

**A CONSULTATION DOCUMENT ON**

**THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE ST BEDE'S  
CATHOLIC SCIENCE COLLEGE AND EXPAND  
HAVEN HIGH TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE IN  
BOSTON**

**6 JANUARY 2011**

**This information can be provided in another language or format. For all enquiries please contact 01522 782060**

**Polish**

Ta informacja jest także dostępna w innym języku i formacie. razie jakichkolwiek pytań zadzwoń pod powyższy numer.

**Portuguese**

Esta informação pode ser fornecida em outro idioma ou formato. Para quaisquer inquéritos, contacte o número acima.

**Russian**

Эта информация может быть предоставлена другом формате. По все вопросам мвышеуказанному номеру.

**Lithuanian**

Ši informacija gali būti pateikta kitoje kalboje ar formate. Visiem pasiteiravimam prašome susisiekti su viršuj nurodytu numeriu.

**Latvian**

Ja nepieciešams, šo informāciju varat saņemt citā valodā vai citā formātā. Uzziņām, lūdzu zvaniem pa augstāk norādīto tālruni.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This document has been produced by Lincolnshire County Council as the first part of the consultation process with parents, the local community and other interested parties. The Council considers that the proposal is in the best interests of children, parents and staff at Boston St Bede's Catholic Science College and within the Boston area as a whole. The proposal to close St Bede's would enable Haven High Technology College to expand onto St Bede's site creating one school across the two sites under the leadership and management of the Boston Witham Schools' Federation (BWSF). BWSF includes Carlton Road Primary School and Staniland Primary School as well as Haven High Technology College. The proposal has the support of the Department for Education (DfE), the Diocese and the Boston Witham Schools' Federation.
- 1.2 The proposal is to close Boston St Bede's Catholic Science College with effect from 31 August 2011 and expand Haven High Technology College onto St Bede's site with effect from 1 September 2011. This proposal will retain the number of school places in the secondary sector in Boston whilst at the same time improving educational standards and opportunities for the young people in the area.

## **2. Why is this proposal being made?**

The educational challenges faced by St Bede's, as outlined below in this document, are not temporary in nature; they are features of the size and nature of the school and the context within which it operates. Progress has been made in addressing the key priorities from the school's Notice to Improve but the school has been placed in Special Measures. To a very large extent such improvements have been funded and supported by substantial additional funding through the Government's National Challenge programme. This funding and support ceases in August 2011. The capacity of the school to improve the educational provision in a sustainable manner is unable to be adequately addressed without a structural solution. The structural solution proposed for St Bede's is for the school to become part of the Boston Witham School's Federation (BWSF), currently comprising Haven High Technology College, Carlton Road Primary School and Staniland Primary School. This solution will enable staff and pupils of St Bede's to become part of a larger school community, with provision for 3 – 16 education, which has demonstrated over time the capacity for sustainable improvement through a balanced curriculum, consistently good quality teaching and learning, high quality extended provision and excellent leadership.

There are 4 main reasons for the proposed closure of St Bede's Catholic Science College as detailed below:-

### **2.1 Current and future standards of pupil attainment**

In June 2008, a three-year National Challenge programme was announced by the government to address under-performance in secondary schools. This programme requires all Local Authorities to demonstrate that its secondary schools have the capacity to reach the National Challenge floor target of 30% of pupils achieving 5A\*-C including English and maths (5ACEM) by July 2011 or to make proposals for structural changes. In August 2008 Boston St Bede's Catholic Science College was designated as a National Challenge School with substantial educational difficulties and potential financial sustainability issues being the second lowest performing school in England under the 5ACEM measure. The DfE has through the announcements in November 2010 raised the performance threshold to 35% including English and maths.

The rationale for the National Challenge target was to improve the life chances of young people by identifying a minimum standard that should be achieved at the end of KS4. A

further function of the floor target is to ensure that no pupil attends a mainstream secondary school at which the overall attainment falls below a certain level.

Under the National Challenge programme considerable additional funds from central government totalling £428K have been allocated to St Bede's since September 2008 to support its leadership capacity and widen the range of intervention strategies (see Table 1). In addition to these funds, high levels of consultant and advisory support have been provided on a weekly basis from the School Improvement Service.

Table 1

	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
National Challenge funding	£91K	£234K	£103K

For each year of funding, a Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) is written, to address the key priorities for the school. These priorities have included:

- Raising expectations and raising attainment, particularly in English and maths, with a key focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching.
- Ensuring a rigorous and robust approach to Quality Assurance.
- Strengthening the capacity of leadership at all levels.
- Ensuring high quality in the delivery of new vocational programmes.
- Ensuring rapid integration of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) by supporting their access to the curriculum and their language needs.
- Enhancing the quality of 'community' within the college.
- Ensuring high quality care, guidance and support across the college.

