



ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL / LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL



CONSULTATION

ON A PROPOSAL TO 'AMALGAMATE'
ST CECILIA'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

AND

ST CECILIA'S CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL WITH
EFFECT FROM JANUARY 2024

The City Council and the Catholic Archdiocese are consulting on a proposal to 'amalgamate' St Cecilia's Catholic Infant School and St Cecilia's Catholic Junior School with effect from 1st January 2024 and offer parents a place for their child at the newly 'amalgamated' Catholic Primary school.

THE PROPOSAL

The law says that to amalgamate the schools we have to close both schools and open a 'new' school. This means that the two schools would close and the new school would open the next day.

The City Council is therefore consulting on a proposal to discontinue St Cecilia's Catholic Infant School and St Cecilia's Catholic Junior School on 31 December 2023, and the Catholic Archdiocese is consulting on a proposal to establish, in the premises of the existing schools, the newly amalgamated Catholic primary school for 420 pupils, mainly of the age range 4 – 11 years, with a 52 (full time equivalent) place nursery class and an admission number of 60 with effect from 1st January 2024.

All parents of existing pupils will be offered a place for their child at the newly 'amalgamated' Catholic Primary School but they would, in addition, be free to send their child to any other school with places available.

CONSULTATION MEETINGS

Consultation meetings have been arranged at both schools. They will give you an opportunity to have the proposal explained and to hear why it is being made. These meetings are your opportunity, whether you are a parent, a member of staff, or a governor to express your views and any concerns, or to offer alternative ideas. The meetings have been arranged as follows:

Please note: Parents are welcome to attend either of the parents' meetings below, whichever is the most convenient.

St Cecilia's Infant School 21 st June 2023	St Cecilia's Junior School 22 nd June 2023
Staff at 4pm	Staff at 4pm
Parents at 6.30pm	Parents at 6.30pm
Governors at 5pm	

Officers will be present at the meetings to answer questions and take note of the views expressed.

BACKGROUND

The Head teacher of the Infant School retired with effect from 31st March 2023.

The two schools are federated with one governing body, and the school governors feel that the natural next stage of development would be to seek the views of stakeholders on a proposal to amalgamate to form a single all-through primary school and that a single school at the heart of the parish and local community would offer a consistent vision and ethos to benefit pupils, staff, parents and carers. The Junior Head teacher has become the Acting Head teacher of the Infant School with effect from 1st April 2023 and if the amalgamation is approved, would become the Head teacher of the newly amalgamated school with effect from 1st January 2024.

The City Council and the Archdiocese are now consulting members of the school community on that proposal.

THE BENEFITS OF AN “ALL THROUGH” PRIMARY SCHOOL

There is a strong educational rationale for amalgamating separate infant and junior schools and many such separate schools have now amalgamated successfully after the initial challenges that change presents. The following have been identified as some of the benefits of amalgamation.

BENEFITS FOR THE CHILDREN

There would be continuity of education through the creation of one school from 4+ to 11 years of age, which would continue with the strong Catholic ethos of the existing infant and junior schools and would benefit the children in the following ways:

- Consistency in leadership and management across the phases, meaning the same routines, policies and practices.
- A reduction in the difference between phases creating the environment to support better planning across the whole age range with additional benefits, for example, of enhanced continuity of curriculum methodology and policies.
- Strengthened tracking of pupil learning and achievement.
- ensure there is a reduction in the potential for disruption as children transfer from one school to another at the end of Year 2; parents only need to apply for a place before reception and do not need to apply again.
- create the climate for a sense of ‘togetherness’ throughout the school community and allow the children to be together, whenever possible, for shared celebrations and services;
- give greater opportunities for the academic, social and moral development of older pupils using cross school projects, for example, working with and for younger children and buddy systems;
- enable continuity of education through the creation of one school, from 4 to 11 years with staff being able to know the children in the school for a longer period of time, thus developing deeper knowledge of them - this would in turn, support seamless safeguarding, more informed assessment leading to better progression, better setting of individual targets and better tracking of individual pupils.

BENEFITS FOR STAFF

The larger “pool” of staff should mean:

- Cross-phase opportunities for staff, such as shadowing colleagues in other phase, joint planning sessions.
- that individual teachers have fewer areas of responsibility, albeit across a wider age range;
- enhanced career opportunities for classroom teachers and learning support assistants as there is the possibility of teaching and supporting learning across a wider age range;
- enhanced career prospects for senior staff from being a member of the leadership team or Head teacher, Deputy or Assistant Head teacher of a primary school;
- greater professional interaction as discussions and decisions are informed by inputs from a wider group; and
- more efficient use of administrative staff as there would be less duplication of work such as census returns, budget information etc.

BENEFITS FOR PARENTS/CARERS

- Continuity of education should ensure that parents do not, possibly, have to re-assess their choice of school or get to know another school, its staff and policies only three or four years after their child has started school.
- The relationship between pupils, parents and the school can be built up over a longer period of time; better understanding of the needs of each child.
- Delivering a seamless and supportive transition from infant to junior school for children and their families.
- Ensuring the continued availability of and access to Catholic education for the parish of St Cecilia long into the future.

PUPIL NUMBERS

The table below shows the number of children attending both schools in recent years.

January	2021	2022	2023
St Cecilia’s Catholic Junior School	240	247	237
St Cecilia’s Catholic Infant School	202	199	197
Combined	442	446	434

This total number of pupils can be managed in a single “all through” primary school.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Feedback from the consultation will be considered by the Archdiocesan Board of Trustees and the City Council's Cabinet in September 2023. If, after considering the comments received, the decision is taken to continue with the proposals:

- a) Statutory notices proposing the closures, and the establishment of the new school, would be posted at the schools and published in the Liverpool Echo.
- b) There would be a period of four weeks, during which people can comment or object.

Only comments or objections received during this four week statutory period would be reported to the City Council's Cabinet when it meets to decide whether or not to approve the proposals.

Comments received as feedback to the consultation will have been considered by the Archdiocese and City Council Cabinet in September 2023, they will not be included in the decision maker report presented to Cabinet in December 2023.

TIMETABLE

The expected timetable for progress of the proposal is:

Consultation Period	12 th June - 21 st July 2023
Archdiocesan Trustees / City Council Cabinet consider results of consultation and decide whether to proceed to publish proposals	September 2023
If approved, Statutory Notices published with four week representation period	September 2023
City Council Cabinet decision	December 2023
If approved, schools will close	31 st December 2023
New school will open	1 st January 2024

HOW TO RESPOND

You can submit views in writing about the proposal to:

**School Organisation Team
(5th Floor, Cunard Building)
St Cecilia's Consultation
Children and Young People's Services
Municipal Buildings, Dale Street,
Liverpool L2 2DH**

or by e-mail to lorraine.walters@liverpool.gov.uk
before the close of the consultation on
Friday 21st July 2023.

Any comments received, by letter or e-mail, will be reported to the City Council Cabinet when it comes to take a decision on the proposals.

City Council papers are public documents and are posted on the City Council website.

Any comments you make, therefore, will be made public, but the papers will be edited before publication, as appropriate, to preserve anonymity in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and to prevent copying of signatures.