



St. Francesca Cabrini Primary School

Forest Hill Road, Honor Oak, SE23 3LE Tel: 020 8699 8862 email: office@stfcabrini.southwark.sch.uk

13th May 2022

Dear Parent,

Future of St Francesca Cabrini Catholic Primary School

We are writing to you with the regretful news about the future of our school. For some time now the number of parents wanting their children to come to this school has been dropping to the extent that parents of only 16 children have expressed their first preference to join the school this coming September 2022. At the same time the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Cabrini) have been looking to increase the education of children in areas where it is sorely lacking, for example their missions in Eswatini, Ethiopia and Uganda.

When, last term, the Missionary Sisters decided that they would be withdrawing their sponsorship of the school as from September 2023, governors spent many hours exploring the options to not only keep the school open but at the same time to ensure the high standard of teaching and learning to its children. Discussions took place with Southwark Council and with the Archdiocese to see if there were any viable solutions available that would safeguard the future of the school, for example amalgamation with another local school.

Regretfully, we found none that were viable, especially with the continuing change in demographics in the borough and across London, and, fewer children would mean even less funding that would create a sizeable deficit for the 2022-23 financial year and beyond, which is not permitted. This will of course impact negatively on the School's ability to deliver the exceptionally high standard of educational provision and pastoral care on which it has thus far prided itself and it would no longer be able to offer the wide and diverse curriculum and learning opportunities which are so important for the children.

The Missionary Sisters have said that they will continue to support the School until August 2023 which will mean that the current Year 5 will be able to do their Year 6 SATS at our school before transferring to secondary school in September 2023.

Should the school have to close, which will be a final decision taken by Southwark Council based on a proposal by the governing body, then Southwark has said that it will work very closely with all parents, carers and Lewisham Council to find alternative places for the children still at the school in August 2023. Both Southwark and Lewisham have surplus places in their primary schools but not necessarily in all the year groups in all the schools that parents might opt for.

The proposal to close a school follows a statutory process which starts with a period of pre-consultation so that those who wish to express a view can do so. These views can then be considered by the Governing Body before determining whether to propose closure. Any such proposal is followed by a period when further representations can be made prior to a decision being taken by Southwark Council.

The process is set out in the attached formal pre-consultation document, including a questionnaire and a timetable with two open meetings being held at the school for parents and carers and anybody else who may wish to express a view. In addition, the Headteacher and governors will attempt to answer any specific questions you may have. It must be remembered that this is a pre-consultation phase so some issues can only be addressed by Southwark Council should the proposal go forward.

It has been a difficult and a sad time as the school has served the local catholic community for over 100 years, the children are uppermost in our considerations and the change in demographics and the reduced demand for places will mean less funding and so the school will not be able to provide the high standard of education the children should be offered and they could receive at other schools.

However, please be assured that, in the meantime, and with the support of the Missionary Sisters the school will still continue to meet our high standards of education and care.

The school will be posting all these documents on its website from Monday 16th May 2022 and there will be a link to the questionnaire which can also be completed on line from Tuesday 17th May 2022 if you prefer to respond that way.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Strappelli

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Strappelli". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Chair of Governors in conjunction with the
Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSC)