

St Helens Local Authority's Statement of Action

St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School, St Helens

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Statement of Action

Introduction

1. This statement of action is produced in accordance with the requirements set out in Ofsted's letter of 15 February 2018 to the Strategic Director of People's Services at St Helens local authority.

Background and Context

2. St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School, St. Helens (URN: 104833) is a smaller than average mixed 11-16 comprehensive Roman Catholic voluntary aided school of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool. Its intake is overwhelmingly white British, and almost all the students speak English as their first language. It was inspected by Ofsted in February 2018, and placed in special measures.
3. The proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium is higher than average at 48% (2017 IDSR), an increase of 7% from 2015. The proportion of students with special educational needs support is significantly higher than the national average (31% compared to 10.7%) and the proportion of students with an SEN statement or EHC plan (0.2%) is lower than the national average (1.7%).
4. The school deprivation level is 0.4, well above the national average (0.2). Attainment on entry, based on average point scores for reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2, was just above national averages for the current Year 11, and below the national levels for Year 8 at St Augustine's. The proportions of lower attaining pupils and higher attaining pupils in each year group are generally below the national averages. The proportion of middle attaining pupils in each year group is higher than the national averages. Absence rates, and persistent absence rates, are both above national averages, and increased between 2015 & 2017 (overall absences) and between 2016 & 2017 (persistent absences).
5. The school is usually under-subscribed, although it is over-subscribed for Year 7 this academic year (2017/18). Its pupil admission number for September 2017 was 151, with St Augustine's being the first choice for all of these pupils. Student outward migration over the past three terms has been: Spring 2017 – 19 pupils; Summer 2017 – 17 pupils; and Autumn 2017 – 11 pupils.

Leadership, Governance and LA Support

6. The substantive headteacher was appointed to the role in 2015. The chair of governors took up the role in 2015, but resigned earlier this month. The school was graded as a Band B school in academic year 2016/17 under the terms of the LA's school effectiveness strategy, on account of the decline in outcomes, and consequently was subject to support and challenge by the LA. The LA's work with the school has included the provision of a mentor for the headteacher (a former headteacher of an outstanding school); a review of the quality of education at the school in November 2017; and another former headteacher of an outstanding school has been appointed as the school improvement adviser and is providing guidance and training to senior and middle leaders. The school has been called to achievement and improvement meetings with the LA, where the school is held accountable for its performance; and the school has also received advice and challenge on matters such as attendance and behaviour from LA officers or consultants. Irrespective of the forthcoming Academy Order, the LA will continue to challenge and advise the school in order to assist improvements in students' academic and pastoral outcomes.

Facilitating Conversion to Academy Status

7. The LA and the governors of the school are required to provide information about the actions both propose to take to meet the duty to facilitate the school's conversion into an academy, and the period within which the proposed actions are planned to take place. The programme of actions that fall within the responsibility of the LA and the GB to facilitate the change to academy status are set out below, with a summary of potential costs. The majority of these actions will be undertaken by the LA's Legal Department, and each action has a lead LA officer responsible for implementation. However, the governors at the school resigned this month, and the Archdiocese and the LA are currently in the process of appointing new Foundation governors and an LA governor representative. In such circumstances, it has not been possible, within the timescale for the statement of action, to establish the steps governors would take in the event of the school converting to academy status. However, it is expected that the new GB will nominate a lead governor to take responsibility for the GB's communication with parents, so the latter set are kept apprised of developments, and have an opportunity to feed back to the GB on progress. Those actions, and the period within the actions are planned, are both contingent on

the consent of the Diocesan Bishop, Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP, as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Catholic Church and the Department for Education.

Other Actions

8. The LA will continue to provide challenge and advice to the school's senior leaders and governing body, given the LA's duty to promote high standards in schools in its area, and the likelihood that Ofsted will not be conducting monitoring visits to the school to assess its progress. Those continuing actions are described in broad terms at paragraph 6 above, and are likely to include an LA review of the quality of education in the school in summer 2018, and on-going training and guidance for senior & middle leaders.

KEY ACTIONS OF THE LA AND GOVERNORS TO FACILITATE CONVERSION TO AN ACADEMY

Action 1 – Land Transfers

The land on which the school itself stands belongs to the Archdiocese of Liverpool (see map at Annex attached). Other land within the curtilage (marked with cross hatching) consists principally of Playing fields, and belongs to the local authority.

Once the consent of the Diocesan Bishop to academy conversion has been secured, the LA's Legal Services will take steps to transfer the land it owns within the curtilage to the nominated multi-academy trust.

The Academy would be entitled to be granted a long lease of the school site from the Archdiocese. If the Council has to complete a transfer of this land to the Archdiocese before the conversion to an Academy, this is going to extend the timescale.

The school has playing fields on land owned by the Council of which it has exclusive use and so the Academy would be entitled to receive a 125 years lease from the Council. Council authority to grant a lease would be required, if not in the Cabinet decision, by a subsequent DED.

The Secretary of State's consent to grant a lease is required but is usually included in the Academy Order. The form of lease or agreement would need to be agreed with the Academy's solicitors. However, there is a prescribed form of lease which usually can only be amended to take account of site specific matters.

Action 2 – Transfer of Shared Use

Examination of the functions and activities of the school reveal that no uses are shared with other parties.

Action 3 - Transfer of Contracts and Service Level Agreements

A Commercial Transfer Agreement between the existing Governing Body, the Council and the Academy Trust will deal with the transfer of any assets to the new Governing Body including any existing contracts and Service Level Agreements for services from the Council.

Action 4 – TUPE TransfersThe Governing Body, as the employer, would undertake TUPE consultation with relevant staff eligible to transfer in accordance with the TUPE Regulations.

Action 5 – Role of the Governing Body

The LA envisages that the GB will carry out the following actions to assist in the successful transfer of the school to the nominated MAT: Presentation and discussions with affected staff on the expected changes and path to academisation (with the LA's HR Department & senior leaders);

A meeting with parents to outline and discuss the expected changes and path to academisation (with the LA's HR Department & senior leaders), in particular how the school will seek to maintain improvement in students' education and care in the face of change; and Effective liaison with the Archdiocese, LA, RSC and designated MAT in order to enable the conversion to academy status to proceed smoothly and without undue delay.

The governors at the school resigned this month, and the Archdiocese and the LA are currently in the process of appointing new Foundation governors and an LA governor representative. In such circumstances, it has not been possible, within the timescale for the statement of action, to establish the steps governors would take in the event of the school converting to academy status.

Summary of Costs

| | £ |
|---|-------|
| Central resources – including cost of LA Legal Department’s work to facilitate conversion | 1,500 |
| | |
| School Effectiveness Service’s costs | 1,000 |
| Administrative Support | 500 |
| | |
| HR Support | 500 |