



## Consultation on the Proposal to Close the Sixth Form at Bishop Young CE Academy from September 2019

### 1 Introduction and Background

Bishop Young CE Academy is part of the Abbey Multi Academy Trust (Abbey MAT). This proposal and the associated consultation has been sanctioned by the Abbey MAT Trust Board, with the support of the Bishop Young CE Academy Advisory Board, and the Senior Team of Bishop Young CE Academy, led by the Principal.

Following much discussion, the Trust has decided to consult on the proposal to close the Sixth Form at Bishop Young Academy with effect from Summer 2019. If agreed, the proposal would mean that no new students would be admitted into Year 12 in September 2019. The proposal would only affect the sixth form and would not mean any changes to the rest of the academy. While the Trust acknowledges that the proposition is regrettable, we believe it is necessary to preserve the future viability of the school.

Significant changes to the way post 16 students are funded in schools and colleges were introduced in the 2013/2014 funding year. Since then, funding has gradually declined, and this has had particular impact on small school sixth forms.

The average sixth form college has around 1,700 students, while the average school sixth form has a little over 200. Economies of scale apply, so it is more expensive per student for schools to provide a sixth form, meaning they often have to subsidise sixth form students from other funding streams, including that received for 11 to 16-year-old students.

The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that sixth forms with fewer than 200 students are not financially viable. Historically, the Bishop Young Academy Sixth Form has never recruited these numbers, the highest being in the 2013/2014 Academic Year when numbers were 128 across Years 12 and 13. Since then, the number of students recruited to the Bishop Young Sixth Form has been in continual decline, culminating in not a single student choosing to join Year 12 in the 2017/2018 Academic Year. We have received no applications for places in the Sixth Form for September 2019.

The declining sixth form numbers have made it more and more difficult to offer courses that are viable educationally and economically at Bishop Young Community Academy. Further to this, a small sixth form does not provide as broad a social experience, nor prepare students for the wider environment of higher education or the work place.

Overall, these factors have affected the demand for sixth form places at Bishop Young Academy to such a level that the Trust believes that closure of the Sixth Form is the right option to ensure the best opportunities and learning experiences for our students. Changing the age range from 11-18 to 11-16 will allow us to focus on ensuring our students achieve the highest outcomes at GCSE and secure places on a quality post 16 learning pathway of their choice.

## 2 Consultation: Proposal to close the Sixth Form at Bishop Young Academy

The Trustees are proposing to close the Sixth Form at Bishop Young CE Academy in Summer 2019 with no new pupils admitted to our sixth form in September 2019. This proposal would therefore change the age range of the Academy from 11-18, to 11-16. The Trust is therefore also consulting on a variation to the Bishop Young CE Academy admissions arrangements to remove the arrangements for admission into Year 12.

As part of the transition process, every current Year 11 student would be supported in securing the most appropriate post-16 learning pathway for September 2019. For our current year 11 students, we have secured an arrangement with Abbey Grange C of E Academy to guarantee every Year 11 Bishop Young Academy student, who achieves the entry requirements in the summer 2019 GCSE exams, a place at Abbey Grange C of E Sixth Form. In addition, all current Year 11 students are entitled, as they always have been through UCAS Progress, to apply for a place at another sixth form provision of their choice.

### 2.1 Insufficient Sixth Form Recruitment

A school or college sixth form has to be large enough to be viable and sustainable in order to be able to provide a wide enough range of high quality courses. It has been recognised that sixth forms with fewer than 200 students are unviable, particularly in the light of the more recent funding changes where sixth form provision is now funded per student, instead of per qualification. The implications of these reforms have meant that some providers have been forced to cut the courses they offer, whilst others have been forced to close.

The Bishop Young Academy Sixth Form operates within a highly competitive market across Leeds, pitching against exceptional and specialist providers. Many of these providers boast a large, specialist curriculum offer and student facilities against which any small sixth form would find it difficult to compete. Many of our own students, and those from other non-sixth form schools who could choose to attend Bishop Young Academy, instead choose to attend other sixth forms with larger capacity and dedicated student facilities, such as dining spaces and common rooms. The result has been an inability to recruit sufficient numbers to our sixth form roll to ensure financial viability. A school or college sixth form has to be large enough to be viable and sustainable in order to be able to provide a wide enough range of high-quality courses.

