

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

Cathedral School Trust and Trust in Learning Academies

Many thanks to all those who have submitted responses so far regarding our proposed merger. Below are responses to general questions that we have received. If questions are related to specific schools or people, we will endeavour to respond individually over the coming weeks.

Our Schools

Under the proposal, the merged Trust would have responsibility for 16 primary schools, one all-through school and four secondary schools. Geographically, our schools will be closer together than in many Trusts, and all located in and around Bristol. The newly formed Trust will deliver exceptional educational opportunities to approximately 11000 pupils, while employing around 1700 dedicated teaching and support staff.

A list of our schools is shown below.

Trust	Primary	Secondary
Trust in Learning Academy	Filton Avenue Primary School Little Mead Primary Academy Parson Street Primary School Henbury Court Primary Academy Fonthill Primary Academy Charlton Wood Primary Academy Nova Primary School	Orchard School Bristol
	Bridge Learning Campus (All-through)	
Cathedral Schools Trust	Henleaze Junior School Cathedral Primary School Hotwells Primary School Victoria Park Primary School Headley Park Primary School Stoke Park Primary School St Werburgh's Primary School Ashton Gate Primary School Henleaze Infant School	Bristol Cathedral Choir School St Katherine's School Trinity Academy

Further information about each school can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables>. We recognise that all of our schools are unique, a guiding principle for our work.

1. What will the benefits be?

We know that choosing the right school and Trust for your child is an important decision and we want to reassure you that this merger is about creating more opportunities and delivering the best possible education for all our pupils.

For pupils:

At the heart of this merger is your child's education and experience in school. By bringing together the strength of both Trusts we aim to:

- Offer the highest quality curriculum, combining the strongest elements from each Trust
- Enhance teaching and learning for pupils by ensuring our staff have access to the highest and relevant high-quality training and development.
- Offer widespread enrichment opportunities building on strengths, such as CST's music Trailblazers scheme and partnership with Bristol Beacon, and TiLA's speak-up challenge.
- Strengthen transitions between schools and key stages, so pupils will have a greater sense of belonging, with many children able to stay within the Trust from age 3 to 18.

For staff:

We know that a well-supported and highly skilled teaching team is key to providing the best education for your child.

- Increased career and professional development opportunities for all staff through collaborative opportunities, enabling us to recruit and retain the very best staff.
- There will be greater opportunity to share practice and learn from a larger group of colleagues through professional learning communities and networks.

For families, communities and Bristol:

Both TiLA and CST are committed to working locally, serving children and families in the Bristol area. Many of our schools are closely geographically located and there are good links between schools, the Local Authority and other trusts locally.

- A consistent experience from 3 – 18 years for your children, through staying within a Trust with a clear identity and strong relationships with your family

- A larger trust which fully represents communities of Bristol, and is able to adapt to contextual changes and opportunities
- An enhanced capacity for civic responsibility, and corresponding voice across Bristol

2. What would a merger mean for my child's school?

While there may be some changes to governance and shared central services for the new Trust, what makes your child's school special will remain the same. Each school will retain its unique ethos, and commitment to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the young people and families it serves. Current policies will only change in line with statutory requirements and in consultation with Headteachers.

3. What would this mean for the current day-to-day experience of my child?

Currently, there are no plans to change any aspect of the day to day running of any of our schools.

4. Will the name of the Trust change?

Yes, we plan on changing the name of the trust. Although none of the school names will change, we would like to establish a new Trust identity. We have not yet made any decisions about what the new name would be. If you have any ideas for names, please do let us know in the feedback form below.

5. Will there be a change to SEND provision?

SEND provision will continue as it is in each school, however there will be more opportunities for best practice to be shared to continuously improve provision for all our young people including those with additional needs.

6. Will the admission criteria change for my child's school under the merged Trust?

All schools across both trusts will continue to fully adhere to the national Admissions Code of Practice. Further information on the school admissions code is available on the [Department of Education website](#) and each school's admission policy can be found on the school website. There are no current plans to change the admissions criteria at any of our schools as a result of this merger.

