



Hotwells
PRIMARY SCHOOL



Cathedral
Primary School

Consultation



**CATHEDRAL
SCHOOLS
TRUST**

Consultation on the amalgamation of Hotwells Primary School and Cathedral Primary School

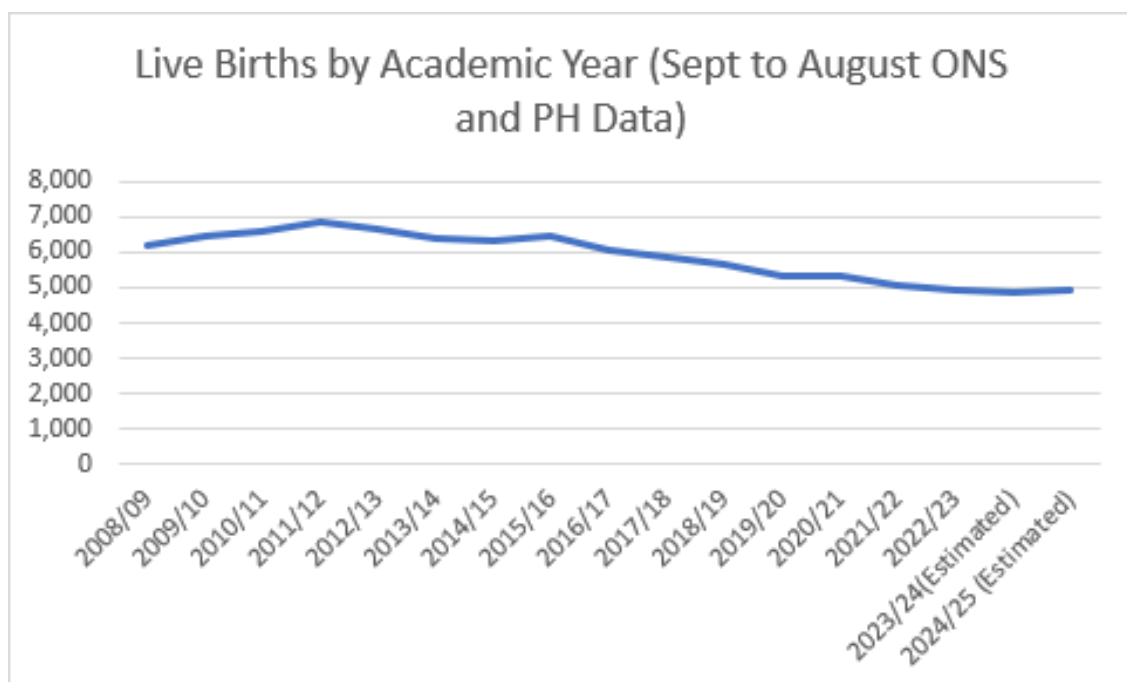
The purpose of this document is to:

- Notify parents, carers, staff, pupils and the local and wider communities of both Cathedral Primary School and Hotwells Primary School of the proposal to amalgamate the two schools. The amalgamated school will be known as Cathedral Primary School.
- Set out the reasons why this proposal is being made.
- Explain how to respond to the consultation, including dates for consultation events.

