



Hotwells
PRIMARY SCHOOL



Cathedral

Primary School

Consultation version 2



**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.

This document is a revised version of the consultation proposal taking on board feedback received so far during the consultation process. For ease of reading, we have put the revised proposal at the top of this document and included the background information in the second half of the document. This document should be read in conjunction with FAQs version 4 which have been updated in light of the proposed changes.

We continue to want to hear from all those with an interest and please let us know your views and comments on the revised proposal by emailing consultation@cathedralschoolstrust.org

Revised proposal

Thank you to all those who have responded to the amalgamation consultation - we have appreciated you taking the time to share your views. There have been a number of concerns raised to date, in particular around the following areas:

- The timeline for change
- Class sizes during any transition period
- What this means for children starting reception at CPS in September 2025
- Support for pupils during any transition period
- Admission arrangements for BCCS and CPS

We understand these concerns and have revised the details within the proposal for the areas below:

Revised transition arrangements

Our proposal is for a more gradual transition so that:

- No existing CPS children (including the Reception 2025 cohort) would need to move site.
- There would be a more staggered transition for Hotwells Primary School children with no changes until September 2027.
- There would be more time to build in transition activities for children and parents.

Admission Arrangements

We appreciate that the proposal has caused considerable concern for parents and carers. We have heard these concerns and as a result we have adjusted the proposal:

- To remove the proposal to vary the admission arrangements for Bristol Cathedral Choir School for the academic year 2026/27. These will continue as currently and there will be no change in the order of feeder school and sibling status (the existing arrangements for BCCS here will continue).
- To vary the admissions arrangements for CPS for the academic year 2025/26. Draft varied admission arrangements 2025/26 can be viewed [here](#).
- To vary the admission arrangements for CPS for the academic year 2026/27. In light of feedback the local places are now 20% with the remainder allocated by random allocation. Distance is now measured to Hotwells Primary School site rather than a nodal point between the two sites. Draft varied admission arrangements 2026/27 can be viewed [here](#).

Detailed Arrangements

We are committed to ensuring that there is a detailed transition plan for each stage of the proposal which is developed with school leaders. This will take account of the individual needs of the children in each school at the point of changes taking place.

How to take part: consultation events

We continue to want to hear from all those with an interest and we appreciate that the revised proposal may still raise questions or concerns. We would like to meet you in person so that we can take the time to talk to you and there are drop-in events on the following dates:

Tuesday 15th July, 3 - 6pm (Cathedral Primary School)

Thursday 11th September, 3 - 6pm (Hotwells)

Tuesday 16th September, 5 - 8 pm (Cathedral Primary School)

If you would like to attend one of these events, please [click here to book a place](#).

How to respond

Please let us know your views and comments on the revised proposal by emailing consultation@cathedralschoolstrust.org.

Please respond by **Friday 19th September 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.

Timeline

3 June 2025: Consultation formally opens

June 2025: Engagement events and meetings

10 July 2025: Revised proposal shared

July - September 2025: Engagement events and meetings

19 September 2025: Consultation closes

2 October 2025: Trustees board meeting - Trustees will consider the consultation before making a decision about whether to make an application to the DfE.

