



Academy Conversion Consultation Summary Report

School Name	Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School
Date of Consultation	08/10/2018 to 31/10/2018 (Extended to 15/05/2019)
Date of Report	17/05/2019
Proposal	That Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School converts to academy status and joins The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust.

Consultation Process: Summary

08/10/2018: The School circulated a consultation letter (Appendix A).

19/10/2018: The Redbridge Teachers Union, “having been contacted by a group of parents”, contacted members, to express their concern that parents might not be aware of the School’s intention to apply for academy status. The email is forwarded to the Headteacher.

29/10/2018: The Headteacher received a [Position Statement from the Diocese](#) which he shared with the Governing Body (GB) for distribution to the parents. Sent to parents on 30 October 2018.

30/10/2018: A group of parents met out of school, the agenda being to ask for an extension to the consultation period.

31/10/2018: The official consultation period was extended to accommodate a parental meeting.

5/11/2018: The School circulated a letter to parents advertising the meeting on 15 November, quoting the “FAQs” in the Diocesan Position Paper (Appendix B).

01/11/2018 to 15/11/2018: The Senior leadership responded to a range of (75) emails from individual parents; a group of governors met on 13 November to discuss these and any other questions parents were raising (cf. Appendix C and Summary of Parent Responses (below)). A FAQ sheet was then comprehensively updated to take into consideration the concerns expressed in those emails. This was circulated prior to the planned meeting on 15/11/2018 (Appendix D).

15/11/2018: The consultation parent meeting was held at the School attended by Rob Simpson (Director of Education), Maria Shepherd (Deputy Director of Education), Fr. Stephen Myers (Episcopal Vicar), Andrew Headon (CMAT Project Manager), the GB, Headteacher, staff and parents. Circa hundred people attended of whom 63 were parents representing 57 families in the school. The others were staff, governors and Diocesan/CMAT representatives. Presentations were made by representatives of the Diocese and the School and questions were taken from the floor. A follow up letter was sent to parents and minutes of the meeting uploaded onto the School’s website on 30

November ([Appendix E](#)).

4/12/2018: An Open Letter is received by the School requesting an open meeting with a group calling itself the 'OLOLE11 Parent Group' (Appendix F).

28/1/2019: The School further updated the [website FAQs](#).

30/01/2019: The School then received 30 emails from the anonymous OLOLE11 Group asking for a response to its request for a further meeting (Sample Email Appendix G).

1/02/2019: The OLOLE11 Group distributed flyers at the school gate (Appendix H).

15/02/2019: The School were provided with the results of a survey conducted by the OLOLE11 Group, seeking a view as to whether the survey participants were happy with the School joining a Catholic Multi Academy Trust (Appendix I); more flyers were distributed at the school gate (Appendix J); and an email sent to the GB (Appendix K).

14/03/2019: Representatives of the OLOLE11 Group attended the School and asked to speak directly with the Head Teacher. HT spent 1.5 hours with this group discussing the concerns raised by the OLOLE11 Group. (An "impromptu meeting" and, therefore, not minuted.) In the Headteacher's words, "The group commented that they found the meeting useful and informative."

14/03/2019: OLOLE11 Group (with NEU and GMB representatives and London Borough of Redbridge Council representatives) staged a protest outside the School, whilst the HT met with the GB in School.

15 & 19/03/2019: The GB wrote to the parents proposing a further meeting on 1 April in order to answer outstanding concerns (and following the letter on 18 March (below), wrote again to all parents/carers asking for a written outline of concerns/questions for the agenda on 1 April) ([Appendices L,M](#)).

18/03/2019: OLOLE11 Group wrote to the GB requesting that all parents be invited to the meeting and requested a change of date.

22/03/2019: The School received a list of agenda items from the parents of Reception children (via the OLOLE11 Group, Appendix N); and a further set of approximately 80 questions from the OLOLE11 Group for discussion at the meeting on 1 April (Appendix O).

28/03/2019: The OLOLE11 Group wrote to the GB with proposed agenda items for 1 April (Appendix P).

29/03/2019: The GB sent an agenda to the OLOLE11 Group (cf. Appendix P).

29/03/2019: The GB received a letter from Leigh Day, Solicitors, questioning the School's consultation process.

01/04/2019: 15 parent representatives, believed largely to form part of the OLOLE11 Group, met with the Chair of Governors, two Vice Chairs, Michael Corcoran (Interim Chief Accounting Officer of The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust and Executive Headteacher of The Federation of St Joseph and St Teresa Catholic Primary Schools) and the staff Governor. Broad responses were provided to the parent questions, reminding parents of the extensive information already provided and a wide-ranging conversation was held regarding the background, benefits and challenges of the School joining a Multi-Academy Trust. The minutes of this meeting were published on the

School's website together with a further updated FAQs ([Appendix Q](#)).

15/05/2019: The School circulated a letter informing parents of conclusion to the consultation process (Appendix R).

17.05.2019: Consultation Summary Report finalised and circulated to the GB.

