

Appendix C

A summary of the representations received in response to the Statutory Proposal to amalgamate St Mary Magdalene's and St Stephen's Church of England Primary Schools from the 1 September 2023

Consultation Response Analysis

Westminster Council consulted the following stakeholders and interested parties directly to inform them of the publication of this statutory proposal:

- ✓ Secretary of State
- ✓ Parents, Carers and Pupils of St Mary Magdalene's and St Stephen's
- ✓ Staff at St Mary Magdalene's and St Stephen's
- ✓ Governors of all Westminster schools
- ✓ London Diocesan Board for Schools
- ✓ Diocese of Westminster (Roman Catholic)
- ✓ Westminster Schools Forum and Education Partnership Board (EPB)
- ✓ Headteachers of all Westminster schools
- ✓ Local MPs
- ✓ All Westminster councillors
- ✓ All neighbouring boroughs' local authorities
- ✓ Published on Westminster website / social media accounts
- ✓ Westminster Extra local paper

By the formal close of the statutory notice, the following written responses were received:

Total Responses	Agreed with the Proposal	Neither agreed or disagreed	Did not Agree with the Proposal
29	27	0	2

Respondents identified themselves as:

- Parents of St Mary Magdalene's Primary School x 6
- Parents of St Stephen's Primary School x 3
- Staff at St Mary Magdalene's Primary School x 12
- Staff at St Stephen's Primary School – 1
- Governor x 4
- No identity provided x 2

Summary of comments

<p><i>'It will make a huge difference in terms of funding and teaching. Children are also very familiar with each other as they attend church together and other celebrations.'</i></p>
<p><i>'We support this union as for the good of our school at first and for the other school too. We believe that such step could help to save the future of our school and might strengthen the educational environment in the school.'</i></p>
<p><i>'My only concern will be if the quality of the education they will receive will not be adversely affected by this amalgamation, again the school heads and governors have assured quality will be expected to improve if anything. Therefore, my overall view is a positive one towards the proposal and time will tell.'</i></p>
<p><i>'I believe that the proposed amalgamation will be in the very best interests of both schools moving forward and provide excellent outcomes for all of the children.'</i></p>
<p><i>'I welcome the proposal of Mary Magdalene and St Stephen coming together. Mary Magdalene and St Stephen children learning and working together will bring great opportunities for their future.'</i></p>
<p><i>'I am a teacher and I think the amalgamation is a wonderful idea because we already share resources, do joint activities, share some staff.'</i></p>
<p><i>'I think it's a great idea that both communities join together. Wonderful for the children's education'</i></p>
<p><i>'It will allow the new school to not just survive, but to thrive. I have full faith in Carol Gold and Tonnie Read to ensure that the new school gives the children who attend the very best education.'</i></p>
<p><i>'Pupils and teachers are really excited at the idea of sharing the school with their peers from St Stephen's.'</i></p>
<p><i>'I think this is exactly what needs to happen to ensure that all the pupils and staff are able to continue their journey together and give each of the schools the opportunity to thrive'</i></p>
<p><i>'My child is scared that it will take time to adapt to new teachers and students'</i></p>
<p><i>'The schools already share the same curriculum and an Executive Headteacher, which would enable a smooth transition. They have also already shared a number of events together (eg a combined summer fair and sports day). There are strong relationships already formed between the schools at pupil, teacher and governor level.'</i></p>

<p><i>‘Entering an amalgamation, rather than a straight closure of St Stephen’s, whilst sad for the pupils at St Stephen’s, will give them a feeling that they are being cared for and keeping something of their identity through the change. It will also enable them to move together. I think it will enable the pupils to look forward to next year with more excitement’.</i></p>
<p><i>‘The change is brilliant, my children and I are very excited. Can we also just appreciate that when anything happens in either schools, the children, parents and especially the amazing staff at both schools adapt and support one another like one big family unit that we are!’</i></p>
<p><i>‘Given the falling numbers on roll and the negative impact that this has had our finances, amalgamation is the only way to secure the future of both schools’.</i></p>
<p><i>‘The school will have more staff at the school may allow the school to have different activities for after school club like they use to as there will be more funding’.</i></p>
<p><i>‘I fully support the amalgamation as proposed. Just a point to make, People in the community have raised questions about the resulting concentration of schools north of the flyover (St Mary Magdalene’s, Edward Wilson, Our Lady of Dolours, St Saviours) compared to distance between schools that will be left to the South (Hallfield, St Mary of the Angels, Colville). I feel that the missing piece in the process has been strategic top level thinking about where the Council would like schools to be. It would be reassuring to think that this top level thinking was taking place alongside the bottom-up work on the ground’.</i></p>

Summary and conclusion of representation

‘The Council acknowledges the genuine support and engagement of parents/carers, staff, governors, local councillors, the local community and educational professionals in response to the six-week statutory representation period and the four-week informal consultation period led by the governing bodies of both schools.

The response to both the governing body led consultation and the representation statutory notice period has been very much in favour of the amalgamation of the two schools. The summary of responses indicate support from parents, staff and governors in bringing the two school communities together and a clear understanding of the financial and the teaching and learning benefits for the pupils when two school come together.

We believe that this amalgamation proposal offers the best opportunity to secure not only the current, but long-term sustainability of high quality primary education to current and future pupils, and is a proposal that provides a guaranteed place at the amalgamated St Mary Magdalene’s and St Stephen’s Church of England Primary School for all pupils on roll of both schools.

An amalgamated school will also enable greater opportunity for families to be provided with a range of extra-curricular activities and ensure value for money’.