



City of Westminster

Statutory Proposal to amalgamate St Vincent de Paul and Westminster Cathedral Roman Catholic Primary Schools – 6 January 2022

Proposal to amalgamate St Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic (RC) Primary School and Westminster Roman Catholic (RC) Primary School from 1 September 2022.

The proposal is to amalgamate Westminster Cathedral RC Primary School and St Vincent de Paul RC Primary School as a one form entry RC Primary School on the St Vincent de Paul 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: Westminster Cathedral RC Primary School

Westminster Council hereby gives Notice in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that it intends to discontinue Westminster Cathedral RC Primary School on 31 August 2022.

Part 2: St Vincent De Paul RC Primary School

That Westminster Council will seek to incorporate pupils from Westminster Cathedral RC Primary School into St Vincent de Paul RC Primary School with a planned Published Admissions Number of 30 pupils from reception entry September 2022.

1. 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) Westminster Cathedral RC Primary School, Bessborough Place, Pimlico, London, SW1V 3SE
- ii) St Vincent de Paul RC Primary School, Morpeth Terrace, London, SW1P 1EP

2. Implementation

Date on which it is proposed to amalgamate the schools:

1 September 2022

It is proposed to implement the amalgamation as follows:

St Vincent de Paul RC Primary will be a one form entry school from September 2022 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.

The Westminster Cathedral school site is to be retained for educational use which will include accommodating additional classes for the amalgamated school. The final arrangements for each class will be determined in the summer term 2022, when it will be clearer how many pupils will be on roll in each year group.

All children attending Westminster Cathedral RC Primary will have a place at St Vincent de Paul RC Primary from 1 September 2022. Children currently attending St Vincent de Paul RC Primary will continue to do so.

3. 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. Both schools have a deficit budget that is projected to increase. Westminster Cathedral RC Primary has a considerable and unrecoverable budget deficit. Both schools have a surplus of over 30% with low reception numbers.

A four-week period of informal public consultation, led by the governing body at each school and including meetings with staff, governors, and parents was undertaken from 11 October to 12 November 2021. The consultation and associated documents can be viewed here:

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/children-and-families/education/statutory-proposal-amalgamate-st-vincent-de-paul-and-westminster-cathedral-roman-catholic-primary>

4. Pupil numbers and admissions

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

St Vincent de Paul RC Primary: This school is a co-educational mainstream RC Primary School for pupils aged 5 to 11. The school has a Published Admission Number of 30 for each year group, giving a total of 210, as well as a nursery class. As of October 2021 the school had 144 pupils on roll, with 15 children in the reception class.

Westminster Cathedral: This is a co-educational mainstream RC Primary School for pupils aged 5-11. The school currently has a Published Admission Number of 30 for each year group. As of October 2021 the school had 139 pupils on roll with 19 children in the reception class.

The current Reception to Year 6 pupil numbers for each school based on the October 2021 school census are shown below. The current spare capacity, excluding nursery, at St Vincent de Paul RC Primary is 33.8% and at Westminster Cathedral RC Primary, it is 31.4%.

Year group	St Vincent De Paul	Westminster Cathedral	Totals
Reception	19	15	34
Year 1	23	21	44
Year 2	23	20	43
Year 3	18	20	38
Year 4	21	20	41
Year 5	17	22	39
Year 6	18	26	44
Total	139	144	283
Spare capacity	33.8%	31.4%	

*based on October census 2021

The admissions criteria for the amalgamated school will give priority to Roman Catholic applicants born in the Westminster Cathedral and St Vincent de Paul Parishes. The Published Admission Number will be 30.

5. Displaced pupils due to amalgamation

No children will be displaced because all pupils will have places at the amalgamated St Vincent de Paul RC Primary School from September 2022.

Provision will be made to accommodate all pupils that are on roll of both schools. As the current combined numbers of 283 exceed the capacity of 210 (Reception to Year 6), arrangements will be made to accommodate any overspill of classes at the Westminster Cathedral school site. The organisation of classes will need to be determined in the summer term 2022 to take account of mobility that may occur.

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 closure of Westminster Cathedral RC 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 of the amalgamation

Westminster Cathedral RC Primary has been linked with the Holy Apostles Church over many generations and is seen as the linked school for the local Catholic community. Many of the local Catholic community have attended the school and will be disappointed that it is no longer a financially viable school.

The proportion of Westminster Cathedral RC Primary Catholic families is approximately 80% and 93% at St Vincent de Paul. Both schools attract Catholic families even though undersubscribed.

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 Catholic Schools, as well as other faith schools in Westminster and surrounding areas, and St Vincent de Paul remains an option for parents, the proposed amalgamation will have minimal impact on the balance of denominational school provision.

9. Maintained nursery schools

Westminster Cathedral RC Primary does not offer nursery provision; this will be available for parents at the amalgamated St Vincent de Paul RC Primary, which already offers nursery provision.

10. Sixth Form Provision not applicable

11. Special Educational Needs provision

There are 26 pupils on roll at St Vincent de Paul RC Primary who have been identified as having special educational needs, of which there are 7 pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan. There are 26 pupils on roll at Westminster Cathedral that have been identified as having special educational needs, of which there are 5 pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan. These numbers exclude Year 6 that will transition to secondary school from September 2022. St Vincent de Paul RC Primary is an accessible building with a lift. In order to improve accessibility and suitability further at St Vincent de Paul RC Primary, particularly at the entrance of the school, the local authority will fund a programme of capital works at St Vincent de Paul RC Primary in 2022.

12. Travel

For the period where some pupils may need to be located on the Westminster Cathedral site, arrangements will be made to organise one drop off and pick up point for parents that may have siblings located at both school sites

13. Making representations about the proposal

Within four weeks 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, Borough Education Service, Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street London, W8 7NX

The closing date for responses is 3 February 2022

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 2022.