

**Bristol City Council****Proposals to combine St Michael's on the Mount C of E Primary School  
and St George C of E Primary School from 1 September 2021****Introduction**

Bristol City Council recognises that all schools must be viable and sustainable for the longer term. The Council has been working with the school governors and the Diocese of Bristol to consider the future of Church of England (C of E) primary school provision in Bristol city centre.

The Council realises that school reorganisation can be an area of concern as local communities often see a school as being at the heart of the community and sometimes cannot immediately agree with the need for change. Taking this into account, the city must continue to have a system of education which will continue to bring about the highest possible standards of education for the children of Bristol for the short, medium and long term and in some cases 'keeping things as they are' may not achieve that in this rapidly changing educational landscape.

**The Proposals**

In order to address the sustainability issues facing both schools, the council, in agreement with the school governors and Diocese of Bristol, is proposing to reorganise the C of E primary school provision in the area. The proposal is to amalgamate St Michael's on the Mount and St George C of E Primary Schools into one Primary School for pupils age 4-11 on the site of St Michael's on the Mount from 1 September 2021.

The new school would have capacity to accommodate up to 210 pupils (30 per year group) although initially pupil numbers would be below this.

The law requires the council to follow a process prior to a formal decision and, if agreed, implementation of the proposals. Some of the wording used is required by law but this document aims to set out the proposals and the reasons for them in a straightforward way.

Although there are 3 separate proposals (the closure of 2 schools and the opening of a school) these are 'related' and are therefore being published together.

You may have some questions to ask. This document attempts to answer some of those questions and explains how you can let the City Council know what you think about the proposal.

**Why is the Council proposing to bring together St Michael's and St George C of E Primary Schools?**

The law calls this an amalgamation. It would lead to a more viable school being established rather than two very small schools with insufficient resources.

Both St Michael's and St George have operated well below capacity for a number of years and the number of children living or being born in the area has been falling. St Michael's can accommodate up to 210 pupils and St George up to 115. There are currently fewer than 150 pupils in both schools.

Cost saving measures have already been taken including sharing a headteacher and combining a number of year groups so that they can share a teacher. Governors have not been able to find any other savings that would be sufficient to keep both school sites operational. School budgets are directly related to the number of children on roll and it is inevitable that the school budgets will continue to shrink with lower pupil numbers.

Governors have considered the issues and options available and do not feel able to provide an appropriate standard of education for local children at both school sites. Moving to one site is the only option available for a school which could be sustainable in the longer term.

### **Why are both existing schools being closed?**

This proposal treats each school as equally as possible while making sure there is still high quality education available for the children in the area.

The option of closing St George, as the smaller school and those children being offered a place at St Michael's would be unfair to the children and staff. The governors' and council's aim is to treat each school equally and fairly.

### **7. Where will the Proposed Primary School be Located?**

The proposed primary school would be located on the existing site and in the existing buildings of St Michael's on the Mount C of E Primary School. The new school will serve the city centre area, currently served by St Michael's and St George Schools.

Parts of the site are owned by Bristol City Council and other parts are in the ownership of the Diocese of Bristol. The school hall is owned by a Board of Trustees and is leased to Bristol City Council.

There are no direct capital costs as the school will occupy the buildings of St Michael's and planning permission is not required.

### **Why will the new school be based on the St Michael's site?**

The St George site is too small to accommodate a one form entry school of up to 210 pupils. The new school would still be of 'village' size and continue to offer pupils an environment in which they are all known and valued as individuals as in their current respective schools.

**What kind of school will it be?**

The new school will be 'voluntary controlled'. This is the same kind of school as St Michael's and St George. The school will be a Church of England school, as it replaces the C of E provision currently provided by St Michael's and St George schools and will continue the established ethos of those schools. The new school will continue to be an important part of the city centre community as the existing schools are.

This proposal will reduce the number of C of E places at a time when pupil numbers are falling in primary schools. There are a number of other C of E schools and academies in the surrounding area and there will continue to be sufficient C of E places in the city centre.

**What will the Admission Criteria be for the Proposed School?**

If the proposed primary school is agreed, the planned admission number (PAN) at Reception age for the school will be 30. The oversubscription criteria for admission to the school will be the same as it is for the current school.

The school will follow the general admission arrangements for community and controlled schools published by Bristol City Council. There will be no priority given to children on the basis of religion or religious denomination.

The school will not provide any dedicated early years provision and will not have any provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for children with special educational needs.

**How will the Proposals affect Pupils?**

St Michael's has 96 boys and girls aged 4 to 11 (September 2020), 1 pupil has an Education and Health Care Plan.