7. What changes will be made to Governance as a result of the merger?

With the merger of the two Trusts, we will need to identify new Members and Trustees. The majority, if not all, will be drawn from our existing Boards where we are fortunate to

have dedicated volunteers with a wide range of outstanding skills, experience and expertise.

The Board of Trustees provides strategic oversight while decision-making for certain functions will continue be delegated to the school Governing Boards for each school. This ensures that each school can continue to meet the unique needs of its community while benefiting from the strength and support of the wider Trust. We believe this balance of local autonomy and collective collaboration is key to ensuring the best outcomes for our children and young people.

A key focus will be to maintain and strengthen effective leadership, both at the Trust level and within each individual school. By ensuring strong and supportive leadership across all levels, we can continue to provide the best possible education and opportunities for our children and young people.

8. What changes will be made to Leadership and wider staff roles as a result of the merger?

Leadership in individual schools will remain unchanged. Leadership at a Trust level will incorporate staff from both Trust teams, and we will be working with the Trust Board to carefully manage this transition.

Staff roles within schools will not change as a result of the merger. As a proposed merged Trust, we hope that this will provide for greater additional opportunities for staff development, training, sharing best practice, progression and development via a range of collaborative opportunities. Staff will be strongly encouraged to explore these opportunities wherever possible, but no one will be forced to work outside of the provisions of their contract of employment.

9. What financial considerations are being considered as part of the merger planning, and how might it support greater alignment or efficiency in shared services such as HR, finance, and school improvement?

At this stage, the financial position and consideration of the merger are being carefully reviewed as part of the due diligence process. All schools contribute to a central services arrangement, which provides essential functions such as school improvement, payroll, HR, finance, ICT, legal and compliance. These are services every school requires. Delivering these through a coordinated central team reduces cost and duplication and ensures compliance.

One of the aims of the trust model is to ensure that schools are well led, financially efficient, and able to focus resources on improving outcomes for pupils. Each school retains responsibility for managing its own budget in line with its priorities and context.

As the merged trust develops, opportunities for improved service delivery and operational alignment will continue to be explored.

10. Cathedral School Trust has some faith-based schools; how will this affect other schools?

Our Trust will be home to a diverse range of schools, including those with faith-based traditions. We believe in celebrating this diversity and we are committed to maintaining the unique character of each school. Each school within the Trust is committed to our common and shared values, making us a unique collective.

11. How will parents, guardians and communities be kept informed during the merger process and how will you ensure that you remain committed to taking parent voice into consideration across all schools?

We understand that during times of change, clear and open communication is essential. We'll be keeping you updated regularly through our usual channels, ensuring you have all the information you need. Both Trusts recognise the importance of the wider community across our schools and we will continue to provide opportunities for feedback where possible via parental surveys, response forms and via the usual communication channels to the central Trust teams and your schools.

12. Will there be any changes to curriculum as a result of the merger?

If and once approval from the Department of Education and both Trustee boards has been confirmed, there will be a period of time for due diligence to take place by both Trusts. This will include areas of finance, HR, compliance and of course education, amongst many others. As part of the education due diligence we will conduct a review of all aspects of the curriculum to ensure that we are offering the very best educational experience for all of the young people in schools across both Trusts. We will work with staff to ensure that any curriculum changes will be implemented at the appropriate time.

13. What are the timescales for the merger?

Subject to feedback and approval, by the Department for Education and agreement from both Trust Boards, the earliest any merger will take place is 1st January 2026.

14. How do I ask questions or provide feedback?

We are seeking the feedback of parents, staff, governors, and other stakeholders on these proposals and would encourage you to submit any questions or comments by emailing our independent project managers, Edwin People at engagement@edwinpeople.com by Friday 16th May 2025, or [click here](#) to complete the response form.