split site should be minimised.**

The proposed timetable and management of a split site does present a number of logistical issues, but they can be managed with support from Education Leeds, and with careful consideration of the needs of pupils, parents and staff.

The proposal is to close Mount St Mary's from August 2010, and use the facility initially as part of a split site, two form of entry Richmond Hill Primary School. This helps bring the two communities together to form a collective identity and plan the transition to the new building as early as possible. It also minimises any confusion for parents applying for reception places at a school they would know to be closing, and it also mitigates some of the risks associated with co-ordinating the revised admissions arrangements and the new building project. It is anticipated the new building will be available for use in 2012.

**A30 Will the economic climate affect this proposal?**

We have no reason to believe it will, and have had reassurances from the DCSF that there is currently no threat to the PCP funding.

**A31 How would the transition be managed, and in particular the split site arrangements? Will there be a temporary governing body?**

The management of the split site from 2010 to 2012, and the move into the new building on completion in 2012 would be the responsibility of the governing body and leadership team of the expanded Richmond Hill Primary School. The details will be developed once a decision has been made and the preferences for Mount St Mary's pupils obtained. The split site may present some challenges, but the school with the support of Education Leeds will develop the most effective transition plan.

The governing body of Richmond Hill will remain in place, and there would be no temporary governing body. They could choose to expand to manage the additional work involved in the larger school and in transition, and can also consider adding associate members with a specific remit. Education Leeds will work with the governing body and staff with immediate effect to start pre-planning the transition.

**A32 Will parents choose which site they use? How will classes be organised?**

During the transition it is not practical for parents to choose a site to attend – this can only be managed as a whole, and by looking at the sizes of individual year groups. It will be for the leadership team and governors to decide how best to

meet the needs of pupils, staff and parents. Classes will need to be organised based on the best use of space and staff, balancing the need for continuity with the need for creating a shared common identity as soon as possible. This may involve mixing up teachers and pupils from the two schools within classes at the new expanded Richmond Hill school

**A33 Can we relocate the Mount St Mary's accommodation on the Richmond Hill site? This would be easier to manage than a split site.**

This option will be explored as part of the transition planning. However, it may not be cost effective and could interfere with building the new school. It would not require any additional statutory process.

**A34 Do you have experience of managing transitions?**

Education Leeds has amassed considerable experience of managing transitions following reorganisations including the management of split sites. Education Leeds will share this expertise to support the school.

**A35 Will the expanded Richmond Hill school change its name or uniform?**

Both are options that the governing body have expressed a willingness to consider to help the two communities come together and feel united.

**A36 Will dinner times change?**

This will be worked out once the decision is made, and as part of the overall planning for the dual sites. There should be no problem supplying dinners for both schools, as Richmond Hill already supplies Mount St Mary's.

**A37 What facilities would the new building contain (a range of suggestions were received) and will the schools and community have a say in the design? Will there be enough budget?**

It is important to start to think about what the community would like to see in the new building, so that when the design process starts everyone can participate fully. The budget is sufficient but finite, based on previous experience. The exact details of the contents will be decided by consultation, and options will need to be costed and prioritised.

**A38 Will the new school have good security measures?**

The school will have good security measures to protect both the pupils and staff, and the investment in the buildings.

**A39 Can we see the site plans for the new building?**

The plans are not yet drawn up. They will be commissioned when a decision is made on the proposal. The building itself will be subject to normal planning regulations and processes, and plans available for viewing and comment in the normal manner.

**A40 How 'green' and sustainable will the new building be?**

All new public buildings have strict standards on sustainability and environmental impact to adhere to.

**A41 How will the construction and demolition work be managed? Will it be disruptive? What will happen to the old buildings? Will you sell off any part of either site?**

We would plan to minimise the disruption by working as far as possible at weekends, out of schools hours, and in holidays, whilst also seeking to minimise disruption to the wider community. We have extensive experience of managing such projects in Leeds.