St George has 49 boys and girls aged 4 to 11 (September 2020), 1 pupil has an Education and Health Care Plan.

All pupils will need to make an application for the new school. This is a legal requirement for the new school. There will be more places available than current pupil numbers so all children that apply will get a place.

The new school will meet the general requirements in relation to the curriculum contained in section 78 of Education Act 2002 in the same way as the existing schools.

The vast majority of pupils will continue to be able to walk to school. Keeping provision within the very central area of the city will ensure minimal impact on car use.

**How will the Proposals affect Staff?**

The new school will need to have appropriate numbers of teachers and other staff, reflecting the pupil numbers. Governors will manage the appointment of staff to the new school, with support from the Council. Individual staff will be able to access support from governors and the council through the process. Any staff not appointed to the new school will be supported appropriately.

**How will the Proposals affect Governors?**

The federated Governing Body of St Michael's and St George Schools would cease to exist with effect from 31 August 2021. A new Governing Body would be formed for the new school.

**Will the standard of education be affected?**

St Michael's on the Mount School was inspected and judged to be 'Good' by Ofsted in April 2019.

St George Primary School was inspected and judged to be 'Good' by Ofsted in January 2019.

These proposals are not directly related to the quality of education provided by the existing schools. The governors have made clear to the Council that reducing budgets caused by falling pupil numbers make maintaining the current standards very difficult and unsustainable.

A more stable school will help to maintain standards and will offer a better opportunity for improvement.

**What other options have been considered?**

Keeping both schools open is not a viable solution given the continuing fall in pupil numbers that would no longer support the separate functioning of two schools.

Closing one of the schools and keeping the other was not considered to be fair or equitable.

**What is the timescale for the process?**

This proposal will stand for 4 weeks, until 23<sup>rd</sup> October. Once this period has ended the City Council's Cabinet will be asked to consider the proposal and if agreed, make the formal decision required to close (the law calls it "cease to maintain") the existing schools and to open ("establish") the new school. Cabinet is due to meet in December or January.

It is proposed that both schools would close on 31st August 2021. A new school will be established on the site of St Michael's on 1st September 2021.

**How can I give my views?**

You can send your views to [ian.bell@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:ian.bell@bristol.gov.uk) or by post to Ian Bell, Place Planning Manager, School Organisation (City Hall), Bristol City Council, PO Box 3399, Bristol BS1 9NE by 23 October 2020.

## Bristol City Council

### STATUTORY NOTICE

#### **Proposals to combine St Michael's on the Mount C of E Primary School and St George C of E Primary School from 1 September 2021**

The proposals will have the effect of combining St Michael's on the Mount C of E Primary School and St George C of E Primary School in order to provide a combined primary school serving the area currently served by the schools. The new school will be located on the site of St Michael's on the Mount C of E Primary School. The proposed combined school will admit pupils as a one form of entry school. There will be no change to transport arrangements because displaced pupils attending the existing schools at the time of implementation will be able to attend the combined school.

All applicable consultation requirements relating to this proposal have been complied with. These proposals are linked.

1. Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Bristol City Council, PO Box 3399, Bristol BS1 9NE intends to discontinue St Michael's on the Mount C of E Primary School, Park Lane, Bristol BS2 8BE on 31 August 2021.
2. Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Bristol City Council, PO Box 3399, Bristol BS1 9NE intends to discontinue St George C of E Primary School, Queen's Parade, Bristol BS1 5XJ on 31 August 2021.
3. Notice is given in accordance with sections 11(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Bristol City Council PO Box 3399, Bristol BS1 9NE intends to establish a new Church of England voluntary controlled school at Park Lane, Bristol BS2 8BE from 1 September 2021.

The school will have an age range of 4 years (Reception) to 11 years (Year 6). The maximum capacity of the school will be 210, with an admission number of 30.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposals. Copies of the complete proposals can be obtained from: Ian Bell, Place Planning Manager, School Organisation (City Hall), Bristol City Council, PO Box 3399, Bristol BS1 9NE or by email to [ian.bell@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:ian.bell@bristol.gov.uk) or online at [www.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.bristol.gov.uk).

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, i.e. no later than 23 October 2020, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Ian Bell, Place Planning Manager, School Organisation (City Hall), Bristol City Council, PO Box 3399, Bristol BS1 9NE or by email to [ian.bell@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:ian.bell@bristol.gov.uk)

Signed: Alison Hurley, Service Director – Education & Skills

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#### **Explanatory note**

Bristol City Council, together with school governors and the Diocese of Bristol have reviewed Church of England primary school provision in Bristol city centre, resulting in these proposals.

The new school will have a maximum capacity of 210 but initial pupil numbers are likely to be below this number.