

APPENDIX 3 – STATUTORY PROPOSAL

The Governing body of St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School, Forest Hill Road, SE23 3LE, a voluntary aided school, publishes these proposals under section 15(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to close St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School, Forest Hill Road, SE23 3LE with effect from 1st September 2023.

Category Information

1. Contact details –

a. School contact details and category

Address: St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School, Forest Hill Road, SE23 3LE

St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School's phone number is 020 8699 8862, and email is office@stfrancescacabrini.co.uk

St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School

b. Local Authority contact details

The London Borough of Southwark, 160 Tooley Street, LONDON, SE1 2QH. Phone number is 020 7525 5000

2. Implementation

The date on which it is proposed to close the school or, where it is proposed that the closure be implemented in stages, the dates of and information about each stage.

St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School is proposed to be closed from the 1st September 2023 onwards.

3. Reason for closure

A statement explaining the reason why closure of the school is considered necessary. The closure of St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School is considered necessary because it is no longer financially sustainable. The pupil roll has fallen consistently over the past five years resulting in reduced funding which the school receives based on pupil numbers. From the start of the next academic year, the funding gap due to falling pupil numbers will incur further debt every year thereafter, due to the number of vacant places if the school remains open.

The Governing body believe that, were St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School to remain open, a new reduced staffing model would be required from September 2023, which would not enable children to continue receiving the high quality education they deserve and need.

4. Pupil Numbers and Admissions

The numbers (distinguishing between compulsory and non-compulsory school age pupils), age range, sex, and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is currently made at the school.

There is a nursery at St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School. It does not include any boarding pupils.

There are 86 pupils as of 8th September 2022.

2 children have an EHCP and a further 19 are supported with SEND action plus. A breakdown of children on roll by age group is shown in the table below:

Year R	1	2	3	4	5	6
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Girls	9	3	3	7	4	6	15
Boys	5	3	9	6	7	6	10

5 to 7. Displaced pupils

5. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for school places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

There is no need for additional places to be provided in order to accommodate the children displaced by the closure of St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School, as there are currently, over 800 spare places within half a mile of the school available across year groups to accommodate displaced pupils.

6. Details of the schools or further education colleges at which pupils at the school to be discontinued will be offered places, including

(a) any interim arrangements. **There are no interim arrangements required**

(b) The provision that is to be made for those pupils who receive educational provision recognised by the local authority as reserved for children with special educational needs. **There is no SEND specialist reserved provision at this school - this section does not apply. There are 2 children with EHCPs – transition arrangements for these children into alternative schools are being managed by caseworkers on the local authority’s Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) team to ensure appropriate placements are made.**

(c) In the case of special schools, the alternative provision made by local authorities other than the local authority which maintain the school. **St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School is not a special school, this does not apply.**

7.

Demand for reception places in the area has reduced dramatically in the last 5 years, the local authority took action in 2018/19 to reduce this excess by formally reducing the published admission number at twelve schools, and at St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School in 2021. This school is situated in the local authority planning Peckham and Nunhead which comprises 19 other schools, demand has decreased substantially, due to consistently falling birth rates and a variety of socio-economic factors that have led to fewer families living in the area in these 13 schools.

The table below shows reception year figures, capacity, vacancies and a percentage of vacancies. Ofsted and the DfE recommend between 5-10% vacancy levels to allow for parental preferences to be accommodated – the vacancy rate in this planning area is significantly higher, currently at 30%.

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
Places	945	945	810	810
Uptake	719	659	612	615
Vacancies	226	286	198	195
%	24%	30%	30%	30%

The local authority has confirmed that there are over 800 vacancies across years R to 6 at 16 other primary schools within 1 mile of St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School, which indicates there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils, subject to parental preferences made through an admissions process.

A coordinated admissions process will be delivered by the local authority for all families with a child on roll at St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School to

enable them to apply for an alternative school of preference for September 2023. Parents will also have the option to apply to schools, which are further away as there are some families travel from outside of the immediate area to enable their children to attend St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School.

The School Admissions Team at the Local Authority can provide information and contact details for schools; they can be contacted at the following email address: schooladmissions@southwark.gov.uk

8. Impact on the community

The decision to propose closure of St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School has been taken to protect the education of children attending the school, and ensure that, should the school close they can have a managed transition to other local schools. Southwark Council and the Roman Catholic Education Commission are working in partnership with the school as they move through this statutory process.

The Governors of St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School as well as Southwark Council and the Roman Catholic Education Commission of Southwark acknowledge that the closure of the school will have an impact on the community, and be deeply felt by many families/local residents due to the significant, community links and emotional ties developed and held by generations at St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School. However, given the significant level of capacity at high quality schools in the locality and across Southwark as a whole, families will be able to access alternative school places in the community. The closure of St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School may enable some of the surrounding schools with low rolls to strengthen their intake and as a result, to become more financially viable.

No mitigation will be required because of the availability of alternative school places at other schools in the local community.

9. Rural primary schools

Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15, a statement that the local authority or the governing body (as the case may be) considered section 15(4). **St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School is not in an area that has been classified as "rural", nor has it been designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15.**

10. Balance of denominational provision

Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice. **The demand for places in denominational schools has decreased substantially across Southwark. The number of vacancies in Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic schools has increased commensurately – from a 9% vacancy rate in 2016 to 25% in 2022.**

The number of preferences expressed per place through the coordinated admissions process each year in Voluntary Aided, Roman Catholic schools have fallen by 11%. The proportion of Voluntary Aided, Church of England primary places would reduce by 0.2% (because of this proposed closure). In terms of a balance between RC and C of E places, these would remain as they are presently - 54:46, as an RC school has just reduced its published admission number as well.

Reducing provision in this area could mean that the remaining Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic schools will potentially stay viable and ensure a future for this group of schools within the educational landscape in Southwark.

11. Maintained nursery schools

Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out

- (a) the local authority's assessment of the quality and quantity of the alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- (b) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

St Francesca Cabrini Primary School is not a maintained nursery school. This section does not apply.

12. Sixth form provision

Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, the effect for 16 to 19 year olds in the area that the closure will have in respect of

- (a) their educational or training achievements;
- (b) their participation in education or training; and
- (c) the range of educational or training opportunities available to them.

St Francesca Cabrini Primary School is a 4-11 primary school, it does not include sixth form provision, this section does not apply.

13. Special Educational Needs Provision

There is no special educational needs provision reserved for SEND pupils at St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School, so no specialist provision is proposed for discontinuation.

14-15 Travel

14. Details of length and journeys to alternative provision. All children on roll at the school could be offered a place within 1 miles of their existing school – there are 16 schools with more than 800 places, across year groups R to 6 available within this area. Every parent however, is able to make a preference for an alternative school inside or outside this area.

The commuting distance of children, currently attending St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School is not likely to be substantively affected as they transition into alternative schools. It is therefore not expected that journeys to and from alternative schools provided will be lengthier than at present due to availability but longer journeys may occur as a result of parental preference of schools outside of the local area.

15. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how the proposed arrangements will mitigate against increased car use. As outlined above, the pupils displaced by the school closure may not be unduly inconvenienced by lengthier travel, as there is plenty of provision within walking distance of St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School. This would help to mitigate against any increase in car use, as no more car journeys will be necessary than at present.

Making objections to or comments on these proposals within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, by 5 pm on October 20th 2022. Any person may object to or make comments on the proposals or, request a paper copy of the proposal by emailing vilma.edwards@southwark.gov.uk

or by post to:

Vilma Edwards
Education Access and Statutory Services
Children's Services
Southwark Council
160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

Signed
Chair of Governors, St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School