October 2025 - January 2026: Application to DfE

January - March 2026: DfE analysis and decision

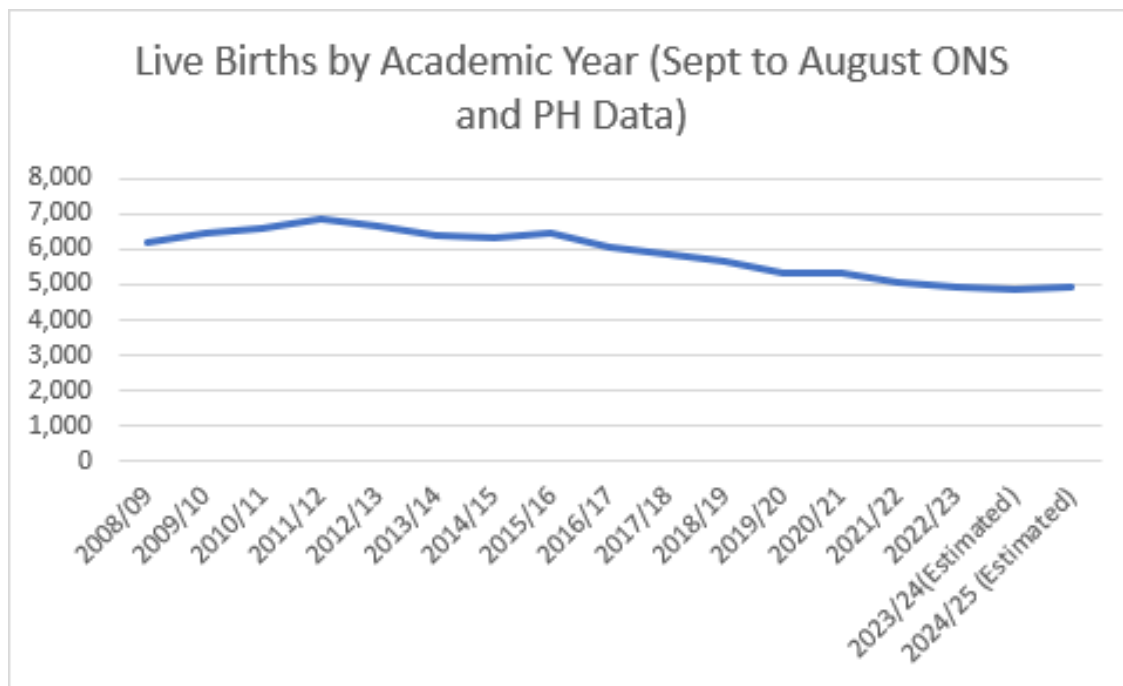
How would the consultation impact on any final decision?

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.

Background

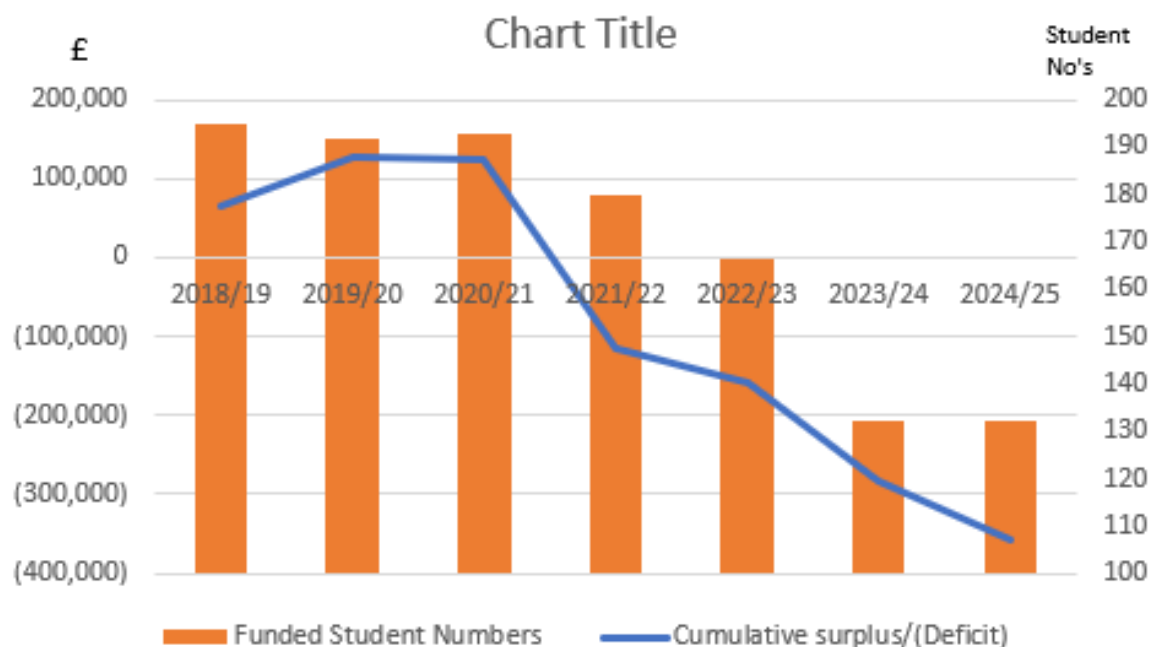
In recent years Bristol has experienced a significant decline in birth rates, leading to a steep reduction in the number of children entering primary education. Estimated births in Bristol for the academic year 2022/2023 was 4,961. This is a decrease of 27% since 2011/2012. As a result, a number of schools 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 2: 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 3: 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. The amalgamated school will be known as Cathedral Primary School (CPS).

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. Please note that there will be an interim transitional arrangement until September 2028 as set out in figure 1 above.

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.