

ST MARY'S AND DOWNS WAY SCHOOLS – PROPOSED AMALGAMATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Admissions

What is the impact of the change for infants applying to St Mary's Year 3 currently, 2016/17 in...?

	Current Year R	Current Year 1	Current Year 2
Downs Way Pupils	These pupils will automatically feed into St Mary's Year 3 (if the proposed amalgamation happens for September 2018)	Apply under St Mary's current admissions policy	Apply under St Mary's current admissions policy
Other Infant school pupils	Apply under St Mary's admissions policy	Apply under St Mary's current admissions policy	Apply under St Mary's current admissions policy

- After the proposed amalgamation (proposed September 2018) there will be 120 Year 3 places available (currently 90)
 - the pupils in Year 2 of Downs Way School will automatically continue up into Year 3 (leaving 60 places for pupils from other schools)
 - Year 2 pupils from other schools will need to apply to St Mary's – With the expansion of the junior school (Years 3-6) there will be more places for all

What is the impact of the change for admissions into Year R?

2016/17 application for 2017 start in Downs Way School Year R	2017/18 application for 2018 start in St Mary's School Year R
Use Downs Way School admissions criteria	Use St Mary's School new admissions criteria (if the amalgamation goes ahead September 2018)

- Year R applicants for entry in 2019 onwards will use the St Mary's admissions criteria if the schools amalgamate. (If the schools amalgamate it is proposed that admission for Year R would be amended to mirror that for Year 3, with the added stipulation that faith-based admission criteria will only apply to those pupils for whom the new school is the nearest Church of England school, as measured from their place of residence)
- Admission criteria for St Mary's year 3 can be seen on St Mary's website - there is no plan for these to change and if there are any changes this will only be after public consultation

Why expand St Mary's school from Year 3? and Why now?

- St Mary's is expanding to meet the increased need for pupil places; which has already taken place at the infant level. The increase in local children means that more places in Year 3 will be needed in September 2018.
- This means more places for pupils wherever they live in greater Oxted

What are the implications for local residents?

- In the light of potential further building work to support this amalgamation, effective building and traffic management will be a high priority in any proposed solution. This will be subject to a separate and subsequent consultation process.

What are the financial implications for both schools?

- Both schools are currently in budget but one leadership team is more financially effective - allowing more money to be available for use on pupils

Have you considered alternative models? - Why not an academy / competition for a new school?

- Other alternatives were considered but did not offer any better solution and in many cases did not address the priorities for both schools
- St Mary's and Downs Way school have worked well with one head teacher for the past two and a half years and wish this to be permanent for:
 - The good of the pupils
 - Teacher development over a wider age range
 - Teacher recruitment (difficult currently nationally)
 - Financial sustainability
 - Both schools to maintain their similar ethos and approach to education
 - Retention of strong leadership at several levels
 - Creating a through primary in circumstances where it is ideal that the two schools are on adjacent sites
- This model allows the opportunity to continue to offer both Christian and non-faith based education from Year 3-6 in greater Oxted

What impact does the amalgamation have on Ofsted judgements and in particular maintaining Outstanding at St Mary's?

- St Mary's has an Outstanding judgement from Ofsted and will retain that until St Mary's School is inspected next time. This will be retained notwithstanding any amalgamation.
- Downs Way's Ofsted rating is currently Good and working towards Outstanding

What is the impact on staff, their employment and development?

- All the staff at Downs Way will become part of the St Mary's team and continue to access a very strong staff development programme, which will be enhanced in the light of the wider age range.

How will the new school operate?

- The school will mainly work as two separate age groups (5-7 years old - Early Years and Key Stage 1 and separately Key stage 2 i.e. 8-11 years old)
- Year 2 will continue to take leadership responsibilities within the lower part of the school.
- Year 3 will all have the same experience of starting afresh together, with pupils mixed into one year group from multiple schools. Children from other schools will make up at least half of Year 3.
- Uniform – There will be one uniform across the whole school. Both School uniforms are the same blue already, however further discussion is needed on how this will be introduced for those already attending the infant school
- As yet there are no plans to alter the access points to the school although there will be greater freedom across the two sites whilst maintaining the safety of all children

What will the new school be called?

- This has still to be agreed - but probably St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

What are the implications for governors?

- Although Downs Way Governing Body will cease to exist at the point of amalgamation the two governing bodies are working closely together to make sure that the experience within both governing bodies is not lost

Will St Mary's move to becoming an Academy?

- There are no expectations that St Mary's will become an Academy