

**Laverstock Schools update**

**Introduction**

1. This report contains a record of the visit to St Josephs Catholic School, St Edmunds Church of England Girls' School and Wyvern College, Laverstock and additional information on collaboration across the site.
2. During the Summer/Autumn 2009, the three Laverstock secondary schools (St Edmunds, St Josephs and Wyvern College) had worked with the Catholic Diocese of Clifton, the Diocese of Salisbury and the LA on an Expression of Interest for an academy. The original proposal for this was based on the low attainment in 2007 at St Joseph's Catholic School, which allowed the LA to bid for funding that was available. The generally poor condition of the school buildings at the site and the sustainable future of small schools was also a contributory factor in pursuing an academy. All three schools are now performing well above the original threshold of 30% 5\*A-C including English and Maths.

**Percentage of 5 GCSE at \*A-C including English and Maths**

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010 (unverified)</b>
<b>St Josephs</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>St Edmunds</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Wyvern College</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>47</b>

3. Due to a lack of consensus regarding various aspects of the academy proposal the project did not proceed beyond the Expression of Interest stage and was eventually removed from the DCSF's list of academy projects.
4. In March 2010, members received an update on the three schools and were pleased to hear of the collaborative working taking place between them. The two governing bodies of Wyvern College and St Edmunds attended a meeting to discuss further links between the schools and agreed to invite St Joseph's Catholic School to form a joint committee to coordinate further collaboration between the three schools. The three schools have a Joint Governors' Committee in place with dates for meetings in the present academic year. Terms of Reference have been agreed and a list of strategic focus points for the committee have been established. All Governors are keen to ensure that the Joint Committee has a positive impact on the provision of the three schools.
5. Members of the Select Committee were still concerned, however, that there was still no solution to the poor condition of the school buildings. It was agreed

therefore that a site visit would be arranged to aid members' understanding of the issues that the schools face.

6. The visit took place on 14 July 2010, with the following members and officers in attendance:

Mrs Di Dale (Further education representative)  
Cllr Mary Douglas  
Cllr Jon Hubbard  
Mr John Hawkins (Teacher representative)  
Cllr Bill Moss  
Henry Powell (Senior Scrutiny Officer)

7. Members of the Select Committee were given a guided tour of the school sites by the respective headteachers as well as having the opportunity to talk to students regarding their views on the schools and their hopes for the future.

### **Buildings and site**

8. Walking around the schools highlighted the restricted nature of the site. The buildings now occupied by St Edmunds and Wyvern were originally intended as a single comprehensive school and for a smaller cohort than now uses them. Out of necessity the site has developed in a somewhat haphazard fashion over the years. In one case, one school owns the ground floor of a building with another owning the first floor. The buildings at St Josephs are separate from the other two schools.
9. In some cases the age and condition of the buildings is an issue. There are large number of 'mobile' or prefab classrooms in use, which can be cold in the winter and hot in the summer.
10. There has been some investment in the schools in recent years. St Edmunds have installed a modern new dance facility with Section 106 money. Recent Locally Co-ordinated VA programme (LCVAP) money from the Diocese has been used to replace flat roofs at Wyvern.
11. At Wyvern, there has also been recent investment, but mainly in order to meet health and safety regulations rather than on new facilities. Wyvern is currently looking into building a pre-school and community centre in a small unoccupied patch on the site.

**St Edmunds' drama / dance facility**



12. Despite the age and condition of some of the buildings, the headteachers emphasised that impressive results can be achieved from clever interior refurbishment, as was seen in some cases.

**This prefab class room actually contained a bright and attractive library (St. Edmunds)**



13. An issue more difficult to solve is the lack of space. It was notable that almost every available space on the site had been used, corridors were full and small classrooms can become hot.
14. While St Edmunds and Wyvern share the use of a large sports hall and between them use it to capacity, St Joseph's have no sports hall at all. St Edmunds' drama studio is used by all three schools.
15. The site and services teams e.g. Caretakers and Site Managers work well together with opportunities for collaborative approaches addressed at regular whole site meetings.

### **Sixth form**

16. An aspiration of the Governors, headteachers and the students is to have a 6<sup>th</sup> form on site, which would require new building(s). Sixth form provision was a strong and agreed feature of the academy proposal. At present, Laverstock students go on to further education at a wide variety of other providers: Wiltshire College, Totton College, Brockenhurst College, and the nearby grammar schools amongst others.

### **Wyvern College**



Students cross the border into Hampshire, sometimes travelling for over an hour to reach their sixth form or college. Some of these providers are very good at marketing themselves and therefore hold strong appeal for students at Laverstock. The Joint Governors Committee have agreed to discuss how a sixth form could be developed at the site.

## **Funding**

17. With the present national financial constraints, funding streams for new buildings at the site are unlikely. The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme has been curtailed.

## **Curriculum collaboration**

18. The need to broaden and personalise the curriculum has been a key priority for the schools. Through collaboration, the schools have been able to offer courses that could not be offered by each school as an individual institution. The collaboration option block has grown substantially over the last two years and the next steps in this process are key in ensuring that curriculum choice continues to grow in future years. The three schools are seeking to explore different strategies to both augment the existing offer and also to implement further whole school benefits.
19. Wyvern and St Edmunds are exploring a new curriculum phase that could see implementation of a change to the school year with an induction term for new Year 7 students and the introduction of 'stage not age' groupings.
20. Timings for the school day need to be addressed for further opportunities beyond just the Key Stage 4 (KS4) option block to be implemented. This will need to be a key focus over the next year.
21. The headteachers expressed interest in an approach such as 'soft federation' and further collaborative working but felt that a 'hard federation' was less likely.

## **Students**

22. The student experience of collaboration is very positive with feedback from the young people at all three schools. Students enjoy working in this environment. It is worth noting that the students who took time out from lessons to discuss their views on the schools and their hopes for the future showed great pride in their schools, and members were very impressed with them.

## **Future of Collaboration**

23. The three schools continue to be open to suggestions for collaboration as long as they meet the requirement that the suggestion is of benefit to the students.

The following areas have been identified as aspirations to further cement and develop collaboration:

- Timings of the school day
- Increased number of option blocks on KS4 timetable
- Collaboration in Core subjects being established
- Groups such as Gifted and Talented, revision and intervention groups established

- Specific projects in departments. that would enhance/enrich learning through collaboration that would develop closer links between departments from different schools.

## Proposal

**Members are asked to consider the report and comment as appropriate.**

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## Appendices

Appendix 1 – School Information

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	Headteacher	Pupils on Roll (11-16) (as at May 2010)	Capacity	Type	Gender	Faith
<b>St Edmunds CoE Girls' School</b>	Mrs Jacqui Goodall	775	840	Voluntary Controlled	Girls	Faith school <u>without</u> faith admissions
<b>St Josephs Catholic School</b>	Mr Paul Hughes	369	415	Voluntary Aided	Mixed	Faith school <u>with</u> faith admissions
<b>Wyvern College CoE Boys School</b>	Mr Chris Tomes	415	750	Voluntary Aided	Boys	Faith school <u>with</u> faith admissions