Background

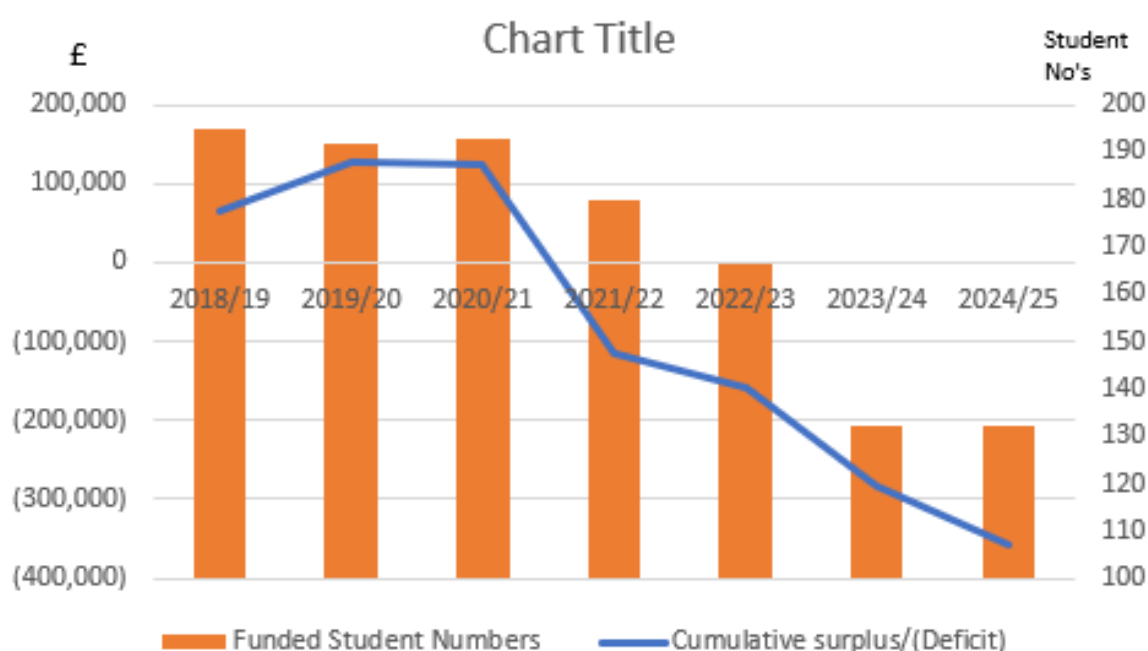
In recent years Bristol has experienced a significant decline in birth rates, leading to a steep reduction in the number of children entering primary education. Estimated births in Bristol for the academic year 2022/2023 was 4,961. This is a decrease of 27% since 2011/2012. As a result, a number of schools have consulted to reduce their Published Admission Number (PAN) or in some cases have closed. With falling pupil numbers impacting on primary schools across the city, the forecast for the long-term sustainability of current primary school places is of major concern and the data from Bristol City Council shows that this is only going to get worse with a requirement to reduce capacity further across the city - see figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Bristol live births by academic year



The fall in roll has been compounded by challenges across the country with the amount of funding for state schools that is available from the government. Schools with low numbers of pupils are very difficult to run in a way that is financially viable. The graph below shows the small cumulative surplus back in 2018/19 for Hotwells Primary School and how it has turned into the large cumulative deficit that we see now in 2024/25 and how this correlates to the fall in the number of students funded at the school.

Figure 2: Hotwells Primary School financial position



What are we proposing?

In light of the ongoing challenges across the city, the trustees of Cathedral Schools Trust are proposing to amalgamate (also referred to as merging) Hotwells Primary School and Cathedral Primary School to form a 60 place (two form entry) primary school for Reception to Year 6 from September 2026.

An amalgamation will create a single primary school from 1st September 2026 with the long term plan of creating KS1 provision (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) on the site of Hotwells Primary School and KS2 provision (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) on the site of Cathedral Primary School from September 2027. Please note that there will be an interim arrangement for the first year (2026/27) of Reception and Year 1 on the Hotwells Primary School site and Year 2 upwards on the Cathedral Primary School site. The amalgamated school will be known as Cathedral Primary School (CPS).

This is a proposal at this stage and it is very important to us to consult with everyone who has an interest before any final decisions are made. As the people closest to our schools, you understand the local community better than anyone else. We're keen to gauge your local knowledge and hear your thoughts on how our proposals could affect the area.

Why are we proposing this and what are the benefits of amalgamation?

This proposal is primarily driven by the ambition to ensure strong and sustainable schools in the area that will provide the highest quality primary education for pupils. It is intended to:

- Maintain provision on both school sites and ensure that there continues to be a school serving the Hotwells/Harbourside community.
- Address concerns around the volume of students on the Cathedral Primary School site on College Square by providing a more appropriate learning environment for the youngest children on the Hotwells Primary School site.
- Support the city with the aim of reducing places across primary schools.

