

Appendix 1 – Objection received during representation period (7 May – 4 June 2025)

Email received on 10th May

Response below sent on Wednesday 21st May at 13:36

Dear Respondent

Please find the responses to your objection and response below.

Your objection and responses will be published in full, anonymously as requested.

I believe that this closure reduces choice for parents in Crouch End, Stroud Green, and North Islington, especially parents practicing in the Catholic faith.

Response: Despite the closure of St Peter in Chains Infant and St Gildas Junior school Haringey will still have 9 other Catholic primary schools (including Infant and Junior schools) almost all of which currently have vacancies. Haringey is also a relatively compact London borough with an excellent public transport system and local schools with a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating within a reasonable travelling distance. Haringey, along with most other London boroughs still has a surplus of primary school places and many primary schools operating below that physical capacity. This allows them to easily revert to their previous size should there be an additional need for places.

There has been a school on the site of St Gilda's for many decades (if not longer), and whilst I appreciate that numbers in primary schools in London are declining at the moment, this may not always be the case. I'm sure only 20 years ago, most schools were oversubscribed. These trajectories can be subject to change, and it feels counterproductive and financially short sighted for the council to shut primary schools now, only to have to potentially reopen them in 10 or 20 years.

Response: The Council has a duty to ensure a high standard of education to all pupils. Schools cannot afford to run significantly below their capacity and a school with a significant fall in pupil rolls will struggle to pay staff salaries and all the costs associated with delivering a full rich curriculum for pupils, including enrichment programmes and also upkeep of buildings and maintenance. Haringey, along with most other London boroughs still has a surplus of primary school places and primary schools operating below their physical capacity. This allows them to easily revert to their previous size should there be an additional need for places. This would negate the opening of new schools should demand increase in future years.

I also think there are alternatives. Maybe encouraging children from all faiths to be able to apply to the two schools. Possibly the provision of a more secular education, with the Catholic ethos of trying to be a good person etc but not specifically following any faith, would be more viable?

Has it been investigated as to why the number of students declined from 135 to 65 in one school year? If this isn't affecting nearby schools like Coleridge, then might there be a different issue?

Response: Demand for Faith schools (Catholic and CofE) has fallen by a far greater proportion in Haringey in recent years compared to non-Faith settings. Since 2012 demand for Faith schools expressed as first place preferences (FPP) has fallen 43% from 826 to 467

whilst demand for non-Faith schools (FPP) has only fallen 7% from 2,313 to 2,142. These statistics strongly suggest that some sort of multi-faith school wouldn't make any significant difference, especially in an era of falling school rolls.

I think it's good to have smaller primary schools available in the borough, as some children thrive in smaller classrooms. Whilst I understand that more students are needed - I wonder whether all of the possible avenues to increase pupil numbers at St Peter's and St Gilda's have been explored.

Response: The Council, Diocese and both schools have worked hard over the last year to try and prevent closure through a variety of actions including efficiency savings (moving to one school site and reducing capacity to better match demand), guidance from the Diocese and promotion of the school locally by the school(s) themselves.

I would also like to understand what is proposed for the two sites if the schools do close? Will they be repurposed in the interest of the community?

Response: The role of the Council in what happens to the two school sites will be limited as both sites are owned by the Diocese. Any proposal to utilise either or both sites for non-educational provision would require the Diocese to submit an application to the Department for Education. At the recent school meeting a member of the Diocese went through the process. For the immediate future, the school site will be secured with property guardians and discussions with local community and other interested parties will commence. We are aware that the Diocese has utilised other sites for educational use.

Yours Faithfully

Haringey Council School Consultation

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