It is likely that the old Richmond Hill buildings will be demolished and play areas created in their place once the new building is available. However this can only be confirmed once plans have been finalised. The Mount St Mary's temporary buildings would be removed as soon as they were no longer required as part of the transition. There are no plans to sell off any part of the Richmond Hill site as part of this proposal.

**A42 Would managing the buildings at Mount St Mary's be the responsibility of Richmond Hill School?**

From the point where Richmond Hill became an expanded school, in September 2010 until the new building was in use and the Mount St Mary's site no longer needed, then the buildings would be maintained by Richmond Hill Primary School.

**A43 What are the details of the proposed SEN provision?**

There is currently no resourced provision for primary age children with severe communication difficulties including autism in the east of the city. The provision based at Richmond Hill would be accessible to the whole east Leeds community, for up to 16 children. Admissions will be managed by Education Leeds, in partnership with the school, in accordance with agreed criteria.

Education Leeds has been developing good inclusive practice, and special schools have developed partnerships with mainstream schools to enable children with complex needs to be educated full or part time in their partner schools. The resourced provision at Richmond Hill would benefit from such partnership arrangements with existing SILCs with experience of children with severe communication difficulties including autism, as well as support from Education Leeds.

The exact nature of support and provision for each child will depend on their individual needs, but the key objective is for inclusive education so they will be educated in existing classes where possible. Staff will build on their existing expertise in providing individualised learning plans for all children.

**A44 We already have significant numbers of children with challenging behaviour who are not always adequately catered for.**

This provision will enhance the school's existing expertise in managing such children within a specially designed fit-for-purpose learning environment. Actual admissions will adhere to agreed criteria, and will reflect the broader needs of the individual year groups and the school as a whole.

**A45 The SEN provision should be larger (20-25 places)**

The provision is based on a notional allocation of 2 per year group, and a total of



16 places, as this is considered reasonable for a school to manage whilst still retaining the principles and characteristics of inclusive education, rather than becoming a specialist school.

**A46 The SEN provision would require staff and governor training, and experienced staff. Will the SEN jobs be internal or external?**

Training needs for existing and specialist staff will be assessed, and arrangements for training made. Likewise, Education Leeds will support the governing body as required with the transition and running of the SEN provision. The staffing structure and appointment of staff will be the responsibility of the governing body and leadership team. The posts will be open to existing staff.

**A47 The SEN provision should build on existing good practice.**

Existing good practice at Richmond Hill and at other schools, including SILCs, will be used to meet the needs of this particular community as well as the broader needs of the pupils.

**A48 The SEN provision needs to be adequately resourced**

Schools with resourced provision receive additional funding.

**A49 The school should not be perceived by parents as ‘a school for the badly behaved’**

This has not been raised as a concern during the consultation. The specific provision is for children with severe complex communication difficulties, including autism rather than behavioural, emotional and social needs.

**A50 Supplying prepaid SAE responses would increase consultation responses**

Education Leeds has a finite budget and a duty to consider effective use of public funds when planning all activity. It is not persuaded that this action would generate significant additional participation, and so would not justify the expense.

**A51 Early years provision and/or a children’s centre should be included**

There is a children’s centre based at All Saints Primary School which provides for the Richmond Hill area. There is no current plan to add further early years provision in the area.

**A52 How will the minutes of this meeting be shared? How will contributions be acknowledged?**

The Executive Board reports will summarise the contributions from all the meetings and all written responses. These are a matter of public record, available from Leeds City Council. In addition, all documentation relating to the proposals can be found on the website [www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation](http://www.educationleeds.co.uk/schoolorganisation) or by contacting the school organisation. All written comments including personal contact details have been acknowledged.

**A53 Other comments or observations received include:**

Activities suggested to help bring the schools together ahead of and during transition: Rounders match, opening day event, visits to each other’s schools,

visiting new schools together, sharing toys & games, emailing each other, video/smart board link ups, working together to prevent bullying.

The proposal is a good opportunity for the future.

We support inclusion / the SEN provision in principle

The consultation process has been useful

The governing body of Richmond Hill would welcome governors from Mount St Mary's joining them now, and have a current vacancy which we would welcome them applying for.