

<u>KEY DECISION</u> No
<u>DATE FIRST PUBLISHED</u> N/A

REPORT ON INSPECTION OF ST AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

WARDS AFFECTED

All

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

No

1. PROPOSED DECISION

To note the content and despatch of the draft Statement of Action at Appendix 1;

To note the role of the Archdiocese of Liverpool; and

To agree the way forward, as set out in paragraphs 6 and 8 of the Statement and below:

- Compliance with the Education and Adoption Act 2016, in that the local authority (and governors) facilitate the conversion of St Augustine's to academy status; and
- The Local Authority to continue to work with the Archdiocese to assist the school to improve outcomes there and progress towards actions identified on the school improvement plan be presented to Cabinet on a regular basis.

2. RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION

2.1 St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School was inspected in February 2018 and judged to require special measures.

2.2 Where a school is graded inadequate, the Education and Adoption Act 2016 places a duty upon a local authority and the school's governors to facilitate the conversion of

that school to academy status.

- 2.3 St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School is a voluntary aided school, in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. The consent of the Diocesan Bishop must be given for academy conversion to take place.

3. FACTS SUPPORTING THE PROPOSED DECISION

- 3.1 The school was graded inadequate for all aspects of performance – overall effectiveness; leadership; outcomes; the quality of teaching and personal development, behaviour and welfare. The report is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.2 The Education and Adoption Act 2016 requires the Secretary of State to make an Academy Order, through the local Regional School Commissioner, to direct that the school is converted to academy status. The Act also places a duty upon a local authority and the school's governors to facilitate that change.
- 3.3 Ofsted requires the Local Authority to produce a Statement of Action, outlining the steps the Local Authority and governors will take to facilitate academisation. A draft Statement has accordingly been produced, and it sets out the actions underpinning the conversion process that the Local Authority must take to comply with the Academy Order. They deal with matters such as the transfer of land belonging to the Local Authority to the nominated multi-academy trust.
- 3.4 When the Act was passed in 2016, the Department for Education signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Catholic Church (see Appendix 3). Amongst other matters, that Memorandum of Understanding stated that “decisions about the future of any Catholic school, particularly any decisions that relate to structural changes, including changes to governance arrangements, require both the consent of the Diocesan Bishop and the Trustees”. The current Archdiocesan position is that the relevant Bishop (Archbishop Malcolm McMahon) will not give his consent to the conversion of the school to an academy.
- 3.5 The instructions surrounding the Statement do not require the Local Authority to set out how it will work to improve outcomes at the school. The relevant instructions state that the Statement must set out “the actions the Local Authority and the governing body propose to take to meet their duty to facilitate the school's conversion into an academy; and the period within which proposed actions are planned.”
- 3.6 Ofsted required the submission of the statement by Monday 16 April, and it was accordingly sent to it on that date.

4. PROPOSED APPROACH

- 4.1 The Senior Assistant Director for Schools has consulted with the Legal Department over the actions the Local Authority and the Governing Body must take to facilitate the conversion. That Department has recent experience of involvement in voluntary academisation – for instance, the move of Rainhill High School to academy status

last year. That Department has consequently inserted the actions that must take place that lie within the Local Authority's responsibilities in order that academisation can take place.

- 4.2 However, it is not possible to insert timelines into the document. This is partly because of the Archdiocese's position on academisation, and partly because the pace of academisation is dependent upon other parties, in particular, the Regional Schools Commission. In addition, the Governing Body members at the time of the inspection have since all resigned. The Local Authority and the Archdiocese hope to install new governors at the start of this term.
- 4.3 If academisation is not put into effect as a consequence of the Archdiocese's stance, then the school will be in a position akin to De La Salle, which was also subject to an Academy Order that was not put into effect, and which (even with De La Salle being judged to require improvement last September) the Regional Schools Commission refuses to revoke.
- 4.4 Beyond this, the Local Authority's school effectiveness service will continue to provide challenge and support to the school, with the assistance of the Archdiocese. For instance, the Local Authority has deployed the former Headteacher of an outstanding school to work intensively with the school to improve the quality of leadership and of teaching at St Augustine's. A specialist consultant has also been asked to support the school to improve behaviour. Beyond that, the Local Authority will continue to conduct reviews of the quality of education at the school. Those contributions will serve to assist in improving leadership and governance at the school, behaviour, and the quality of teaching.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs of officer time and associated administrative work would be absorbed within the People's Services budget.

6. NEXT STEPS/CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Statement of Action was sent to Ofsted on 16 April. The Local Authority's School Effectiveness Service will continue to support the school and governing body with the school improvement actions outlined above at paragraph 4.4 above.

7. RISKS

- 7.1 If the proposals are approved, then it is still likely that the school will not be subject to academisation, given the Archdiocese's position. However, it is vital that the school is prompted and supported to improve by the Local Authority, in order that students there can achieve better outcomes in their GCSE examinations this year and beyond. The work in place is expected to contribute to improvement over that period and beyond, given past performance.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is attached at Appendix 4.

9. PREVIOUS APPROVAL/CONSULTATION

None

10. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS THEREOF

10.1 If Members decided not to approve this approach, then the Council would be in breach of the law, and improvement at the school would be put in jeopardy.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Statement of Action

Appendix 2 - Ofsted inspection report of St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School

Appendix 3 - Memorandum of Understanding between the Department for Education and the Catholic Church

Appendix 4 - Community Impact Assessment

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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