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PRESS RELEASE – Embargoed to

16:00 Tuesday 27th March 2018

LEEDS WEST ACADEMY SIXTH FORM TO CLOSE IN SUMMER 2019

Present Post-16 provision to be discontinued in 2019 as part of a continued focus on 11-16 learning outcomes

Leeds West Academy and **The White Rose Academies Trust** has announced intentions to discontinue its **Sixth Form provision in July 2019**, following **full completion of all courses by its present Year 12 and Year 13 cohort**.

Due to decreasing Post-16 application numbers in recent years and the extensive resources required to meet many course preferences, Leeds West Academy has assessed that a Sixth Form provision **beyond 2019** cannot be satisfactorily offered with the exacting standards and expectations which the Academy presently delivers.

Leeds West Academy Principal Christian Wilcocks said: "It is with deep regret that we announce the eventual closure of our Sixth Form in Summer 2019. This is on no account a reflection of our current Sixth Form students and staff, who work tirelessly to achieve remarkable results. We're immensely proud of the achievements of Years 12 & 13 and the impact they have on our school community, especially as aspirational role models for our younger, 11-16 students."

"We do, however, realise that we must realistically offer the highest standard of education now and in the future. Our forecasts have shown that we cannot maintain overheads of a decreasing Sixth Form provision without drawing precious resource from across the school. With that in mind, we have made the difficult but necessary decision to concentrate our energies and expertise on our 11-16 age range from Summer 2019."

There have been changes in the way Post-16 students are funded in schools and colleges across the United Kingdom. Funding has gradually declined over the last two years, which has had a particular impact on small Sixth Forms such as Leeds West Academy, which presently has only **170 students on roll**.

An average Sixth Form college has approximately **1,700 students** and the average school Sixth Form has **over 200 students**. Economies of scale apply and it is prohibitively expensive for many schools to sustain an undersized Sixth Form. Often, institutions must subsidise Post-16 teaching from other funding streams, including that received for 11 to 16-year-old students preparing for GCSE.

Christian Wilcocks: "As we have a limited resource at our disposal for Sixth Form, the breadth of the subjects which our students would like to follow cannot always be offered to them. This means some students often have to look elsewhere, or pick from a limited range which is not appropriate to their learning pathway toward university or employment."

"As such, many of our Post-16 students have eventually transferred to **Notre Dame College, Elliot Hudson College or Horsforth School Sixth Form**, all of which offer strong and broad **Level 3 (A-Level)** programmes of study. We are also privileged to be part of the **Leeds City College Group** as our **Trust sponsor**, whose colleges across the region offer a great range of **Vocational qualifications**, as well as an expanding range of A-Level academic study with dedicated pathways through to its Higher Education University centre."

"Leeds West Academy has strong links with each of these providers and **we will work closely with them to ensure every student has the information, advice and guidance they need to choose and secure a course, or range of courses, that is right for them and closely matches their ambitions and aspirations**. It is our guarantee that each and every student will continue to be supported in planning their own personal pathway to Education, or Employment with Training. We thank our whole school community for supporting the Academy as we continue to secure the best results and the most vibrant futures for the young people in our care."

ENDS

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

- The **Leeds West Academy Sixth Form** is expected to close in **July 2019** – only when current students in **Year 12** complete their courses by the **end of Year 13**.
- **Students currently in Years 12 and 13** will be **unaffected by the proposed closure**. As these students are currently enrolled, they will continue with their chosen courses of study until **completion in June 2019**.
- **All Sixth Form students will be supported to secure destinations Post-18 as normal**, via the Academy's Information, Advice and Guidance programme. All students will be guided very carefully and informed of all available options.
- Students on roll at Leeds West Academy who have applied to our Sixth Form for enrolment into Year 12 in September 2018 will still be able to do so. Students who join the Sixth Form in September 2018 will have access to a limited range of courses and will be required to transfer, with the Academy's support and guidance, to an alternative provider at the end of Year 12.
- No new students will be admitted to the Sixth Form in **September 2019**.
- There will be a **one-month consultation period** available for all stakeholders from **27th March 2018**. The consultation period includes **two public meetings** with an open **Question & Answer** session with the **Principal, Executive Principal** and **Chair of the Local Accountability Board**.
- For more details visit www.leedswestacademy.org.uk.

Following a rapid improvement programme across **Leeds East Academy, Leeds City Academy** and **Leeds West Academy**, the young people within **The White Rose Academies Trust** are now benefiting from a **greatly enhanced education**.

Progress 8 scores 2017:

Leeds East Academy - a leap of **+1.00** - The **most improved school in Yorkshire**; the **4th most improved nationally**.

Leeds City Academy - a jump of **+0.50** - The **4th most improved school in Leeds**.

Leeds West Academy - an upturn of **+0.38** - The **2nd most improved school in the West of Leeds**.

New leadership, exceptional teaching and **cutting-edge facilities** equip students with the unique skills and personal confidence to fully meet their aspirations and potential

The White Rose Academies Trust is a local trust dedicated to raising the ambitions and aspirations of young people. It is currently comprised of three academies which occupy sites in the centre, east and west of the city.

The Trust is sponsored by **Leeds City College**, one of the largest further education providers in the country which encompasses **Leeds College of Music** within its organisation. Through the College's expertise and national and international networks, our Academies now offer highly desirable employability prospects within education and beyond.

The White Rose Academies Trust is the only truly local Leeds partnership of schools that share the same ethos and that have pathways into Further Education through a special relationship with Leeds City College. The Trust shares a mission with the college to ensure that all students attending the academies have very well-developed employability skills. All WRAT Academies also work in conjunction with local businesses in formal relationships which commit employers to supporting young people to understand and prepare for the demands of the world of work.

The Executive Principal of White Rose Academies Trust is Andrew Whitaker. Andrew joined The White Rose Academies Trust as Executive Principal on 1st September 2016, with a personal determination that all White Rose Academies will become outstanding providers of education to the communities that they serve.

In 2018, Andrew, was awarded a prestigious **Churchill Fellowship**. Andrew's previous work includes leading the transformation of **Todmorden High School**. For more details visit:

<https://www.theparliamentaryreview.co.uk/editions/pdfs/TPR2016-EducationSecondary-North.pdf>

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