The impact of the proposal on our stakeholders

Supporting our pupils

We want to reassure you that supporting our pupils is our highest priority. Under these proposals we are committed to accommodating current Hotwells pupils at the amalgamated school. Both CPS and Hotwells are currently delivering strong academic outcomes and we will continue to ensure that the amalgamated school provides an excellent foundation for its pupils. In particular it will provide an opportunity to deliver tailored provision for Early Years and KS1 with more outdoor space for play and learning activities as well as more space for targeted support and interventions on both sites. Transition support will be provided to all pupils with enhanced support available for vulnerable students and those with SEND.

Supporting our staff

Our staff are at the heart of what we do and we want them all to continue to be part of our Cathedral Schools Trust (CST) family. The likelihood is that most of the staff requirements for the amalgamated school will initially be quite similar as the new school will be serving pupils from both existing schools. Our aim will be to maintain staff employment within the CST family where possible. If the proposal proceeds this may mean that the place of work of some staff will change. We are committed to full consultation with staff on both staffing requirements and place of work considerations and will put in place individual meetings with staff members where required.

Admissions

The DfE's significant change guidance for a school amalgamation states the importance of pupils being accommodated at the amalgamated school should they wish and we are committed to ensuring that this is possible. As part of the transfer process, parents will need to submit an in-year application for Cathedral Primary School for the academic year 2026/27 or seek admission at an alternative primary school. Provision can be made to accommodate all pupils that are on roll of both schools across the two sites.

As part of the consultation process to amalgamate Hotwells Primary School and Cathedral Primary School we intend to vary admission arrangements that have already been determined for:

- **Cathedral Primary School for the academic year 2025/26** - to give priority to children on the admission register at Hotwells Primary School. (Draft varied admission arrangements 2025/26 can be viewed [here](#) - proposed changes are highlighted in yellow).
- **Cathedral Primary School for the academic year 2026/27** - to give priority to children on the admission register at Hotwells Primary School and to prioritise families who live within Hotwells, Clifton, Harbourside. (Draft varied admission arrangements 2026/27 can be viewed [here](#) - proposed changes are highlighted in yellow).
- **Bristol Cathedral Choir School for the academic year 2026/27** - to give priority to our existing BCCS families the proposal is to amend the oversubscription criteria order; applicants with siblings on roll at BCCS (category 5 in the draft varied admission arrangements) will be given priority over applicants applying from the named feeder school (category 6 in the draft varied admission arrangements). (Draft varied admission arrangements 2026/27 can be viewed [here](#)).

Timeline

3 June 2025:	Consultation formally opens
June 2025:	Engagement events and meetings
7 July 2025:	Consultation closes
Sept - Nov 2025:	Application to DfE
December 2025:	DfE analysis and decision

How to take part: consultation events

We would like to hear from all those with an interest in the proposal and we would like to meet you in person so that we can take the time to talk you through our proposals and to answer any questions that you may have.

You are invited to come and meet us at the following times:

Week of 9th June 2025:

Staff Consultation (Hotwells) 10th June 2025, 3.45pm

Parents and Carers' Evening (Hotwells) 10th June 2025, 5.30pm - 6.30pm

Week of 16th June 2025:

Staff Consultation (CPS) 18th June 2025, 3.45pm

Parents' and Carers' Evening (CPS) 18th June 2025, 5.30pm - 6.30pm

Public Meeting – 12th June 2025, drop in session from 2.00pm - 3.30pm at Hotwells Primary School

Senior CST leaders, school staff and representatives from Bristol City Council will be in attendance.

How to take part: other ways to respond

1. Complete our online response form [here](#)
2. Email us: consultation@cathedralschoolstrust.org.
3. Write to us: CST, St Katherine's School, Pill Road, Bristol, BS20 0HU

Please respond by **7th July 2025** so that trustees have the opportunity to take your views into consideration when making their decision. If you require the documents translated into another language, or provided in a different format, then please email consultation@cathedralschoolstrust.org, stating which language and/or format.

CST's trustees are mindful of their duties under the Equality Act and will be carrying out their own assessment of the impact on any protected characteristic groups of a decision to move forward with this proposal (if any), but if there is anything related to this which you would like to draw to the trustees' attention, please get in touch.

How would the consultation impact on any final decision?

The trustees of CST will not make a final decision until the consultation period has closed and all views have been heard. Following the consultation period, if the trustees decide to proceed with the process, they would then make a 'significant change' application to the Department for Education who would make the final decision.