

**The Education Commission  
on behalf of  
Archdiocese of Southwark.**

**Response to  
Draft Commissioning Plan for  
Education Provision  
In Kent 2016 – 2020.**

**Education  
Commission**  
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK



## Introduction

The Education Commission of the Archdiocese of Southwark would like to thank you for sharing the Local Authority's draft commissioning plan for Education Provision in Kent and we welcome the opportunity to offer a response to the draft plan.

The Archdiocese of Southwark seeks assurance that the need for additional new school places is reflected proportionally both within the Catholic sector and the Faith Sector at large.

We would propose that the Local Authority with the clear accountability for ensuring that a fair, inclusive and transparent process brings all relevant local responsible bodies together effectively to understand each other's needs, the relevant legal requirements to which these bodies are subject and to agree local priorities. This would lead to an effective plan to deliver on agreed priorities from the capital available.

All responsible bodies must be fairly represented to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for all Kent children, rather than there being a perceived bias towards the local authority sector.

## Response to the draft Commissioning Plan

Our response reflects on the paragraphs outlined in italics below and on subsequent pages.

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### *4.4 Principles and Guidelines*

*It is important that the Local Authority is open and transparent in its role as the Strategic Commissioner of Education. To help guide us in this role we abide by clear principles, and consider school organisation proposals against our planning guidelines. We stress that planning guidelines are not absolutes, but a starting point for the consideration of proposals.*

### *4.5 These are our Over-Arching Principles:*

- \* We will always put the needs of the learners first.*
  - \* Every child should have access to a local good or outstanding school, which is appropriate to their needs.*
  - \* All education provision in Kent should be financially efficient and viable.*
  - \* We will aim to meet the needs and aspirations of parents and the local community.*
  - \* We will promote parental preference.*
  - \* We recognise perceptions may differ as to benefits and detrimental impacts of proposals. We aim to ensure our consultation processes capture the voice of all communities. To be supported, proposals must demonstrate overall benefit.*
  - \* The needs of Children in Care and those with SEN and disabilities will be given priority in any commissioning decision.*
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Considering the over-arching principles above how are KCC intending to ensure that every child has access to a local good or outstanding school, which is appropriate to their needs if the child wants to attend a Catholic School? How will KCC promote parental preference if the parents want their child educated in a Catholic school? We consider that Catholic parents should be able to access education for their children at Catholic schools. There are

also other Christian communities who traditionally wish to send their children to Catholic schools e.g. the Greek and other Orthodox communities.

## Primary schools

In 2015, 15 out of the 26 Catholic primaries had 1<sup>st</sup> preference applications over and above their PAN. Which means about 163 children did not succeed in obtaining a place in a Catholic school of their choice in Kent. Because of the distances between the schools this means that their 2<sup>nd</sup> preference school may well not be a Catholic school.

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### 4.6 Planning Guidelines – Primary:

- *The curriculum is generally delivered in key stage specific classes. Therefore, for curriculum viability Primary schools should be able to operate at least four classes.*
  - *We will actively look at federation opportunities for small Primary schools.*
  - *Where possible, planned Published Admission Numbers (PANs) will be multiples of 30 but where this is not possible, multiples of 15 are used.*
  - *We believe all through Primary schools deliver better continuity of learning as the model for Primary phase education in Kent. When the opportunity arises we will either amalgamate separate infant and junior schools into a single Primary school or federate the schools. However, we will have regard to existing local arrangements and seek to avoid leaving existing schools without links on which they have previously depended.*
  - *At present Primary school provision is co-educational, and we anticipate that future arrangements will conform to this pattern.*
  - *Over time we have concluded that 2FE provision (420 places) is preferred in terms of the efficient deployment of resources.*
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We agree with your conclusion that 2FE is preferred in terms of the efficient deployment of resources. Consequently we would take this further to conclude 2FE will aid the provision of efficient education particularly where there are 1½FE schools with mixed age classes.

