

Consultation on whether Cathedral Primary School (CPS) should adopt a faith designation (Church of England)

What are we proposing?

The governors of Cathedral Primary School (CPS) and trustees of Cathedral Schools Trust (CST) are actively considering whether the school should adopt a faith designation (Church of England). Before making a decision about whether or not to proceed, governors and trustees are keen to hear all views on the question. This document provides further information and outlines how you can respond to the consultation.

Why are we proposing it?

There are three significant institutions on the College Square campus: Bristol Cathedral Choir School (BCCS), Cathedral Primary School (CPS) and Bristol Cathedral itself. As CPS matures it is timely to consider the relationship afresh. Cathedral Primary School shares a name with the Cathedral but the primary school does not currently have a faith designation. The change to the admissions policy at BCCS now means CPS is a feeder school and students that choose to attend BCCS in year 7 will be transferring to a school with a faith designation. We are therefore at this stage exploring the possibility of further aligning the schools and enhancing the relationship between all three institutions. Further information on what the change could mean is outlined below and the school would remain inclusive and open to pupils of all faiths and none.

Timeline for consultation and any possible change

The consultation process will run from Thursday 14th November 2019 - Friday 10th January 2020. The change in designation, if it were to be agreed by governors and trustees, would not take place until September 2020 at the earliest.

How can I find out more information?

We will be holding information sessions on:

- Thursday 28th November at 5.30pm
- Monday 2nd December at 9.15am

How do I make my views known?

There are a number of ways in which you can make your views known:

- email (admin@cathedralprimaryschool.org) and title your email 'CPS faith designation consultation'
- deliver hand written comments to the school office marked 'CPS faith designation consultation'

- attend one of the information sessions listed above
- arrange a meeting with the headteacher, Sara Yarnold or the Chair of Governors, Stephen Parsons

Please respond by Friday 10th January 2020 so that governors and trustees have the opportunity to take your views into consideration when making their decision.

How will the consultation impact on any final decision?

The governors of CPS and trustees of CST will not make a final decision until the consultation period has closed and all views have been heard.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does a faith designation mean?

The proposal is for CPS to become a free school with a faith designation. There are different types of schools with faith designations and the proposal is for CPS to adopt a voluntary controlled (VC) model for its governance. This is the same designation as BCCS. There are around 2,000 VC schools in England, of which the majority are primary schools. VC schools are 'managed' by the local authority (LA) or for academies/free schools by the academy trust, whilst maintaining their distinctive characteristics. In the case of CPS the academy trust is Cathedral Schools Trust. In terms of governance, under a VC model, up to 25% of the governors are 'Foundation Governors', appointed to represent the religious body. The school name would remain exactly the same because it is a free school and there will be no addition of 'VC' to its title.

As a VC type school, the school's approach to Christian distinctiveness and Religious Education (RE) will be monitored and reported on every five years and VC schools are held to account by the diocese and national Church of England via a SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection. This inspection framework focuses on the impact of the Church school's Christian vision on pupils and adults. This involves looking at the school's Christian vision, the provision the school makes because of this vision and how effective this provision is in enabling all pupils to flourish. Church schools will employ a variety of strategies and styles appropriate to, and reflective of, their particular context in order to be distinctively and effectively Christian in their character and ethos. SIAMS inspectors therefore do not look for a set template of what a Church school should be like, but rather take the particular context of the school into account.

What does it mean for my child?

If CPS were to become a church school, it is likely to mean that the school will benefit from greater access to the resources of Bristol Cathedral and the diocese. It will also mean a more consistent school experience for those pupils who are going on to BCCS to study in Year 7. The change will not impact on admissions (see further information below) and the school will continue to remain open to pupils of all faiths and none and to encourage pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and values.

How will any change impact on admissions?

There are no plans to alter the way in which children are admitted to Cathedral Primary School as a result of this change. Pupils will continue to be admitted in line with the order of priority in Cathedral Primary School's oversubscription criteria. The only change will be to the introductory section of the admission arrangements to reflect the new status of the school. As this is not a material change we do not need to consult formally on changes to the admission arrangements for 2020/21 or subsequent years.

What will change?

We do not expect much to change in terms of the day to day running of the school. The governance of the school will remain as part of Cathedral Schools Trust, as will the staff and leadership. Some areas of our work will be enhanced to reflect the designated status of the school including curriculum delivery and ensuring the school has an effective and distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, which enables pupils and adults to flourish. There are seven strands to this work:

- Vision and Leadership
- Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills
- Character Development: Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy
- Community and Living Well Together
- Dignity and Respect
- The impact of Collective Worship
- The effectiveness of Religious Education

Will the uniform and name of the school change?

There are no planned changes to either the uniform or the name of the school.

Will collective worship change?

A daily act of collective worship is statutory for all schools regardless of whether they have a faith designation. There will therefore be no difference as a result of any change in designation.

Who makes the final decision on the change?

Following the consultation period, if the governors and trustees decide to proceed with the process, they will make a 'significant change' business case to the Regional Schools Commissioner/ Department for Education who will make the final decision.