

## **Consultation on the amalgamation of Hotwells Primary School and Cathedral Primary School (CPS) Version 2: June 2025**

### **1. What is being proposed?**

We 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. An amalgamation will create a single primary school from 1st September 2026 with the long term aim of 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. The amalgamated school will be known as Cathedral Primary School.

### **2. Why is it being proposed?**

The proposal is 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.

### **3. How will the amalgamated school work across the two sites?**

Our plan is that Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and KS1 will be based at the current Hotwells Primary School site. The space is well-suited to children in this age range. KS2 children will be based at the current Cathedral Primary School site in order to support transition to Bristol Cathedral Choir School (BCCS). However, please note that there will be an interim arrangement for the first year (2026/27) of Reception and Year 1 on the Hotwells site and Year 2 upwards on the Cathedral Primary School site. Although provision will be on two sites the school will be one entity and children on the EYFS and KS1 site will have an automatic right of transfer to the KS2 site.

### **4. What will it mean for existing students at Hotwells Primary School?**

The Department for Education (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 of pupils at Hotwells Primary School 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 pupils of both schools across the two sites and pupils will be taught at the appropriate site for their age group. Parents and carers will be provided with support and further information on the admissions process as part of any transition arrangements.

#### **5. What is the plan in terms of year groups?**

The long term plan is to have 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. This will be in place from September 2027. However, 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.

#### **6. Will the timing of the school day change as a result?**

We will want to talk to parents and carers to find out their views. We will ensure that there is sufficient variation between the start and end times to enable parents, carers and pupils to move between the two sites. The walking distance between the two schools is 0.9 miles and the school locations are:

Hotwells Primary School, Hope Chapel Hill, Hotwells, Bristol BS8 4ND

Cathedral Primary School, College Square, Bristol BS1 5TS

#### **7. What will the uniform be for the new school?**

Children will adopt the uniform currently in place for children at CPS. We will explore options for the transition and are mindful of the need for affordability.

#### **8. What will be the ethos of the amalgamated school?**

The amalgamated school will follow the vision and values of Cathedral Primary School. The vision 'Many Voices, One Harmony' is rooted in compassion and equality and CPS, like Hotwells Primary School, celebrates the many voices of its diverse community and how they come together to create one harmony. The school's unique setting in the heart of Bristol means that the community is endless; all cultures and traditions are welcome and the school strives to share a common understanding and love for the world. The school's values enable the whole school community to achieve its vision. They are for everyone; all faiths and none. [Vision and Values of Cathedral Primary School.](#)

**9. Will the school remain a Church of England School?**

Cathedral Primary School will remain a Church of England School. We have strong links with Bristol Cathedral. As a flagship music specialist primary school CPS puts on numerous concerts and productions at Bristol Cathedral. Cathedral Primary School also educates a number of Bristol Cathedral Choristers and there is a close-working relationship between the Cathedral and school.

**10. Will the school continue to have strong links with the Cathedral?**

The school is proud of its links with Bristol Cathedral and the Diocese. The school participates in planned educational experiences at the Cathedral to enhance their religious education teaching. The close partnership with Bristol Diocese has allowed opportunities to develop the christian character of the school and supported RE leadership, SIAMS and School/ Cathedral and Community partnerships. We are proud to be so close to such a prestigious space and feel fortunate for this close partnership.

**11. How will this impact on the nursery provision at Hotwells Primary School?**

There will be no change to the nursery provision at Hotwells Primary School. The Montessori nursery, Hotwells Children's House, will continue to operate on the Hotwells site.