We also agree the overarching principle that all education provision in Kent should be financially viable and efficient and we advocate that KCC take the opportunity to expand Catholic schools that are below 2FE Most particularly the two schools that are 1½FE.

There are 22 Catholic primaries out of 26 that fall below the 2FE benchmark for efficient financial viability. This is 84.57% of our schools that that are, in KCC terms, not financially viable and we have an expectation that the Commissioning Plan will propose that the areas of high need Catholic schools under the 2FE benchmark will be identified for expansion.

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### 4.9 Planning Guidelines - Expansion of Popular Schools and New Provision

- *We support diversity in the range of education provision available to children and young people. We recognise that new providers are entering the market, and that parents and communities are able to make free school applications.*
  - *We also recognise that popular schools may wish to expand, or be under pressure from the local community to do so.*
  - *As the Strategic Commissioner of Education Provision, we welcome proposals from existing schools and new providers that address the needs identified in this Plan, which include new provision to meet increased demand, and new provision to address concerns about quality.*
  - *In order for us to support any such proposal, they must meet an identified need and adhere to the planning principles and guidelines set out above.*
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We agree that KCC should recognise the need for popular schools to expand, or be under pressure from the local community to expand. There are 6 Catholic schools that are over-subscribed year on year. The Diocese and the Catholic community will be looking to the

Commissioning Plan to recognise the need to consider the expansion of popular and successful schools Catholic schools.

Using the recorded baptism figures alone the likelihood is that by 2017 we will have 9 schools that will be substantially over-subscribed, some by one form of entry. The baptism figures do not, of course, make allowance for inward migration to Kent from other parts of the UK or abroad. Neither do they allow for other Christian communities, e.g. Orthodox Christians, who traditionally prefer to send their children to Catholic schools.

To illustrate where the Diocese is seeking to expand primary schools to meet both the needs of the Catholic and local community we have constructed a Venn diagram for each the Kent areas (pages 5-8).

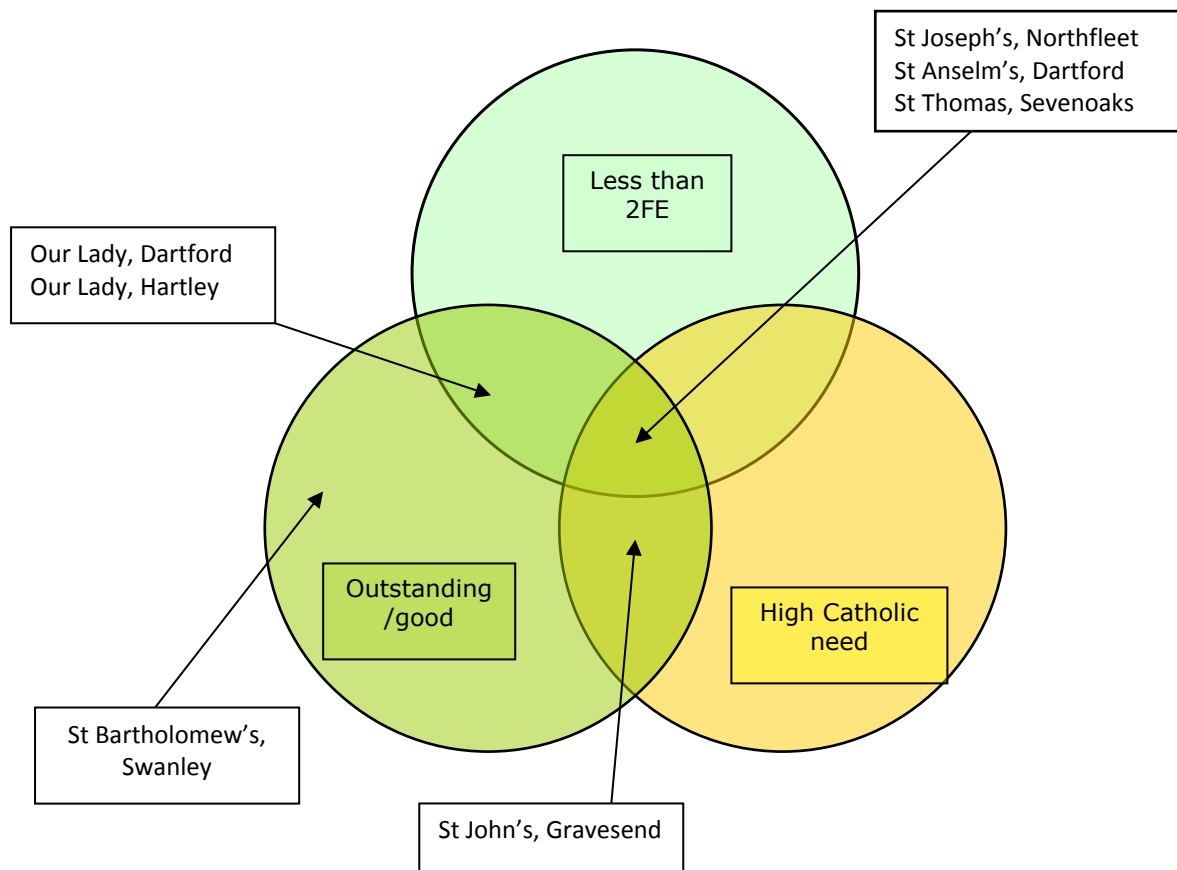
Attention is focused on the three areas highlighted within the draft Commissioning Plan:

- 1) Schools that are good to outstanding
- 2) Schools below 2FE in size
- 3) Schools where there is an acute/high parental demand for Catholic places.

## **Secondary schools**

We agree with the draft Commissioning Plan that the expansion of secondary schools is becoming increasingly important.

The total number of places available at present at Catholic secondary schools at Year 7 is 880. Projecting the Catholic primary admissions forward approximately 1100 Catholic pupils will need places at the secondary schools in 2020. Allowing for some inward migration into the county this will give an undersupply of about 7-8FE. There is a case for expanding Catholic secondary schools to meet the need for Catholic pupils and the wider community. There is an expectation that the Commissioning Plan will recognise the need to expand Catholic schools. As the 7-8FE is spread across the county each of the Catholic schools could be expanded by at least 1-1.5 FE each.

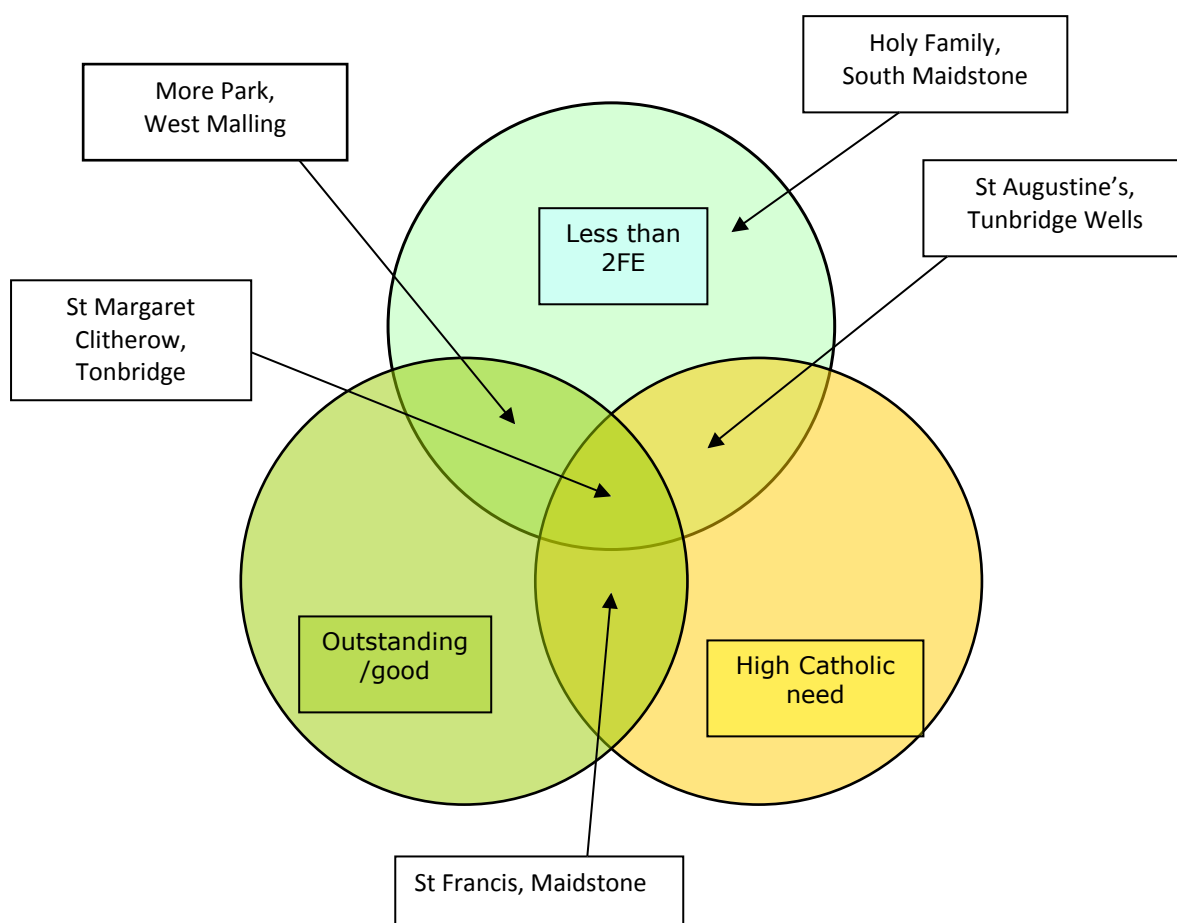


## North Kent - Catholic Primary Schools

Parish	School	Baptisms					PAN
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Dartford (St Vincent)	St Anselm's	77	43	55	55	63	30
Dartford	Our Lady's	22	37	29	20	20	30
Gravesend	St John's	100	84	81	99	151	90
Hartley	Our Lady of Hartley	12	11	12	7	10	30
Northfleet	St Joseph's	24	29	32	41	30	30
Sevenoaks	St Thomas	72	84	66	59	57	30
Swanley	St Bartholomew's	11	11	11	16	17	50

### Parishes without Primary Schools

Edenbridge	St Thomas, Sevenoaks	11	12	7	7	9
Meopham	Our Lady of Hartley	2	1	2	0	3
Westerham	St Thomas, Sevenoaks	10	13	6	6	7

