



City of Westminster

Statutory Proposal to amalgamate St Stephen's and St Mary Magdalene's Church of England Primary Schools

28 March 2023

Proposal to amalgamate St Stephen's Church of England (CE) Primary School and St Mary Magdalene's (CE) Primary School from 1 September 2023.

The proposal is to amalgamate St Stephen's CE Primary School and St Mary Magdalene's CE Primary School as a one form entry CE primary school on the St Mary Magdalene's school site. No pupils will be displaced as there will be a guaranteed place for pupils on the roll of both schools at the amalgamated school.

Part 1: Notice in accordance with 15(1) of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 that Westminster Council intends to discontinue St Stephen's CE Primary School on 31 August 2023.

Part 2: Notice that Westminster Council will seek to incorporate pupils from St Stephen's CE Primary School into St Mary Magdalene's CE Primary School with a planned Published Admissions Number of 30 pupils from reception entry September 2023.

1. Published Admissions Number of 30 pupils from reception entry September 2023.

2. Contact details

Name and address of Local Authority publishing the proposal:

Westminster City Council, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP

Name, address and category of schools proposed to be amalgamated:

- i) St Stephen's CE Primary School, 91-99 Westbourne Park Rd, London W2 5QH
- ii) St Mary Magdalene's CE Primary School, Rowington Cl, London W2 5TF

3. Implementation

Date on which it is proposed to amalgamate the schools: 1 September 2023

It is proposed to implement the amalgamation as follows:

St Mary Magdalene's CE Primary will be a one form entry school from September 2023 from the reception intake. Year groups that have more than 30 on roll will be organised as two classes until the numbers reduce to 30 per year group.

All children attending St Stephen's CE will have a place at St Mary Magdalene's CE from 1 September 2023. Children currently attending St Mary Magdalene's CE will continue to do so. The school will be renamed **St Mary Magdalene's and St Stephen's CE Primary**

School.

Reason for amalgamation

The proposal arises for two key reasons: a fall in pupil numbers across Westminster that has impacted both schools and current and future financial viability. St Stephen's has a deficit budget that is projected to increase. Both schools have a surplus of over 30% with low reception numbers.

A four-week period of public consultation, led by the governing body at each school and including meetings with staff, governors and parents, was undertaken from 16 January to 10 February 2023. The consultation and associated documents can be viewed here:

Link will be here once published on the website

4. Pupil numbers and admissions

The numbers for whom provision is currently made at the school:

St Stephen's CE Primary: This school is a co-educational mainstream CE primary school for pupils aged 3 to 11. The school has a Published Admission Number of 30 for each year group, giving a total of 210. As of October 2022, the school had 144 pupils on roll, with 15 children in the reception class and 8 in the nursery.

St Mary Magdalene's CE Primary: This is a co-educational mainstream CE Primary school for pupils aged 3-11. The school currently has a Published Admission Number of 30 for each year group. As of October 2022, the school had 139 pupils on roll with 19 children in the reception class and 12 in the nursery.

The current Reception to Year 6 pupil numbers for each school based on the October 2022 school census are shown below. The current spare capacity, excluding nursery, at St Stephen's is 64% and at St Mary Magdalene's Westminster, it is 36.6%.

Year group	St Stephen's	St Mary Magdalene's	Totals
Reception	9	19	22
Year 1	3	23	26
Year 2	9	16	25
Year 3	9	19	28
Year 4	13	18	31
Year 5	17	17	34
Year 6	16	21	37
Total	76	133	209
Spare capacity	64%	36.6%	

**based on October census 2022*

5. Admissions Criteria

Children who have applied for reception or nursery places at St Mary Magdalene's or St Stephen's for September 2023 would be offered places through the standard admissions process.

Children with siblings at St Mary Magdalene's or St Stephen's would be given sibling priority for September 2023 and subsequent years. Belonging to either parish of St Mary Magdalene's

or St Stephen's would carry equal weight in the admissions criteria. After all other criteria have been considered if there are further applicants requesting places, a distance criterion would need to be used in a tiebreak. St Mary Magdalene's School entrance would be used to measure home-school distances.

5. Displaced pupils due to amalgamation

No children will be displaced because all pupils will have places at the amalgamated St Mary Magdalene's and St Stephen's CE Primary School from September 2023.

Provision will be made to accommodate all pupils that are on roll of both schools. As the current combined numbers do not exceed the overall school capacity of 210 (Reception to Year 6), all pupils can be accommodated on the one site. The larger Year 6 class will have moved on to secondary with the incoming reception class not exceeding 30.

During the informal consultation, it was indicated that some families have preferences for other local schools and may live closer to other schools. Some schools in the surrounding areas have vacancies in some year groups; parents who wish will be supported to apply for them and the Local Authority will endeavour to meet parental preferences for school places, where possible.

Current pupil projections indicate there are sufficient places for future cohorts following the discontinuation of St Stephen's CE Primary. The Local Authority will continue to monitor the projected need for future school places and propose changes, if required, to ensure sufficient places are available.

6. Impact on the community on the amalgamation

Both schools follow the same curriculum, share curriculum subject leads and the staff jointly participate in various training sessions. Children of both schools often participate in activities together so arrangements in the merged school will feel familiar to the children. The differing needs of each age group will continue to be met at the amalgamated school.

The Christian ethos, which is a strength of both schools, will remain paramount. The merged school will be the parish school for both St Mary Magdalene's and St Stephen's, with weekly shared collective worship in school, taken alternately by the Vicar of St Stephen's and the Vicar of St Mary Magdalene's, together with shared Church assemblies for the main festivals alternating between the two churches.

7. Rural Primary Schools

Not applicable

8. Balance of denominational provision

The LA is under an obligation to consider the impact on the balance of denominational provision in the area before it determines the outcome of school closure proposals. As there are other Church of England schools, as well as other faith schools in Westminster and surrounding areas, and St Mary Magdalene's remains an option for parents, the proposed amalgamation will have minimal impact on the balance of denominational school provision.

9. Maintained nursery schools

The amalgamated St Mary Magdalene's and St Stephen's CE Primary will continue to offer nursery provision.

10. Sixth Form Provision

Not applicable

11. Special Educational Needs provision

There are 21 pupils on roll at St Mary Magdalene's CE School who have been identified as having special educational needs, of whom there are 6 pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan. One pupil with an EHCP will be leaving the school at the end of July 2023 as they are in Year 6. There are 7 pupils on roll at St Stephen's who have been identified as having special educational needs, none of whom are in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan.

St Mary Magdalene's currently has step free, accessible access to its Early Years and KS1 areas as well as the communal areas. They have a hearing loop to support pupils with a hearing impairment. There is no lift within the main building. However, if there is a need for adjustments or adaptations to meet needs of current or future pupils or staff, the Diocese would be expected complete a feasibility study to assess appropriate capital works.

12. Travel

The travel distance between the two schools is approximately a 13-minute walk. For current St Stephen's pupils, this may be further than their current journey, for some it may be closer. The additional distance is considered reasonable and will not require travel support.

13. Making representations about the proposal

Within six weeks (extended from the statutory weeks to take account of the Easter break) from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by contacting:

Email: school.organisation@westminster.gov.uk

Post: Head of School Place Planning and Access to Education, Bi-borough
Education Service, Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street
London, W8 7NX

The closing date for responses is 5 May 2023

We will not be able to consider any responses received after this date. All responses received during the representation period will be fully considered by the Local Authority, and a final decision will then be made by the Local Authority on whether to implement the school amalgamation proposal or not with effect from 1 September 2023.