

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

REPORT FOR RESOLUTION

COMMITTEE Executive

DATE 14 March 2007

SUBJECT Proposed closure of Nicholas Varley Community Primary School and St Mark's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School and the establishment of a community primary school in their place.

REPORT OF Director of Children's Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Executive of the response to the publication of formal notices proposing the closure of Nicholas Varley Primary School and St Mark's CE Primary School and the creation of a new community primary school in their place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Nicholas Varley Community Primary School and St Mark's CE Primary School (Voluntary Controlled) close on 31 August 2007 and that a new 315 place community primary school be established in their place, from 1 September 2007.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REVENUE BUDGET

The revenue balances for both schools at the time of closure is projected to be a deficit: Nicholas Varley £47,044 and St Mark's £29. The deficits will revert to the City Council to manage.

The new school will begin from a balanced budget position. Its funding will come through application of the LA's Scheme For Financing Schools, which will provide initially for a part-year allocation to cover the period 1 September 2007 to 31 March 2008.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CAPITAL BUDGET

The cost of building the new school will be met in full from Manchester's New Deal for Schools capital allocation from the DfES.

The cost of minor works required for the Nicholas Varley building to accommodate the additional pupils from St Mark's Primary on a temporary basis will be met from the Children's Services capital programme.

CONTACT OFFICERS

Allan Seaborn 234 7155
a.seaborn@manchester.gov.uk

Seema Hanware 234 7464
s.hanware@manchester.gov.uk

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Previous reports of the Director of Children's Services to the Executive and the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, copies of which are available on the report file for inspection.

WARDS AFFECTED

All

IMPLICATIONS FOR

ANTI POVERTY	EQUAL OPPS	ENVIRONMENT	EMPLOYMENT
No	Yes	No	Yes

INTRODUCTION

1. At its meeting on 20 December 2006 the Executive resolved that the Director of Children's Services should publish a statutory notice on a proposal to close Nicholas Varley Community Primary School, Nelson Street, Miles Platting, Manchester, M40 8FE and St Mark's CE (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School Miles Platting, Holland Street, Manchester, M40 7DA from 31 August 2007; and in their place to establish a new 315 place community primary school, from 01 September 2007. The Executive was advised that any objections or comments on the proposal made within six weeks of publication of the notice would be referred to the School Organisation Committee (SOC) for a decision on the proposal to be made.

2. A copy of the statutory notice is at Appendix A. This was posted at all external and internal entrances to the Nicholas Varley and St Mark's buildings and sites. It was also placed in the local library and in the entrance foyer of Overseas House. The period for objections ran from 8 January 2007 to 25 February 2007.

RESPONSE TO THE CLOSURE NOTICE

3. No objections were received to the closure notice and as a result the notice does not need to be referred to the School Organisation Committee for determination. The Executive is therefore asked to confirm closure of Nicholas Varley and St Mark's CE Primary schools, with effect from 31 August 2007; and the establishment of a new 315 place community primary school in their place, with effect from 1 September 2007.

TEMPORARY GOVERNING BODY

4. The Director of Children's Services has been working closely with the existing governing bodies at Nicholas Varley and St Mark's Primary Schools to establish a temporary governing body for the new successor school. The temporary governing body will be made up of equal representatives from the two existing schools and from LA, parent and church representatives. In the first instance the temporary governing body will have an independent chair appointed by the LA. The temporary governing body will oversee a number of time specific tasks that need to be undertaken when a creation of a new school has been proposed. In time, the temporary governing body will be disbanded and replaced with a permanent body.
5. Once the Executive has confirmed the proposal to discontinue Nicholas Varley and St Mark's Primary Schools, from 31 August 2007 and establish a new school in their place, the temporary governing body will move quickly to develop a staffing structure for the new school. In the first instance, the priority will be to appoint a new head and deputy head. Once the headteacher has been appointed, the headteacher designate and the temporary governing body will work together to recruit to the remaining posts in the staffing structure.