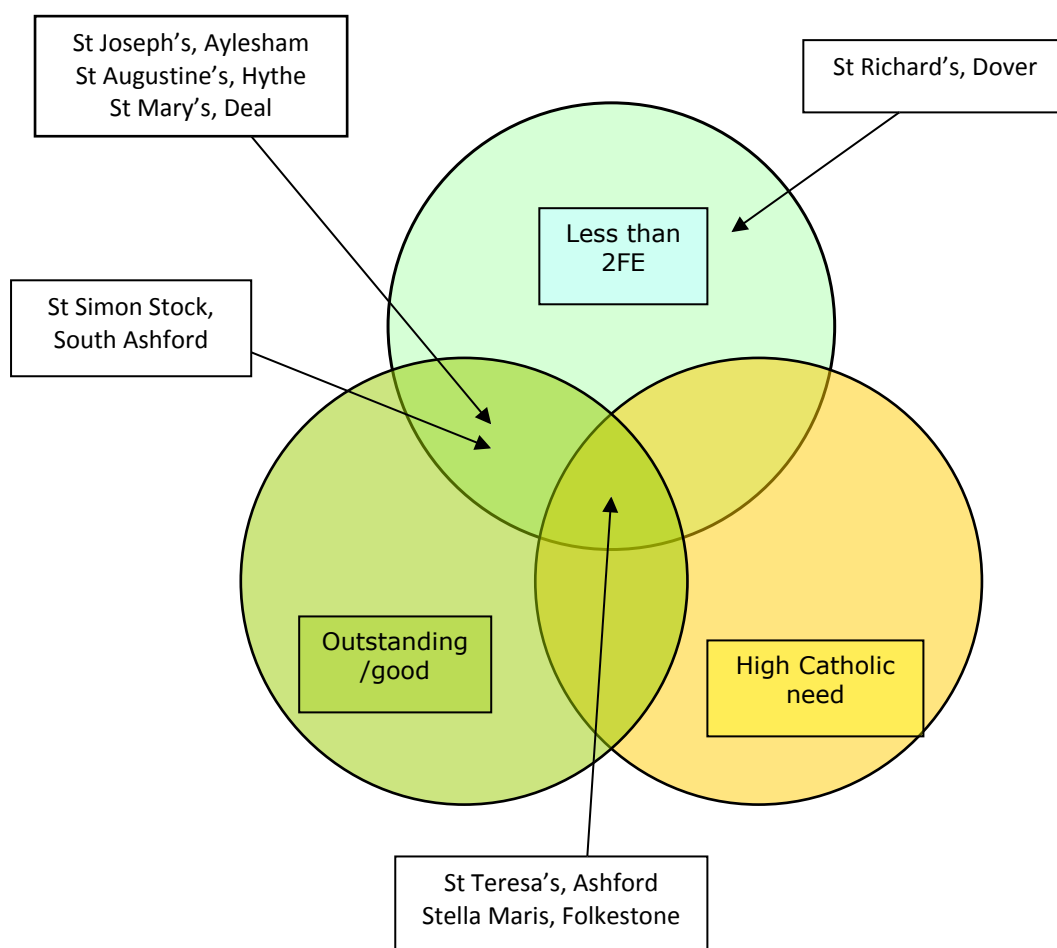


## West Kent - Catholic Primary Schools

Parish	School						PAN
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Maidstone (South)	Holy Family	21	14	6	11	16	30
Maidstone	St Francis	79	107	115	83	107	60
Tonbridge	St Margaret Clitherow	23	28	23	35	21	60
Tunbridge Wells	St Augustine's	75	64	62	64	61	45
West Malling	More Park	33	32	39	27	44	30

### Parishes without Primary Schools

Parish	Nearest school	Baptisms				
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bearstead & Harretsham	St Francis, Maidstone	7	8	13	15	9
Cranbrook	Holy Family, Maidstone	4	3	10	2	3
Paddock Wood	St Margaret-Clitherow, Tonbridge	9	7	1	5	3
Pembury	St Augustine's, T-Wells				3	1
Southborough	St Augustine's, T-Wells	16	14	4	13	11