**12. Will there be any changes to the curriculum?**

The two schools already have a broadly aligned curriculum although there are some differences. Like Hotwells, CPS has an ambitious curriculum, following the National Curriculum. It is rigorous, coherent and sequential, where knowledge is taught to be remembered. Our cumulative curriculum from EYFS to Year 6, ensures that children build on their knowledge year by year. The curriculum is rooted in the strongest available evidence about how pupils learn and retain knowledge in the long term. Cathedral Schools Trust's Teaching and Learning advisers will provide support to overcome any challenges and minimise changes to the curriculum. [Curriculum at Cathedral Primary School.](#)

**13. Will there be any changes to term dates?**

Following the amalgamation, the term dates will follow those of Cathedral Primary School from September 2026 onwards. [Term dates for Cathedral Primary School.](#)

#### **14. What will the transition plan look like for current Hotwells pupils moving to the CPS site?**

Over the next 12 months, the leadership teams will be working closely together to ensure a smooth transition for the pupils. We aim to create a clear transition plan for all children so that they are confident and happy with the change that is taking place.

#### **15. What will the numbers on roll be like for the amalgamated school?**

The table below shows what the combined roll might look like from September 2026, based on the current numbers of pupils at both schools. Please note this is subject to change.

<b>Year group</b>	<b>Potential combined numbers</b>
Reception	60
Year 1	73
Year 2	78
Year 3	81
Year 4	70
Year 5	75
Year 6	84

#### **16. What will the potential impact be on admissions at BCCS given the current feeder school status of CPS?**

There will be a temporary increase in the number of eligible children applying for places at BCCS under the feeder school category following the amalgamation of the two primary schools. Historic data on the allocation of places for Year 7 at BCCS from the last 4 years indicates that there have been an average of 54 children allocated places under the feeder school category. Remaining places offered by random allocation under category 7 of the BCCS admissions arrangement has been an average of 22. Following the amalgamation, we estimate there will be approximately 5 - 10 places available under category 7 (random allocation). Please note this is an estimate only and no place can be guaranteed.

#### **17. Will the admissions arrangements for the amalgamated school prioritise the Hotwells/Harbourside area?**

This is the intention. The proposal includes a change to the determined admission arrangements for Cathedral Primary School for the academic year 2026/27 to

prioritise families who live within the Hotwells, Clifton, Harbourside area. (Draft varied admission arrangements 2026/27 can be viewed [here](#) - proposed changes are highlighted in yellow). The criteria includes a 'nodal admissions point' defined as OS Grid Reference ST 57487 72424, What3Words: What3Words: solve.lanes.chips and located at The Mardyke Ferry Landing. Please see the map [here](#) for the proposed location of the point.

**18. Will the Hotwells staff be joining CPS as part of the amalgamation?**

In order to support transition for the pupils, our hope is that many of the staff from Hotwells will work in the amalgamated school.

**19. How will pupils with SEND be supported through this process?**

Leaders for pupils with SEND will work closely together to ensure a smooth transition and that the needs will be met for the pupils and their families.

**20. What will the leadership arrangements be from September 2026?**

Sara Yarnold will continue to be the Headteacher at Cathedral Primary School. Mrs Yarnold has worked closely with the Hotwells community in the past and worked with the leadership team when they joined Cathedral Schools Trust.

**21. What measures will be put in place to pre-empt a likely increase in traffic?**

We will make sure that there are staggered start and end times to the school day to allow for movement between the sites. We would continue to communicate with our families about safe ways to travel to school and work with Bristol Local Authority to support their travel initiatives. Involvement in Bristol safe travel initiatives would continue e.g Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel, The Bristol Bike project and Walk to School week.

**22. Hotwells children are used to a small, close-knit school community, moving to a larger school will be a substantial change. How will this be managed, particularly for the children who may struggle?**

Cathedral Primary School provides exemplary pastoral support and is well placed to support Hotwells children through the transition period. A carefully considered, joined up transition plan between both schools will be put in place.

**23. Will the Hotwells Y6 children still be able to go on their school camp? When will this be?**

Both schools already use the same provider for their school camp at Osmington Bay. Cathedral Primary School attend their school camp in May and details about

this will be sent to all Hotwells families. Camp is only for Year 6 but in preparation for this, the Year 5 children go for a whole day to an activity centre. We will make sure that it is possible for Year 5 children at Hotwells Primary School to join this day which will take place in summer 2026.