Parent Responses

<p>Total Number of Responses</p>	<p>Period 1: 8/10/2018 – 31/10/2018: There were 74 emails from 73 individuals (67 households) (Appendix S). Period 2: 17/11/2018 – 1/4/2019: There were 43 emails (37 households) quoting the same content and signing off as the OLOLE11 Group. (Appendix T). Period 3: 2/4/2019 – Publication of the 1/04/2019 minutes: 21 emails (Appendix U).</p>
<p>Summary of Questions/Queries</p>	<p>Period 1: Initial responses as summarised by a governor on 13 November: 1. Explain the thinking behind us planning to join in the first group. Explain why we are joining with the Palmer Academy, St. Aidan’s and St. Peter & St. Paul. 2. How are we proposing to keep the links we have with other Redbridge Schools for the sharing of ideas, best practice, and resources between Heads? 3. Is Redbridge currently supplying a sub-standard support and will their expertise be missed once we become a CMAT? If you aim to retain a positive relationship with them how will this work in practice? 4. What do we lose by not being part of the Redbridge cover? Will we have access to Redbridge Music School and be able to partake in the Redbridge Choral Festival at the Royal Albert Hall and other Redbridge initiatives? 5. Will you continue to make non-Catholic parents and partners welcome within our existing School community and will the prospect of a CMAT impact the tolerant and welcome nature to other religions, cultures and viewpoints and will we continue to present diverse views and religions to our children? 6. Does the School intend to follow the National Curriculum, and will there be greater emphasis on RE; and will other subjects be reduced to accommodate this? 7. Will a CEO / Super Head be appointed to oversee the CMAT? 8. Does the Diocese intend to engage in constructive dialogue with parents, trade unions, local councils, and other interested parties? 9. Will the implication and removal of financial accountability from established local checks and balances be considered? 10. What are the intentions of the CMAT regarding employment law where a teacher leaving an Academy and joining a Maintained School does not have accrued employment rights such as maternity leave regardless of how long they worked in the Academy before leaving? 11. By removing our School from the remainder of the local School communities would this have the unintended consequence of isolating us from interacting with our neighbouring Schools? 12. If as has been said there is not going to be any visible change to the running of the School then why convert to a CMAT? Also, some subjects may be prioritised over others and we need to understand how this freedom may impact such as the length of terms and School days and if not now maybe sometime in the future? 13. Historically, where schools have been converted into an Academy they have been run as a business with disastrous impacts on teacher numbers and quality of teaching even pay</p>

	<p>cuts. What are the KPI's for the conversion process and what would happen to the School if the conversion was not a success?</p> <p>14. What are going to be the specific benefits occurring after the academisation for OLOL School?</p> <p>15. What would happen if the academisation was not a success as hoped and what are the timeframe's and options in this case to return to a local authority-controlled setting? Could we return to being controlled by the Local Authority?</p> <p>16. Are many of the staff who are long term employees likely to be lost / leave and hence the character of the School change and will the Headmaster stay?</p> <p>Period 2: Requested a further meeting.</p> <p>Period 3: Requested minutes of the 1/04/2019 meeting; and criticised the process.</p>
Action taken during consultation	Two parent meetings; the FAQs were updated to incorporate answers to the above questions; they were referred to in the Open Meetings.

Staff Responses

Total Number of Responses	None. (The majority of staff chose to attend the Open Meeting for parents on 17 November.)
Summary of Questions/Queries	
Action taken following consultation	

Local Authority Responses

Total Number of Responses	None.
Summary of Questions/Queries	
Action taken following consultation	

Other Responses

Total Number of Responses	None.
Summary of Questions/Queries	
Action taken following consultation	

Consultation Summary

The extended consultation relating to the proposed conversion of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School to a Catholic Academy and membership of The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust has now concluded.

The two formal meetings held as part of the consultation process showed that a small group of the School's parent community had significant concerns and questions regarding the conversion to Academy Status. A Diocesan Position Paper and two FAQs were circulated to help address these questions and concerns: those in the original consultation letter (App. A) which were comprehensively updated and circulated before the 15 November meeting.

The number of emails received by the School decreased after each formal meeting. On the formation of the "OLOLE11 group" a single email was repeatedly copied and sent by the members.

Although there was no official Local Authority response to the consultation, there were significant concerns and objections raised by the Local Authority of Redbridge to the proposed conversion and these were responded to by the Diocese of Brentwood on behalf of the Governing Body.

There is significant support from the School's staff and the Board of Governors for the conversion to Academy status and membership of The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust.

In summary, a minority of parents have been vocal in expressing serious concerns regarding the conversion of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School to a Catholic Academy. Whilst many of these concerns appear to stem from a lack of knowledge, which the School has attempted to address through the consultation, it is apparent from the communications that some parents have an entrenched opposition to the idea of academy conversion and their objections are unrelated to the specific implications for the School. The School has sought to engage fully with parents, and those expressing concerns specifically, over an extended consultation period involving two dedicated meetings, continued correspondence and publication of information on the School's website, with all follow up questions having been answered.

Notwithstanding the views of a minority, there is a significant level of support within the school community (parents, staff and governors) for the proposed conversion.