In considering the school's capability to reach the floor targets of 30% 5ACEM, it is important to consider the general nature of the school roll. The most recent analysis of pupil cohorts at St Bede's clearly identifies the high proportion of the pupil population with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) together with ability of the cohort, calculated by the KS2 Average Point Score (APS) compared with the National APS. See Table 2 below:

Table 2 Cohort Summary 2010/11 (Sept 2010)

	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11
Number in cohort	64	58	64	70	66
Number of EAL pupils	38	26	28	27	27
% EAL of cohort	59.4	44.8	43.8	38.6	40.9
Number of SEN pupils	29	17	19	21	17
% SEN of cohort	45.3	29.3	29.7	30	25.8
KS2 APS		25.1	20.3	22.0	20.7
KS2 National APS		27.9	27.9	27.9	27.9

Using the data provided by Fischer Family Trust (FFT) based on the prior attainment of the pupil cohorts at KS2, the future standards of attainment for St Bede's are estimated as follows (see Table 3). The model of estimation used provides an indication of what might be achieved if pupils made sufficient progress to be within the top quartile of schools nationally.

Table 3 FFT estimates for KS4 examination year

	2011	2012	2013	2014
5ACEM	27%	29%	23%	23%

Current and future standards of attainment at St Bede's indicate strongly that reaching the government floor targets for the 5ACEM measure is neither achievable nor sustainable in the longer term. The National Challenge programme ceases at the end of the academic year 2010/11 with the financial support that has been provided to St Bede's under this programme is consequently no longer available.

The Local Authority (LA) has to demonstrate with confidence that all National Challenge schools will achieve above the floor targets for the 5ACEM measure or make proposals for structural changes and St. Bede's was the only school in the country that did not have an agreed plan. The school is therefore judged to be at severe risk and significant pressure has been exerted on the LA and the Diocese to confirm a structural solution/closure. This was confirmed by the recent Ofsted inspection, placing the school in Special Measures. The DfE recognises the benefits of the proposed amalgamation, and supports the plan.

## **2.2 Breadth of curriculum**

The Published Admission Number for St Bede's is 70, giving an expected 350 on roll for this 11 – 16 school. The actual number on roll as at October 2010 was 319.

In the government's planning terms, the smallest viable secondary school is one with an annual intake of between 120 and 150 pupils. This enables a school to provide the minimum number of curriculum options to meet pupil aspirations and provide viable group sizes to stimulate learning through social interaction to promote the sharing of ideas, information and experiences as well as enabling pupils to participate meaningfully in team games, sports and other community activities.

A secondary school with a projected annual intake of 70 pupils will face an increasing challenge in providing a staffing structure able to deliver an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum, even in collaboration with other educational institutions.

St Bede's is finding it increasingly difficult to provide an appropriate range of viable option choices for Y10 and Y11 within its own resources even though it does fund courses offered by other educational institutions such as Boston College. The Interim Executive Board (which has replaced the governing body) recognises that many of the smaller sized groups are unsustainable as well as not providing a stimulating learning environment for pupils. Some groups have to operate outside of curriculum time in order to meet pupil demand or miss lessons to comply with specific requirements of its Science specialism. For example, in order to provide for the study of Chemistry, Physics and Biology (Triple Science), pupils have to miss lessons in Citizenship.

The secondary curriculum is increasingly broad and complex, and is largely structured around subject families, making it difficult to compare schools offering different subjects and different number of options. For example, St Bede's offers GCSE Graphics and GCSE Food Technology whereas another school may offer a broader choice within that subject family, offering perhaps not only those two Technology subjects but also GCSE Design Technology and GCSE Electronics. Therefore, whilst overall the school may meet the requirements of the current National Curriculum, in comparison with other larger secondary schools, the options available do not provide the breadth of choice within subject families, which may be enjoyed by pupils at other schools. Furthermore the recent DfE White Paper encourages schools to offer a broader set of academic subjects to age 16.

## **2.3 Recruitment of teaching staff**

Most secondary schools on Lincolnshire's east coast experience difficulties from time to time in recruiting qualified teaching staff with appropriate subject specialisms. In addition, the nature and context of St Bede's has significantly affected the extent to which it has

been able to attract a suitably qualified and experienced Catholic Head to lead the school and appeal to high calibre candidates for key roles.

Such is the lack of suitably qualified candidates that a significant proportion of the teaching staff appointed in the past has not had Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). In the 2009/10 academic year, 42% of lessons were taught by instructors. Although keen to teach, instructors will have received no formal training in how to plan and deliver effective lessons or how to assess the quality of learning and ensure the level progress expected of individual pupils.

A comprehensive programme of support for instructors has been implemented and the opportunity for such training has been warmly received. The quality of teaching and learning has improved as a result but overall, across the school, this aspect remains as broadly satisfactory.

The small size of St Bede's is reflected in the small size of subject departments. Many subjects are single person departments and there are thus fewer departmental role models for emergent leaders. This seriously limits the opportunity for professional dialogue and the scope for career development. Whilst there is a high degree of loyalty to the school, qualified teachers who may wish to expand their educational repertoire need to look for posts elsewhere. This is currently evident in the school's Mathematics department where all the teaching staff has been successful in securing posts and promotions elsewhere.