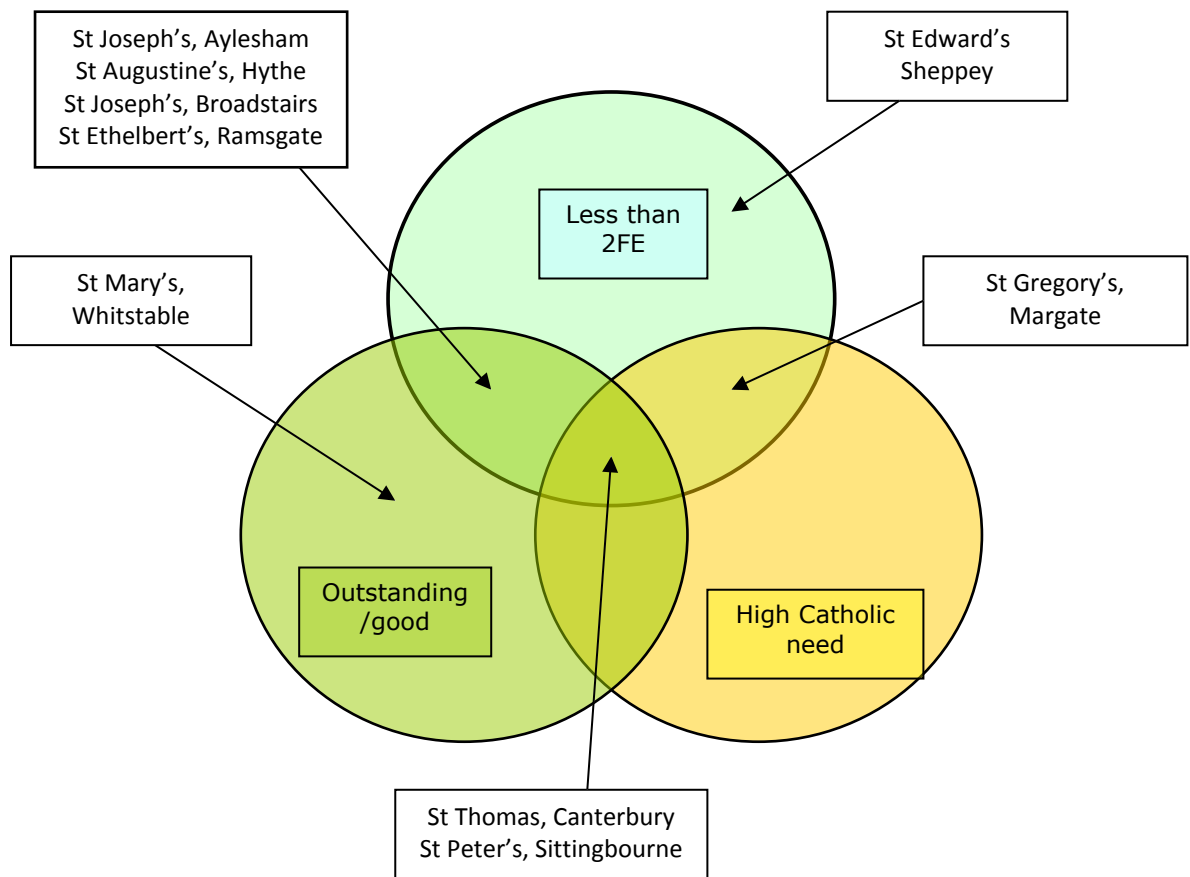


## South Kent - Catholic Primary Schools

Parish	School	Baptisms					PAN
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Ashford (South)	St Simon of England	15	16	17	39	29	30
Ashford	St Teresa's	40	57	48	14	47	30
Aylesham	St Joseph's	9	12	13	11	11	15
Deal	St Mary's	7	7	2	4	6	30
Dover	St Richard's	14	15	11	9	13	30
Folkestone	Stella Maris	47	52	42	32	27	30
Hythe	St Augustine's	12	21	25	21	25	30

### Parishes without Primary Schools

Parish	Nearest school	Baptisms				
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Mongeham & Sandwich	St Mary's, Deal	10	14	4	5	3
Tenterden	St Simon, South Ashford	3	6	6	3	1



## East Kent - Catholic Primary Schools

Parish	School	Baptisms					PAN
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Aylesham	St Joseph's	9	12	13	11	11	15
Broadstairs	St Joseph's	22	14	10	17	23	30
Canterbury	St Thomas	47	54	62	38	38	30
Hythe	St Augustine's	12	21	25	21	25	30
Margate	St Gregory's	28	19	47	34	34	45
Ramsgate & Minster	St Ethelbert's	24	28	39	31	33	30
Sheppey	St Edward's	17	26	15	28	23	30
Sittingbourne	St Peter's	22	21	31	29	21	30
Whitstable	St Mary's	6	24	18	19	18	60

### Parishes without Primary Schools

Parish	Nearest School	Baptisms				
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Cliftonville	St Gregory's, Margate	22	23	Merged with Thanet parish		
Faversham	St Peter's, Sittingbourne	16	14	16	12	12
Herne Bay	St Mary's, Whitstable	16	25	27	14	23
Hersden	St Thomas, Canterbury	2	1	0	1	3
Thanet	St Gregory's, Margate	12	3	3	3	7