

Consultation responses re. the new school : 28 responses received

14 for the relocation and expansion of whom 4= staff, 9 = parents, 1 = Moat Farm Junior School

14 against of whom 12 = parents, 2 = parishioners

Comments people wish to be considered

Security and road safety should be given utmost importance

- The safety and security of pupils, staff, parents and the wider community will be a priority as the design for the new school develops. The Local Authority will provide support to the school to develop a robust travel plan that will be used by the school to educate all school users on road safety

Parking will be an issue even with access to car park because of new school plus secondary school

- Sufficient staff/visitor parking will be provided to meet the needs of the primary school

Concerns about new children starting at one school and then moving mid-year as can cause distress

- The wellbeing of all pupils socially, emotionally and educationally will be considered when planning the move including considering whether a phased move might be advantageous. All efforts will be made to minimise disruption. The exact time of the move will be influenced by timings of the building process which are beyond the school's control

Lost learning time and distress to pupils due to mid-year relocation

- Lost time will be kept to a minimum to reduce the impact on children and their learning
- Concerned about secondary school on site due to teenagers attitudes and behaviour around impressionable young children and would rather own children do not see
- Whilst the hope is that the primary school will be able to access secondary school facilities it will be timetabled. Normal day to day segregation will be managed by secure fencing between the schools

Disappointment that after 75th birthday history is being passed over

- The future of the school builds on all that has happened in the past. The age of the building means that it was not designed for the 21st Century national curriculum and compromises have to be made. As an aging building, it is also less cost efficient than a new building, particularly as the building ages and requires more repairs and upgrades, diverting funds from pupils' education. The opportunity for a new building means the building can be designed to match the needs of the current educational climate as well as being more efficient to run.
- Sadness as children went to school and hard to imagine parish church without school nearby
Unfortunately, there is not the possibility of expanding on the current site to provide sufficient places for Catholic children living locally who require a place. However, the school and parish priest are committed to retaining strong links and ensuring children have regular opportunities to worship in the parish church.

Concerned about the idea of an academy and wonder who would be interested in present St Hubert's site

- The council is proposing to lease the existing site from the diocese to establish a new primary school in order to meet demand for places in the area.

Concerned that with a state secondary on proposed new site, parents may choose to keep children on same site and therefore not send to Catholic school so more children possibly lost to the faith

- Some parents already make choices to send their children to non-Catholic schools. However, St. Hubert's has strong links with all the Catholic secondary schools to which it feeds: these links and the fact that many parents value Catholic education mean that they choose these schools ahead of nearer non-Catholic schools.

Life experiences have taught that big is not better and small organisations more successful than large ones and small organisations retain human scale, serving members and community more efficiently and productively

- The school is oversubscribed and an outstanding school. Expansions of primary schools by a form of entry have proved successful in other parts of Sandwell. The school is committed to retaining the ethos that underpins its current success and to use the many organisational advantages of being a 2 form entry school to strengthen its current outstanding practice.

Concerned it will break school-parish link and deprive school of its moral base and reason for existence

- The school and parish priest are committed to the school-parish link and will work to sustain this.

Why is there no statutory requirement for consultation and why will move go ahead regardless of views. Who made this decision?

- The 2013 regulations have removed the requirement for VA schools to undertake full statutory proposals for relocation under 2 miles away and for a school expansion, although there is still a requirement to undertake effective consultation with parents and other interested parties in order to provide them with sufficient opportunity to give their views. Although governing bodies are no longer required to follow a statutory process they are nevertheless required to adhere to the usual principles of public law by acting rationally, taking into account all relevant considerations and by being fair. The law expects that governing bodies will liaise with the LA and diocese to ensure a proposal is aligned with wider place planning/organisational arrangements.

Suspect reason behind proposal is council and individuals using St Hubert's as a catalyst to raise educational standards across area through St Hubert's and so gaining improved status for those involved.

- The School and Diocese are in full support of the planned expansion and relocation. The success of the school and an increased number of Catholic families in the area mean that the school is unable to meet the current demand for places meaning Catholic children are having to be educated in non-Catholic schools.

Larger organisation will drag down standards so St Hubert's and its achievements will be lost to the people and the church

- Standards link to intake, ethos, teaching and learning, leadership and management and governance. While the intake will be larger and may be more varied, all other factors will remain the same, so there is no reason why standards should decline. Indeed, the advantages of being a 2 form entry school will enable children's needs to be met even better and provide increased leadership and management capacity, factors which should strengthen the school.

Parking and state of Moat Road a problem

- see above

No bus route on Moat Road - causes problems for those who do not have car and for whom it is too far to walk

- Sandwell Planning Officers have been asked to investigate the lack of a bus route with the Transport Authority

Need transport provided by the school

- The school is not obliged to provide transport but will work with the local authority and parents to support access to the new school for those who live too far to walk.

Children won't be able to walk as too far yet walking is actively promoted

- Responses from the travel surveys indicate that while some children will not be within easy walking distance of the new site, some children who live too far away to walk to the current site will be able to do so to the new one.