**24. How do you envisage wraparound care working, particularly for families who have children on both sites? Will the hours be extended to accommodate this?**

Cathedral Primary School will continue to provide wraparound care which provides breakfast club from 07:45 and afterschool care is available until 18:00 each day. We currently use SHINE as the provider for after school care and the breakfast club is provided by staff at Cathedral Primary School. Further information on arrangements will be shared with parents and carers as soon as possible.

**Additional questions received as part of the consultation process**

**25. What are the plans for year groups in the amalgamated school? What are the proposed class sizes and teaching ratios?**

We cannot confirm the class sizes yet as we do not know whether all families will choose to apply for a place at the amalgamated school. There are maximum class sizes in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in line with infant class size legislation of a maximum of 30 children per teacher and our aim would be to ensure that class sizes are as close to this as possible throughout the school.

**26. Will CPS take more children to become 3FE?**

In the long term the amalgamated school will continue to be a 2FE. However, in the short term, there will be a need for more classes in year groups, in order to accommodate all children. This will be for a temporary period in order to meet the requirement in the DfE's significant change guidance to accommodate pupils on roll at Hotwells Primary School.

**27. Won't the listed benefit of having a smaller volume of children in College Square be lost by having Hotwells children added to the pupil numbers?**

The long term plan will see the number of forms of entry on the site reduced from the current 14 forms (across 7 year groups) to 8 forms. We are grateful for responses and suggestions received and we are considering additional options for any transition period.

**28. Once there are only 60 children in each year group what will happen to the Hotwells site?**

As detailed in the consultation information, the long term plan is to create EYFS and KS1 provision (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) on the current site of Hotwells Primary School and KS2 provision (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) on the current site of Cathedral Primary School. The proposed amalgamation will create a single primary school (Cathedral Primary School) across the two sites.

**29. Can you provide further information on the split site drop off/collection and logistics?**

We fully recognise that for many families the logistics may be a challenging aspect of the proposal. We have already had some helpful suggestions from families and are keen to hear more from families about what could be done and whether interim measures need to be put in place to support the transition period.

**30. Will Hotwells still be able to accept more pupils?**

Until a decision is taken to proceed with the amalgamation and this is approved by the DfE, Hotwells will process in-year applications in line with the admission arrangements for the relevant year group. If a decision is taken to proceed with the amalgamation and this is approved by the DfE, then no further admission can take place.

**31. Can you stop or pause admissions to CPS?**

We cannot cap a year group. The PAN at CPS will remain at 60 for the relevant age group. This is the age group to which children are normally admitted (i.e Reception). Reception applications will continue to be coordinated with the local authority. We can admit over PAN for the purposes of In Year applications and these will be processed in line with the admission arrangements for the relevant age group. Admission may be refused where the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources or where Infant Class Size limits have been reached. CPS currently has no places available.

**32. Can you provide a breakdown of the allocation of reception places for Cathedral Primary School (CPS) under the proposed arrangements from 2026/27?**

It is not possible to predict how places will be allocated in the future. However, we can provide data on how places at CPS were allocated for the past 5 years and will update the next version of the FAQs with that information.



**33. Why is there a change to the BCCS admission arrangements for 2026/27 when the amalgamation isn't taking place until September 2026?**

If the amalgamation is approved during the next academic year there is potential for further late applications during the offer year that need to be processed in line with the 2026/27 admission arrangements eg if a child joined CPS in Year 6 after the closing date of the Year 7 admission round they could apply for a place at BCCS as a late applicant and their application would be processed and it would impact where they would be placed on the waiting list. This scenario is unlikely to impact many children applying under the admission arrangements for 2026/27 but in order to be open and transparent as part of the consultation we wanted to share the draft arrangements so that we could gather views on the change of order as part of the amalgamation consultation.