EMPLOYMENT IMPLICATIONS

6. If the proposal goes ahead recruitment to posts at the new school will be carried out by the temporary governing body. The headteacher and deputy headteacher posts for the new school will be advertised nationally, in accordance with statutory requirements.
7. A procedure for recruitment to other posts at the new school has been discussed with the trade unions/teacher associations representing the existing St Mark's/Nicholas Varley staff. This procedure will, in the first

instance, ring fence the available posts at the new school to permanent staff from the existing schools.

8. Any staff not appointed to posts at the new school will be able to apply for vacant posts in other schools. To assist displaced staff in securing such opportunities, the LA will offer time-limited financial incentives to receiving schools.
9. Any unfilled posts will be available for staff in other closing schools to apply for and, ultimately, may need to be subject to external recruitment.



**NOTICE OF PROPOSALS TO CLOSE NICHOLAS VARLEY
COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL & ST MARK'S CHURCH OF
ENGLAND (VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED) PRIMARY SCHOOL
FROM 31 AUGUST 2007 & ESTABLISH A NEW COMMUNITY
PRIMARY SCHOOL IN THEIR PLACE FROM 1 SEPTEMBER
2007**

Part 1:

Notice is hereby given in accordance with section 29(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ("The Act"), that Manchester City Council intends to discontinue Nicholas Varley Community Primary School, Nelson Street, Miles Platting, Manchester, M40 8FE and St Mark's CE (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School Miles Platting, Holland Street, Manchester, M40 7DA from 31 August 2007.

It is proposed that pupils currently attending these schools will attend the new Community Primary school proposed in Part 2 of this notice. However, admission may be sought at other schools in the local area, subject to the availability of places. No transport arrangements are necessary.

Part 2:

Notice is hereby given in accordance with section 28(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 that Manchester City Council intends to establish a new Community Primary school for 315 boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 11 from 01 September 2007. The nursery class will provide 45 (full time equivalent) places.

The new school will be situated in the premises currently occupied by Nicholas Varley Primary School on Nelson Street, Miles Platting, Manchester, M40 8FE.

Manchester City Council will be the admissions authority for the proposed school. There will be no selection by ability.

The number of pupils to be admitted to the school at age 4 from 01 September 2007 and subsequent years will be 45. Manchester City Council's transport policy will apply.

Within six weeks after the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by sending the representations to:

The Director of Children's Services (FAO Siân Davies)
School Organisation, Development and Admissions
Overseas House
Quay Street
Manchester
M3 3BB

Within one month after the end of the representation period, the LA will send to the School Organisation Committee for the area copies of all representations made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the representation period, together with the Authority's observations on them.

Signed: Susan Orrell, City Solicitor

Date: 4 January 2007

Explanatory Notes

1. This proposal came out of a City-wide review of Primary Schools carried out by a multi agency Steering Group.
2. The proposal is to close Nicholas Varley Community Primary School and St Mark's CE (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School and to replace them with a new 315 place with a 45 place nursery Community Primary School in Miles Platting. The new school will be established from 1 September 2007 and will operate from the premises currently occupied by Nicholas Varley Primary School.
3. It is intended to provide the new school with a new build on the site of St Mark's Primary School, subject to land acquisition. The earliest date for completion of the build being September 2008.

4. The basis for this proposal is that pupil numbers at Nicholas Varley and St Mark's are very low and projections show that the position is not likely to self correct. There are enough pupils in the area to sustain one school.

5. The new school will contribute to community cohesion by working in collaboration with neighbouring primary, secondary and special schools, to ensure that good practice is identified. Wherever possible the new school will admit pupils with a wide range of special educational needs. It will therefore be a genuinely inclusive resource. The syllabus for religious education at the new school will be the Council's agreed syllabus for religious education which promotes an awareness of other cultures, faiths and lifestyles and encourages respect, understanding and tolerance.

6. Copies of all the reports to the City Council's Executive relating to the proposal to cease to maintain Nicholas Varley Community School and St Mark's CE (Voluntary Controlled) School and to establish a new Community School in their place are available on demand and free of charge from the Director of Children's Services (FAO Siân Davies), School Organisation, Development and Admissions, Overseas House, Quay Street, Manchester, M3 3BB.