Grandparents often take children to school - means they will need to drive and this adds to traffic and parking issues

- This also applies to the current site so should not make any difference.

Will be safety issues in winter crossing road

- Considering road safety issues at all times of the year will be considered as part of the planning process.

New site not convenient - has poor access and poor transport links. Road will be congested

- The new school development will include improved access / egress arrangements for the site

Don't believe school should move as bought house to be close to existing school

- Hopefully, because some parents have chosen to move near to the school to increase chances of securing a place, they will be committed to keeping their child at the school in its new location.

Cost of buying bus pass will be an extra cost for families

- The school is still within a 15 minute walk for parents who currently walk to school

Concerned about placing school on same site as a secondary school parents know nothing about and that may not have same ethos

- See above and also that this is not a unique situation with schools sharing the same site

Concerns that school is currently small and family orientated and this is one of reasons for success. Feel this will be lost when school relocates

- The school have made it clear that its ethos will be continued and that in fact the new building is designed to build upon its successes.

Standards will drop due to being a larger school

- See above

Believe loss of current pre-school provision will be a great loss as it is fantastic

- The pre-school provision will remain on its current site to maintain outstanding pre-school provision. Funding conditions unfortunately prevent them from being able to move with the school or the school being able to accommodate them in its new location. Once open the school will consider establishing a nursery as part of a wider Foundation Stage provision at the new site.

Scheme has been rushed through with no regard for thoughts of pupils and parents

- The project has been in planning stages for a number of months with the school providing updates to parents / carers and pupils

Parishioners would like school to stay where it is and remain linked as was intended when school was first built

- The school was established to provide Catholic education for those who wished this and lived locally to the parish and school. A change in the demographics of the area means the school is no longer able to meet the demand for places from Catholic applicants. As there is insufficient room to expand on the current site, it is necessary to relocate site: it is fortunate that there is an available site within the parish boundary.

Concerned about the number of non- Catholics who will get a place and thereby dilute Catholicity

Concerned that school will lose its strong Catholic identity and close knit family feel and strong home- school partnership and commitment to Catholic faith to which schools success can be attributed. Larger school may result in admission of more non- Catholic children which may make it harder to keep this

- The Catholicity of a Catholic School is not dependent on the number of Catholic children attending the school but on the leadership and governance of the school. The head of a Catholic school must be a practising Catholic. The increased numbers of Catholic children should strengthen the ethos. In addition, the school and parish have a strong track record of supporting non-Catholic families within the school who wish to become Catholic as a result of being part of the school and learning more about the Catholic faith. Many of these families are active members of the parish. It is hoped that, though the expansion of the school, as well as ensuring all catholic applicants who wish a place are able to secure one, there will be opportunities to evangelise and help no-Catholic children and families develop and understanding of the Catholic faith and experience the positive Catholic ethos. All non-Catholic families who join have traditionally supported the school's ethos and have to sign up to this as part of the home-school agreement. Many of these families make an extremely positive contribution to the school and some of our families of other faiths are very supportive in helping our children to learn more about the multi-faith community our pupils live in, so ensuring our children grow up into informed and tolerant citizens.

Concerned it may be harder to enforce non- Catholic children participating in religious education and that, without support of their parents, Catholic identity may disappear

- See above

Things staff want considering in the scheme

Need to ensure enough parking for all staff plus parents with disabilities

- Parking for staff and visitors, including the disabled will be provided as part of the scheme

Don't want unisex toilets

- The latest DfE / Education Funding Agency (EFA) guidance requires new school builds to provide toilets for the less ambulant that can also be used by members of staff

Ensure there is enough storage

- Store areas will be provided within the new school building in accordance with the DfE / EFA building guidance

Separate office for administrator

- All of the above will be considered and, where agreed, included in the design/site layout for the new school

Positive comments

(Many of the responses in favour did not make any comment other than “yes” to the proposal)

- Expansion is a good idea and a great move for the school
- Fully support proposal - expansion will be a great advantage and enable more pupils to have access to a great education. Keep up the outstanding St. Hubert's
- Fully support the proposal as it will provide the best facilities available for the children

Questions

Moat Farm Junior Trust:

What will be intention for separating the high school, new primary and Moat Farm as these are adjacent and separated only by line of trees at present?

- The high school site is secure from Moat Farm. A new boundary fence will be erected to securely separate the new primary school from the high school and Moat Farm sites

Where on site will new primary be built and will it be adjacent to boundary line with Moat Farm?

- It is intended to locate the new building at the mid point of the site where there is currently a split level in the ground. It is not intended to construct adjacent to the boundary line with Moat Farm, but to provide hard play areas between the perimeter line and the rear elevation of the new building. Obviously the final building location will be determined by the local Planning Authority

Will current right of way used by Moat Farm still be accessible to their parents?

- Yes, if the Moat farm Trust directors wish this to be the case

What will admissions policy be and will it be mainly Catholic pupils as Moat Farm are concerned about impact on their numbers as they have recently expanded and have 120 places in Reception?