## **2.4 Financial sustainability**

The future number on roll appears stable and the school has underspent in recent years. However, the school is currently in receipt of National Challenge funding which is due to end this year. Also, it receives through its School Development Grant, £100k for Leadership Incentive Grant. The DfE is considering whether to alter the way in which this grant is distributed to schools from April 2011. So, whilst the school have been able to maintain an underspend in recent years, it will be unable to do so from 2011/12 when significant reductions are made to its budget through Government decisions. Furthermore, as the rest of this report demonstrates, current levels of spending in the school have not been sufficient to offer a broad curriculum and to ensure that the percentage of 5ACEM is at an appropriate level. There is therefore a strong financial case for change and the longer it takes to implement the change the bigger the deficit will be.

## **3. What are the advantages of this proposal?**

3.1 The Council would not be actively participating in this process if it did not see significant advantages for children and young people, their parents/carers and the local communities in the Boston area. The proposal sustains local provision and will enhance the quality of provision.

3.2 There are many advantages to this proposal and these are summarised as:-

- Greater curriculum choice including wider access to specialist vocational facilities across the federation creating a broad and rich opportunity for young people in the Boston area to achieve their maximum potential.
- Wider access to a range of extended services including speedy referral to support services.
- Access to a comprehensive menu of study support activities throughout the year.
- Improved opportunities for community and family learning supporting the LA's Children's Services vision and the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).
- Increased opportunities for continuity of educational provision from primary to secondary school.

- Providing long term, sustainable, high quality secondary education for the young people of Boston.
- Wider development opportunities for all staff to help maintain stability and provision of high quality teaching and learning whilst securing the quality of staffing.
- Greater focus on the development for senior and middle leadership models so increasing leadership capacity.
- Retention of the Catholic element of the school in that Catholic religious education will continue to be part of the curriculum offer in the secondary school and also members of the Catholic community will have representation on the Governing Body of the BWSF.

#### **4. What are the potential issues arising from this proposal?**

This consultation exercise will enable the local community to raise issues of interest and these will be added to the points summarised below:

- The closure of an existing secondary school (although school places will be retained by the expansion of a neighbouring secondary school)
- The loss of a Voluntary Aided Catholic School (although members of the Catholic community will have representation on the governing body of the federation and Catholic religious education will continue to be part of the curriculum offer in the secondary school).

The proposal was considered by the Scrutiny Committee of Lincolnshire County Council on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010 and after discussion the committee fully supported the proposal to take this to public consultation.

#### **5. What will happen now?**

- 5.1 The County Council consultation regarding the proposal to close Boston St Bede's Catholic Science College with effect from 31 August 2011 and expand Haven High Technology College onto St Bede's site with effect from 1 September begins 6 January 2011. This process will run for 6 weeks until 17 February 2011 by which time all responses to the Local Authority consultation must be received.
- 5.2 A public meeting will take place on Thursday 20 January to allow all those who have an interest in this proposal to be able to gather information, ask questions and get involved in the process. A timeline for the consultation process is shown below. Following the meeting a FAQ document will be published on the website at [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/provisionplanning](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/provisionplanning).
- 6 January 2011 - Publication of Local Authority documents commencing consultation.
  - 20 January 2011 - Consultation meeting with staff at Boston St Bede's Catholic Science College.
  - 20 January 2011 - Consultation meeting at 6.00pm with parents and the public at Boston St Bede's Catholic Science College
  - 17 February 2011 - Local Authority 6 weeks public consultation on closure (this document) ends.
- 5.3 The questionnaire at the back of this document can be completed and returned as indicated. All such responses will be collated and analysed and a report will be written and presented to the Children's Services Executive for a decision in March 2011.
- 5.4 If the Executive approves the decision to proceed to the publication of a Statutory Notice proposing the closure of Boston St Bede's Catholic Science College with effect from 31

August 2011 and the expansion of Haven High Technology College onto St Bede's site then a 6 week representation period would be expected to start at the end of March 2011.

- 5.5 At the close of the Statutory Notice period (6 weeks) responses will be collated and analysed and a second report will be presented to the Executive for a final decision in June 2011. If this process approves the decision to close Boston St Bede's Catholic Science College then this will happen on 31 August 2011 and Haven High will expand onto the St Bede's site on 1 September 2011.



## Consultation Feedback Form on the Closure of St Bede's Catholic Science College and the Expansion of Haven High Technology College in Boston

Please note that if you do not provide your name and address your views will not be counted as legitimate responses to this consultation. Names and contact details will remain confidential.

Name:	Email (optional)		
Postal address:			
Parent/Carer <input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher/Schools staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Governor <input type="checkbox"/>	Employer/Business <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> : .....			
Which school (if any) do you represent?			

Having read the proposal please indicate your view below by ticking one of the boxes.

I am in favour of proposal  I am against proposal  I am neither for nor against the proposal

Why have you decided that is your view? Tell us about it below.

Is there anything else you want us to consider?

Please return the completed form by Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011 to: Property & Technology Management, Children's Services, Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YQ or email [provisionplanning@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:provisionplanning@lincolnshire.gov.uk) or fax 01522 553257