

Background and Further Information on the Proposal to Close St Pius X Primary School

1. St Pius X is a Catholic primary school in Withywood. The school has a capacity of 210 pupils (7 year groups of 30 children). For a number of years the school has operated well below this capacity with a large proportion of empty places.

Number on Roll from January School Census	
2010	116
2011	125
2012	143
2013	159
2014	155
2015	135
2016	127
2017	121
2018	125
2019	123
2020	106

2. The school has not been able to attract sufficient numbers of parents to apply for a place for their child in the Reception Year. The table below shows the first preferences since 2015. When Bristol was experiencing growth in applications for Reception, the school may have had more children start where the preferred school was oversubscribed. With demand for primary school places now falling, fewer pupils are offered a place that is not in a preferred school.

First Preferences (on-time applications)	
September 2015	8
September 2016	6
September 2017	4
September 2018	10
September 2019	2
September 2020	9

3. The school is currently judged to be 'Inadequate' by Ofsted following the last full inspection in June 2018. For a number of years the school has been judged not to offer a satisfactory standard of education, being judged to be Inadequate in 2012, to Require Improvement in 2014 and Inadequate in 2016. Despite extensive support from both the LA and Diocese, the governors do not feel that the school can make the necessary improvements to offer pupils a satisfactory education.
4. As part of the process required for schools judged to be inadequate, the governors, with support from the LA and Diocese of Clifton have been seeking to join a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The low number of pupils and accompanying financial uncertainty have meant that no MAT has been prepared to allow the school to join.
5. The Governors of St Pius X Catholic Primary School have therefore proposed and consulted on closing the school from 31 August 2021. The full proposal, as published by the governors of St Pius School, is attached as Appendix A (i). The proposal was published following discussions with both the LA and Diocese of Clifton.

6. Under statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education (Opening and closing maintained schools - Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers), proposals to close (“discontinue” in legislation), the Local Authority is the ‘Decision-maker in these circumstances. Proposers and decision-makers must have regard to the guidance when making proposals and decisions and decisions must be made with regard to the factors outlined in the guidance and follow the relevant statutory process.

7. Following a decision by the LA the following have a right of appeal to the Schools Adjudicator:
 - The Diocesan Board of Education of any C of E diocese in the relevant area.
 - The bishop of any Roman Catholic church in the relevant area.
 - The governing body or any foundation of the foundation or voluntary school specified in the proposals.