- The school will continue to give priority to Catholic applicants in accordance with its trust deed.

With the 60 available places at St. Hubert's there are 180 reception places available in the area - will there be any contingency for schools left with empty pupil places?

- School will be aware from the updates provided by the Authority that the unprecedented growth in the birth rate does not give rise to a concern that there will be surplus places in the area

Questions from St. Hubert's parents/parishioners

For parents who walk, will there be a school bus to collect/ drop off children at new site as distance is further to those who cannot drive /can't afford a second car/ and only walk?

- Improvements to public transport are being explored

Will school masses still be in church? If so, will transport be laid on for children to attend mass in church?

- Intention that the new school building design will provide opportunity for most school masses to be held at the new site. Monthly school-parish masses will continue to be in church and there will be some school masses in church too.

How many places will be kept for Catholic pupils?

- There is no quota set for Catholic pupils. There will be 60 places available each year. Catholic applicants will be given priority in line with the trust deed under which the school operates and the school's admissions policy. As the school is currently oversubscribed, it anticipates that there will be at least 40 Catholic applicants per cohort. Other Catholic schools that have expanded e.g. St. Mary's, Harborne have attracted large numbers of Catholic applicants.

If there is a demand for school places in area why is council proposing free school and not a state school on old site?

- As with all other Local Authorities government legislation does not allow the council to establish a new 'state' community school

Why do we need to have more students?

- There is a shortage of places in the area generally due to the rising birthrate and new family housing in the area. There is a particular shortage of places for Catholic children. It is the school's and Diocese's wish to expand as it is currently unable to meet the demand for places from Catholic applicants.

Will children still have same chances of getting into Hagley?

Yes. The school is a named feeder school for Hagley.

Will St Hubert's still be a feeder school for Hagley?

- Yes.

Will children still be able to apply to Hagley or other preferred secondary schools?

- Yes.

Will catchment area be based on distance from the parish or the site of the school?

- As a parish school, it is likely that admissions criteria will specify distance from the parish church as the defining factor in the case of oversubscription. This will have to be formally agreed by governors.

Will teaching staff including senior teaching staff be moving with the school?

- The school wishes to retain all its current staff, so staff will automatically move to the new site. During any school year there is a changeover of staff as staff retire, achieve promotions or move school for other reasons. Therefore, it maybe that there is some changeover which coincides with the move but no change is anticipated because of the move.

Why was there no notification of proposed move in application pack for September 2013 intake - would have affected parents' decision to apply to St. Hubert's?

- September 2013 pack was relevant to the intake to the existing school site. At the time of that admission pack, this proposal had not been suggested.

Will the security of the school be improved from existing site?

- Yes, particularly with separate pedestrian and vehicular access and improved security at the main school entrance.

How will the disruption affect staff and pupils?

- Some disruption is inevitable. However, every effort will be made to keep disruption to a minimum for pupils, families and staff with dedicated support from the Diocese and the local authority

Are there likely to be further delays in relocation causing further disruption and upset for pupils and staff?

- No, provided planning permission is granted and we have no adverse weather conditions, or other factors that delay construction work.

Will name of school change to academy etc.?

- One consideration for governors will be whether to change the name of the school to the name of the parish to confirm the parish link. The governors have votes to enter into a multi academy company with 3 other local Catholic primary schools. However, this is a totally separate matter and will not affect the school name. A separate consultation regarding this will be held on 7th October.

Will access to site be any better than at present?

- Yes

How will parking be affected when the 2 schools occupy the same site with large numbers of pupils?

- Start and finish times for each school may be staggered to manage traffic flow in the area

Will children be expected to attend the secondary on the site?

- No, it remains a parental choice

The Diocese sold off the Parish Hall. Are there any guarantees school site won't be sold off to property developers in the future?

- As part of the expansion and relocation the current site will be leased by the Diocese to the local authority for 125 years and the new site leased from the local authority by the Diocese for the equivalent period. This will prevent any "selling off" of land.

Is new secondary school going to be St Hubert's High School?

- No. It is proposed that a completely separate Academy Sponsor will establish the new secondary school

Is the secondary going to be a Catholic school?

- No- see above

Will the new primary on current site have places for pupils that wish to transfer from St Hubert's rather than move?

- It will depend upon the admission criteria and arrangements established by the new school sponsor

Why does the council not provide for needed places by building on new site but not moving St. Hubert's, especially as the current document says the existing St. Hubert's will be a new school?

- The reason St Hubert's is moving and expanding is that more places are needed for Catholic children and the existing site is not large enough to expand. The local authority, diocese and school wish to expand and relocate what is an already existing successful school to ensure the high level of attainment is maintained and increased for local children.

Will the school in the existing building be a Catholic school or will the building be lost to the church as has much of the site already?

- As mentioned earlier, the building and land will be leased by the Diocese to the local authority for 125 years in exchange for the lease of the land and building on the new site. As such, the local authority will be free to make arrangements to provide places on the current site according to current legislation. It will therefore not be a Catholic school. However, the leasing arrangement means no land or buildings will be lost to the church.