



St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Marnhull – proposal to change the age range

From

05/03/2025

Until

28/03/2025

Consultation on a proposal to extend the age range of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Marnhull from 3-11 to 2-11 years of age.

If you need this document in a different format or language, please contact Plymouth CAST on 01752 686710 or via email: admin@plymouthcast.org.uk

Proposal

Plymouth CAST Multi Academy Trust is proposing to extend the age range of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Marnhull from 3-11 to 2-11 years of age.

The proposed implementation date, if the proposal is approved, is estimated to be from 1 September 2025.

Background

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Marnhull runs a Foundation Stage Unit offering early years provision for children from the age of 3 years old. The unit provides morning and afternoon sessions, with the option of children attending both and staying for lunch. St Mary's is seeking



to extend the age range of the Foundation Stage Unit and thereby extend the age range of the school from 3-11 to 2-11 years of age. Plymouth CAST Multi Academy Trust has experience of operating 2 year old provision within Foundation Stage Units and Nursery Classes within the school structure and there is plenty of support available to the school. If approved, the school's extended age-range Foundation Stage Unit would continue to operate from the main school building; the number of places offered is likely to increase. As with our existing arrangements, parents would still need to make a separate application to Dorset County Council for a place in the Reception Class.

Benefits of the proposal

The school will be able to establish the strongest links possible with families from the outset working to support them from a younger age.

The leadership and management of a school must be strong, efficient and effective to enable high quality services to be delivered. The extended age Foundation Stage Unit will be an extension of the school services that will benefit children, families and the school community.

Children whose parents meet the free school meal eligibility criteria and attend for the whole day will be entitled to a free school meal. Parents will also be able to purchase a school meal for two year-old pupils.

A 2-year-old can get funded childcare if the parent/carer lives in England and is entitled to qualifying benefits.



Parents who wish to pay for childcare will be able to do this via Tax Free Childcare or via ParentPay directly to the school.

Staff

If the proposal is approved, the extended age-range Foundation Stage Unit will continue to be run by qualified early years staff who are employed directly by the Academy Trust. A school is required to work to the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage framework that governs the ratios and qualifications of staffing.

Process and Decision-making

The consultation period will run from 5th March 2025 to 28th March 2025. All responses to this consultation will be carefully considered by the School, Plymouth CAST Multi Academy Trust & The Diocese of Plymouth before any decision is made by the Academy Trust to submit an application to the Department for Education (DfE) to change the age range of the school from 3-11 to 2-11.

If a decision is made to proceed with the proposal, following consideration of the consultation responses, an application will be made to the Department for Education (DfE) South West Regions Group. It is the DfE's South West's Region Group who will make the final decision on the proposal to extend the age range of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Marnhull from 3-11 to 2-11. The DfE will make this decision after considering responses received to the consultation and the application submitted by the Academy Trust. Please note that consultation responses will also therefore be shared with the DfE South West Regions Group.



Capital and planning

This proposal will not affect the Published Admission Number (PAN) for the school, nor the capacity for school aged children. Some capital remodelling will be required to accommodate the requirements of taking 2 year-olds within the school.

Responding to the consultation

This consultation will run from 5th March 2025 to 28th March 2025. The Trust welcome responses on this proposal by the closing date of 28th March 2025 by emailing:

admin@plymouthcast.org.uk

Or by writing to: Rose Colpus-Fricker, Chief Operating Officer, Plymouth CAST Multi Academy Trust, The Edmund Rice Building, 21 Boniface Lane, Plymouth, Devon, PL5 3AG.

All responses to the consultation will be considered and will be shared with the school's leadership team and the Board of Directors Of Plymouth CAST Multi Academy Trust. Responses will also be shared with the Department for Education as the decision-maker, but we will not send individual responses to any specific points made.

The Trust Privacy Notice can be found [here](#).

Consultation method:

- Consultation document Consultation document on the school and Trust websites.

Contact information:

Address: Plymouth CAST Multi Academy Trust, The Edmund Rice Building, 21 Boniface Lane, Plymouth, Devon, PL5 3AG.

Email: admin@plymouthcast.org.uk