#### How many students choose Bishop Young Academy Sixth Form?

|      | Sixth Form numbers (based on January Census) |         |         |       |
|------|--|---------|---------|-------|
|      | Year 12                                      | Year 13 | Year 14 | Total |
| 2019 | 0  | 0       | 0       | 0     |
| 2018 | 0  | 0       | 0       | 0     |
| 2017 | 0  | 32      | 0       | 32    |
| 2016 | 45   | 54      | 0       | 99    |
| 2015 | 64   | 52      | 2       | 118   |
| 2014 | 72   | 53      | 3       | 128   |
| 2013 | 80   | 44      | 0       | 124   |
| 2012 | 62   | 55      | 1       | 118   |
| 2011 | 61   | 52      | 4       | 117   |
| 2010 | 65   | 60      | 2       | 127   |
| 2009 | 72   | 31      | 0       | 103   |
| 2008 | 54   | 10      | 0       | 64    |
| 2007 | 11   | 0       | 0       | 11    |

For a number of years, the majority of our Year 11 students have chosen to pursue post 16 education at a school or college other than Bishop Young Academy. We are unable to offer the breadth of subjects or levels that students would like to follow. This means that students must either go elsewhere or pick from a limited range offered, rather than choose what they would either like to do, or would be more suited to, in preparation for Higher Education or employment.

## **2.2 What does this mean for our students?**

### **What would closure mean for the current Year 12 and Year 13 students?**

There are no Year 12 or Year 13 students currently enrolled at Bishop Young Academy Sixth Form.

### **What would closure mean for the current Year 11 students?**

There would be no entry into Year 12 for current Year 11 students in September 2019. Every student will be guided and supported to apply to an alternative provider of their choice. We have a Careers Adviser and pastoral staff who will work with every student, guiding them personally through their options, supporting them with their applications and supporting them through any interview process. Students who have expressed an interest in an apprenticeship will be supported to do so.

### **What would closure mean for the current Year 7-10 students?**

There will be no entry into the Bishop Young Academy Sixth Form for current Year 7-10 students. The closure of the Sixth Form will allow us to focus our efforts on delivering education for students in Years 7 to 11. This will be crucial in securing strong examination results to ensure they can move on to their chosen Post-16 courses and destinations in September 2020 and beyond. They will be supported to apply to alternate providers in the same way that the current Year 11 will.

## **3 Consultation Process**

### **3.1 Requirements for Consultation**

Any proposal from schools or academies wishing to close a sixth form provision must be approved by the Secretary of State for Education. The Department for Education specifies that any consultation to close a sixth form must be published at least four months prior to the planned closure, and that the consultation period must last for a period of at least one month.

Members of the Abbey MAT Trust Board, Bishop Young Academy Advisory Body and the Leaders of Bishop Young C of E Academy therefore invite comments from all stakeholders on the proposal set out in this paper. All views expressed during this consultation will be reported to and considered by the trustees after the consultation period has ended and will, on request, publish to parties who explicitly request this information.

### **3.2 The Consultation Process**

This consultation will run from Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019 to Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2019, during which time you are invited to respond to this proposal. In order for you to ask any questions you need to inform your understanding of this decision, we are holding a Public Meeting. This will be an open Question and Answer session with the Trust CEO's and the Principal of Bishop Young CE Academy.

You may wish to attend the session before responding to the consultation. The Public Meeting will take place as follows:

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 at 5.30pm

Moyes Centre (adjacent to Bishop Young CE Academy)  
Bishops Way, Seacroft, Leeds, LS14 6NU

Interested parties are then invited to complete either the online consultation survey available via the Bishop Young Academy website, or alternatively, you may obtain a copy of the consultation response form via email or paper copy on request from Reception at Bishop Young Academy.

All consultations must be completed and returned by noon on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

### 3.3 Consultation List

The list below identifies the extent of the consultation, and therefore those who are invited to respond:

- Students currently on roll at Bishop Young Academy
- Parents and carers of students on roll at Bishop Young Academy
- Staff at Bishop Young Academy
- The Diocese of Leeds
- Leeds City Council
- Headteachers/Principals and Chairs of Governors of other secondary schools, academies and special schools in the Leeds area and in neighbouring local authorities.
- Local Councillors
- Local Member of Parliament
- The Chief Executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- Other community members who may be affected by the proposal

### 3.4 Consultation Methods

- Electronic survey for parents and students
- Consultation form (email or paper copy)
- A series of two public meetings.

### 3.5 Timeline for Proposed Closure of Sixth Form

| Action   | Proposed Timeline          |
|--|----------------------------|
| Consultation period commences*   | 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2019 |
| Public Meeting 1   | 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2019   |
| Consultation period closes (12 noon)   | 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2019  |
| Application for closure/ Consultation findings to the Education Funding Agency and the Regional Schools Commissioner | Late May 2019              |
| Decision of the Secretary of State   | Summer 2019                |
| Implementation   | September 2019             |

*\*Information, advice and guidance will run concurrently to the consultation process to ensure appropriate pathways are secured for all Year 11 students.*