**34. What will happen if there are not enough places at BCCS for current CPS students?**

All applications will be considered in line with the oversubscription criteria, in order of priority as set out in the BCCS admission arrangements for the relevant age group. Note: that some CPS students may qualify for a place under a higher category than the feeder school category e.g sibling etc. If a place for Year 7 cannot be offered in the first round allocation, parents may request their child be added to the waiting list to be considered for places in subsequent allocations. Parents have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel following an unsuccessful application. We recognise that this particular issue is causing concern for the CPS community and we are exploring options.

**35. What steps will the Trust take to ensure that CPS does not just become a school for the children of affluent parents who can afford to live in those areas? How will CPS retain the city wide feel of the school?**

By prioritising a percentage of places for children who live closest to the nodal point we aim to preserve an education offer for the local community. Remaining places will continue to be allocated by random allocation to children whose home address is in postcode areas BS1 to BS16. The hope is that this will help to retain a city wide feel to the school. We understand that people are concerned about this and that it may be preferable to reduce the percentage of places based on distance to places offered by random allocation to the wider area. It is worth noting that the demographic data for both schools is similar - see question 52 below for more information.



**36. Can children in the feeder school pool, that do not get a place at BCCS, be given priority on any waiting lists to transfer to BCCS if children leave the secondary school?**

All applications will be considered in line with the oversubscription criteria, in order of priority as set out in the BCCS admission arrangements for the relevant age group. Waiting lists are ranked in line with the oversubscription criteria, in order of priority. Parents have a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel following an unsuccessful application.

**37. What happens if children leave CPS?**

The PAN at CPS will remain at 60 for the relevant age group (Reception) and this number will follow the cohort through the school and there is no intention for the school to become three forms of entry (3FE). If children leave we still have to process In Year applications in line with the admission arrangements for the relevant age group. Admission may be refused where the admission of another child would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources or where Infant Class Size limits have been reached.

**38. Can Hotwells pupils apply for other schools?**

Parents of children currently on roll at Hotwells will have to apply for places at an alternative primary school, either at CPS or elsewhere if they choose. Parents of children currently on roll at Hotwells would need to make an in-year application for CPS and follow that school's in-year admission process. It is possible for an admission authority to admit over PAN in order to meet the requirements in the DfE's significant change guidance to accommodate pupils on roll at Hotwells Primary School.

**39. Is this a genuine consultation given press reporting?**

Yes, the consultation is being run in line with the Department for Education's guidance on making a significant change to an academy and is designed for proposers and decision makers to take on board the views of those affected by the proposed change. The outcomes of the consultation will inform whether the trustees of Cathedral Schools Trust decide to proceed with the process at which point they would make a significant change application to the Department for Education who would make the final decision.

**40. Can we attend all the staff and parent meetings? Are the Hotwells parent consultation events open to CPS parents and vice versa?**

We advise parents and carers to attend the event for their school only as these are designed to allow each school community to ask their questions separately. However, all are welcome to attend the drop-in public consultation events on 12th

June and there is now an additional evening session so these will take place at the following times: between 14:00 -15:30 and between 18:00 - 19:20 at Hotwells Primary School.

#### **41. What alternative options have been considered?**

In preparing the proposal a range of options have been explored including:

- Reduce Hotwells Primary School to 0.5 form of entry (FE) (15 children intake in Reception)
- Reduce Hotwells Primary School to 0.5 FE/ with alternative provision on site
- Continue to reduce and merge more classes at Hotwells Primary School
- Close Hotwells Primary School
- Retain Hotwells Primary School as a 1FE primary school, explore feeder school status for BCCS
- Retain Hotwells Primary School as a 1FE primary school, explore feeder school for BCCS and Cathedral Primary School to become 1FE
- Amalgamate Cathedral Primary School and Hotwells Primary School with Reception to Year 6 on both sites
- Amalgamate Cathedral Primary School and Hotwells Primary School with Early years/KS1 and KS2 split
- Do further marketing and wait for changes to primary admissions across the city
- Explore feeder school for St Katherine's School.

