

Consultation information:

Statutory Notice on the Proposal for the Closure of St Matthias Church of England Primary School

XX Month XXXX



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Contact Details	3
Implementation	3
Reason for Closure	3
Pupil Numbers and Admissions	4
Displaced Pupils	4
Impact on the Community	4
Rural Primary Schools	5
Balance of Denominational Provision	5
Nursery Provision	5
Sixth Form Provision	5
Special Educational Needs Provision	5
Travel	5
Finances	6
Procedure for Making Representations (objections and comments)	6

DRAFT

Introduction

Notice is given in accordance with section 15 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended by the Education Act 2011) and the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 that Tower Hamlets Local Authority intends to discontinue St Matthias CofE Primary School with effect from 31 August 2021.

Contact Details

Name and address of Local Authority publishing the proposal:

Tower Hamlets Council, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

Name, address and category of school proposed to be closed:

St Matthias Church of England Primary School, Bacon St, Shoreditch, London E2 6DY

Implementation

Date on which it is proposed to close the school:

31st August 2021

It is proposed to implement the closure as follows:

Following the closure of St Matthias Primary School it is proposed for the remaining pupils on roll at that time to transfer to other primary schools in the local area. The Local Authority has identified sufficient vacancies at local 'good' or 'outstanding' primary schools within 0.2 miles from St Matthias, and including places at nearby Christchurch, Church of England Primary School in Brick Lane, E1 (0.9 mile).

There are also vacancies at other schools in the areas to the west of borough, providing St Matthias families with a range of options to secure a suitable school for their child. The Local Authority will endeavour to meet parental preferences for school places, where possible.

The Local Authority is already undertaking preliminary work with St Matthias, Christchurch and other schools in the area on the necessary transition planning for children and families, should the Council decide for the School to close on the date proposed.

Reason for Closure

The Local Authority, in partnership with the governing body of St Matthias has reluctantly determined that School should now close due to a substantial decline in its pupil numbers over an extended period and the associated impact on its educational and financial viability.

Pupil numbers in Tower Hamlets schools are currently falling in the West of the borough where St Matthias School is situated. This means that St Matthias, along

with other schools, has not had enough pupil numbers to fill its classes. The School is now well below its capacity in all of its year groups and this is causing increasing difficulty in maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum with enhanced extra-curricular activities.

The fall in pupil numbers has adversely affected this the school's budget, which is now at significant risk. This has required St Matthias to take a number of measures to protect the quality of education, including considering whether it would be necessary to apply to the Local Authority for a licensed deficit. However, it is clear that should a licensed deficit be required the School would not be able to repay this within the required three-year timeframe, in accordance with the school funding regulations. The Local Authority is not allowed to continue to fund schools that are not financially viable and, after considering the alternative options available, it was determined that it would be necessary to propose for St Matthias School to close.

Pupil Numbers and Admissions

The numbers for whom provision is currently made at the school:

St Matthias Church of England School is a co-educational mainstream Primary School for pupils aged three to eleven. The School has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 30 for each year group, giving a total of 240 places (including nursery places). As at September 2020, the school had 106 pupils on roll.

Displaced Pupils

From Wednesday 1st September 2021, the pupils remaining on roll at St Matthias School will have the offer of places at other local schools. There will also be opportunity for parents to secure places at schools within the surrounding areas, including the nearby Christchurch Church of England School.

Current projections for school places indicate that there are enough places for future cohorts following the closure of St Matthias. The Local Authority will continue to monitor the projected need for future school places and propose changes, if required, to ensure sufficient places are available.

Impact on the Community

St Matthias does not currently provide additional services or use of its facilities for the wider community and there are a number of alternative facilities available for hire at other nearby locations. There will therefore be no loss of any enrichment clubs or programmes for local families in the community.

Rural Primary Schools

Not applicable

Balance of Denominational Provision

The local authority is under an obligation to consider the impact on the balance of denominational provision in the area before it determines the outcome of school closure proposals. St Matthias is a CofE school. Were St Matthias to close, then CofE primary school options would continue to be available in Tower Hamlets at nearby Christchurch and St John's schools. There are also other faith school places accessible in neighbouring catchment areas.

As there are other CofE schools as well as other faith schools locally and surrounding areas, the proposed closure will have minimal impact on the balance of denominational school provision in Tower Hamlets.

Nursery Provision

Children currently attending the nursery provision at St Matthias School will be able to continue to do so until end of the current school year (July 2021). They will then be able to transfer to the nursery provisions at other local schools in the area or to the reception year at these schools, if they have reached school age.

Sixth Form Provision

Not applicable

Special Educational Needs Provision

St Matthias School does not provide educational provision recognised by the Local Authority as being reserved for children with special educational needs. There are xx pupils on roll (September 2020) who have been identified as having special educational needs (SEN support) and xx pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Travel

The approximate distances for home to school travel for pupils from Nursery to Year 6 currently attending St Matthias ranges from 0.09 to 3.5 miles.

There are enough places at other nearby schools to ensure that the maximum distance any child would travel to school would be no more than 3.5 miles from their home address, unless the families decide to secure places at alternative schools with vacancies further away.

It is anticipated that pupils will walk or use other sustainable modes of travel to alternative schools in the local area and therefore any impact on road traffic would be minimal. There is also sufficient local transport provision to cover the routes from home to school of current pupils.

Finances

When a school closes its finances (any surplus or deficit) is returned to the Council. St Matthias' deficit balance will transfer to the Council on the School's last business day, Tuesday 31st August 2021.

Procedure for Making Representations (objections and comments)

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by:

Email: school.organisation@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Post: School Organisation and Place Planning Manager
Pupil Services and School Sufficiency
Tower Hamlets Children's Services
Town Hall
Mulberry Place
5 Clove Crescent
E14 5BG

Closing date for responses is 5pm Monday 4 January 2021

We will not be able to consider any responses received after this date. All responses received during the representation period will be published on the Council's website in late January 2021. The website address is:

<https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Home.aspx>