

**Corporate Director, Families, Children &
Wellbeing.
Hove Town Hall,
Norton Road,
Hove**

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Date: 17th January 2025

e-mail: Deb.austin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to the Consultation on the proposed closure of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

On behalf of Brighton and Hove City Council I am writing in response to the current consultation on the proposed closure of the school. Last year the Council had to take the difficult decision to close two primary schools in the city as a direct response to the reduction in pupil numbers. We understand the difficult decision of the Governing Board and Diocese in putting forward these proposals and understand the impact that putting forward the proposal will have on the pupils, families, staff and local community the school serves. As the decision maker on the proposal the Council will conscientiously consider all responses received during the consultation process when making the final decision on closure.

At the time the Council took the decision to close St Peter's and St Bartholomew's schools, the Council also proposed a reduction in Published Admission Number of 6 schools. Following the Council's decision to make those changes 3 of those proposed reductions were overturned by the Schools Adjudicator. As a result, the Council remains concerned about the level of unfilled places in the city.

When determining how to address the issue across the city the Council did engage with both the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and the Diocese of Chichester, and we appreciated the thought and consideration given at that time to the role we all need to take to address this issue.

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Notwithstanding the comments and reflections of the Schools Adjudicator in their decision regarding the timing of the closure of St Bartholomew's CE Primary School, the Council considers a potential closure on 31 August 2025 to be the most appropriate timescale, should the proposal be implemented.

The Council supports the description of the city context in the consultation document and in addition, our most recent forecast of future Reception places now includes the first indication of pupil numbers in September 2028. I attach a summary of that data below:

Date of Birth / school year	School yr in Sept 25	Grand Total all planning areas from 2023 data	pupils likely to want a school place based on 90% of GP reg data	Permanent places in Year R in 2024	Surplus places or shortfall of places
All planning Areas					
places in each school year from Sept 2025					
01 September 14 to 31 August 15	6	2,856	2,570		
01 September 15 to 31 August 16	5	2,865	2,579		
01 September 16 to 31 August 17	4	2,753	2,478		
01 September 17 to 31 August 18	3	2,620	2,358		
01 September 18 to 31 August 19	2	2,437	2,193		
01 September 19 to 31 August 20	1	2,409	2,168	2,550	
01 September 20 to 31 August 21	R	2,246	2,021	2,460	439
01 September 21 to 31 August 22	2026	2,198	1,978	2,460	482
01 September 22 to 31 August 23	2027	2,025	1,823	2,460	638
01 September 23 to 31 August 24	2028	2,097	1,887	2,460	573

Continued.....

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Date of Birth / school year	School year in Sept 2025	BN1 2	BN1 3	BN1 5	BN1 1	BN1 4	BN1 6	BN1 7			
4 Central City			St Mary Mags Prim St Pauls Primary	Stanford Infant Stanford Junior Westdene Primary	Middle Street Primary	St Bartholomews	Downs Infant Downs Junior Balfour Primary St Bernadettes Pri	Hertford Infant Hertford Junior St Josephs Primary	TOTALS	pupils likely to want a school place based on 90% of GP reg data	Surplus places or shortfall of places
places in each school year from Sept 2025			60	120	30		210	60	480		
01 September 14 to 31 August 15	6	21	63	119	≤5	54	214	102	573	516	
01 September 15 to 31 August 16	5	26	74	117	12	60	184	108	581	523	
01 September 16 to 31 August 17	4	33	47	112	12	59	169	90	522	470	
01 September 17 to 31 August 18	3	20	73	106	8	39	174	90	510	459	
01 September 18 to 31 August 19	2	22	55	96	6	57	172	73	481	433	
01 September 19 to 31 August 20	1	32	58	94	6	42	147	96	475	428	
01 September 20 to 31 August 21	R	14	56	108	9	53	142	87	469	422	58
01 September 21 to 31 August 22	2026	31	58	75	6107	30	146	69	415	374	107

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These tables continue to evidence that there are still a considerable number of surplus primary places in the city and there is no indication of an immediate upturn in pupil numbers. This places on-going risk to the successful maintenance of the school's ability to provide a high standard of educational experience for its pupils.

It is inevitable that when a proposal is made, some families will choose to move their child and effectively exacerbate the situation for the school. We are aware that the school has seen a reduction in pupil numbers since the consultation launched. and this will add to the justification outlined for the proposal put forward. Our most recent understanding is that 41 pupils have left the school leaving 106 on roll currently.

The Council is committed to working alongside the Diocese and Governing Board in supporting the pupils, parents and staff should the decision be taken to close the school.

Yours faithfully,



Deb Austin,
Corporate Director, Families, Children & Wellbeing.