The consultation was launched on the basis that the proposal best meets the objectives outlined in the consultation document 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 an enhanced learning environment for the youngest children on the Hotwells Primary School site.
- Support the city with the aim of reducing places across primary schools.

#### **42. Why is the timeline happening so quickly?**

We appreciate this concern and as a result of responses to the consultation to date we are exploring all options.

#### **43. What are the long term plans for Brandon Hill?**

Following water damage to flooring at CPS and the need to relocate a number of classes, the local authority has provided a temporary lease of the Brandon Hill building. The significant costs of renovation works to the Brandon Hill site were

funded by the insurance for the water damage with contributions from the trust. The lease for the site was on a short term basis only and Bristol City Council has long term plans for the site once the CPS building works are complete. The current timescale is that Brandon Hill will not be used beyond winter 2025, unless there is a further delay to the building work but it will need to be vacated by CPS during the 2025/26 academic year.

**44. Has financial modelling been done to show that the proposed amalgamated school is sustainable across two sites?**

We have looked at high level financial projections for the amalgamated school but there are a number of unknowns that make this difficult. What we can say at this stage is that we manage three schools that run a split site and make them work financially and we expect this to be the case for the new amalgamated school. Additional funding comes for schools that operate on a split site to take into account the challenges around operating two sites and we are confident that we will be able to produce a balanced budget for the amalgamated school both for the years when the existing Hotwells children will be part of the school and beyond this when CPS has 2 forms of entry in each year group.

**45. How will the trust support parents of children from low socio economic backgrounds with this change e.g. will there be any subsidised bus passes?**

We are happy to discuss measures that might help parents in this respect and would welcome any additional suggestions.

**46. What does this mean for children starting at CPS in September this year? Will they go through multiple site changes?**

In response to suggestions received through the consultation we are exploring options.

**47. Why have the trust been allowing new pupils to attend the school if a merger was to be considered?**

All applications must continue to be processed in line with the School Admissions Code, and this includes during any consultation. We cannot change the admissions until such a point as a decision is made by the DfE on whether the change will take place.

**48. How will the needs of children be supported who struggle to cope in a larger environment? What about adopted children and those with EHCPs and complex needs and how will the trust mitigate the emotional impact on pupils?**

A carefully considered, joined up transition plan between both schools will be put in place to support and we have had a number of suggestions through the consultation which we are considering and would welcome further information if considered relevant.

**49. How is it deemed acceptable to take the right of religious choice in school away from parents and families?**

The city will continue to have a range of schools of different types including faith and non faith schools that provide choice to parents and their families.

**50. Why has the freedom of educational choice been taken from families who have moved or relocated who are in want/need of a smaller school environment?**

We fully understand this position but as outlined in the consultation document there are significant challenges across the country with the amount of funding for state schools that is available from the government. As a result smaller schools with low numbers of pupils are very difficult to run in a way that is financially viable and this is particularly challenging in inner city areas where there are lots of alternative options for parents and carers. Hotwells Primary School has had a reduced number of pupils on roll for a number of years now and that has led to a cumulative deficit of around £0.5million.

**51. Why can't current children finish their time at the school they are a part of before the merger looks to begin?**

We appreciate this concern and as a result of responses to the consultation to date we are exploring further options, however if this were to happen the process could not begin for another 7 years.

**52. Can you provide information on the numbers of pupils on pupil premium across both schools? Will this change if the intake includes a local area?**

The table below shows pupil data across the two schools and shows that they are broadly similar across key metrics. The proposed admission arrangements would combine a local element and a city wide catchment and therefore we would not expect a significant change in this demographic.

	Cathedral Primary School	Hotwells Primary School
Number of boys	51.0%	51.2%
Number of girls	49.0%	48.8%
% of children from a Minority Ethnic Background	52.1%	50.4%
% of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)	18.3%	31.8%
% of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)	15.2%	14.0%
% of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	3.6%	3.9%
% of children in receipt of Free School Meals	22.4%	27.1%
% of pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant	25.8%	28.7%