

Public consultation: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Proposed  
amalgamation of St.  
Nicholas CofE Middle  
School and Pinvin  
CofE First School**

The four-week representation period commences on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and will run until the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

It is very important that all those wishing to respond to this proposal do so within this timeframe to allow their comments to be considered by the decisionmaker.

Responses can be made on-line via the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/e/7TQnSk7aTh>

Should you require a paper/ Word copy of this survey, please contact: [vicky.rudge@dowmat.education](mailto:vicky.rudge@dowmat.education)

### **Introduction**

The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DOWMAT) in agreement with the Local Academy Board of The Pinvin Federation of Schools (St. Nicholas CofE Middle School and Pinvin CofE First School) is proposing to amalgamate the two existing schools into one, by;

- Expanding the age range of Pinvin CofE First School from 2-8 to 2-12 years of age.
- Closing St. Nicholas CofE Middle School.

The proposal has met the criteria for a significant change and therefore public notice of this proposed change must be issued. This document helps to explain the background to the proposal and the next steps of this process.

- What is proposed
- Why are these changes being proposed
- Details of how the decision will be made
- How to submit a response

Please note: a meeting with parents has been scheduled to take place at the Pinvin Federation of Schools at 5.30pm on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March.

**School details: St. Nicholas CofE Middle School**

Address	Main Street, Pinvin, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 2ER
Status	Academy
Ofsted Rating	Requires Improvement
Current Age Range	9-12
Proposed age range	N/A
Pupil Admissions Number	112 (4 classes x 28 per class)

**School details: Pinvin CofE First School**

Address	Main Street, Pinvin, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 2ER
Status	Academy
Ofsted Rating	Good
Current Age Range	2-9
Proposed age range	2-12
Pupil Admissions Number (Years R-4)	25
Pupil Admissions Number (Years 5-7)	112

**Background information:**

Pinvin CE First School is a one form entry first school in the rural village of Pinvin. It is situated immediately next to St Nicholas CE Middle School, which is a larger than the average-sized middle (deemed primary) school.

The two schools are federated; they share one Headteacher and operate under the same Local Academy Board. On 1st April 2017, both schools converted to academy status as part of the Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DoWMAT) and now benefit from a dynamic collaborative network of 16 academies and the extensive school improvement support offered by the Trust.

Both schools are very proud of the Federation which offers a secure, inclusive and caring environment where everyone is valued and respected as part of the learning community. The Federation's Christian Values are an integral part of the ethos and their motto; 'Be Happy, Grow and Flourish' lies at the heart of both schools.

The Federation is committed to ensuring all pupils have the opportunity to excel, attain their very best and have the opportunity to fulfil their ambitions. The learning experience offered

is both stimulating and motivating; one of high expectations, that equips and prepares pupils for the 21st Century, including a better understanding of British Values in a global context.

Federation leaders believe that everyone in school should enjoy learning and feel proud of their achievements. To fulfil this, both schools provide a curriculum which aims to be engaging and purposeful and one which is underpinned by high expectations. The goal is to prepare every child so that they can make a positive contribution to the society in which they live and develop character for life. The relationship with parents, stakeholders and members of the community is valued; recognising that effective partnerships are essential in ensuring the very best for all pupils.

### **What is proposed**

#### ***1. Change of Age for Pinvin CofE First School***

It is proposed to alter the age range of Pinvin CofE First School from 2-9 to 2-12. The school will be renamed as the **Pinvin CofE Academy**. The school will continue to operate under the same leadership structure and the same Local Academy Board. The upper age range will be extended from 9 years of age to 12 years of age, to include all the pupils currently being provided for at St. Nicholas CofE Middle School, and those expecting a Year 5 place in future years.

Children in Year 4 at the school will remain at the school for Year 5, 6 and 7. Children in Year 7 would then transition to a High School for Year 8 onwards.

**NB: The school will continue to accept children from other schools into Year 5. These children will remain in the school throughout Years 5, 6 and 7.**

Historic and Forecast number on roll at Pinvin CofE First School:

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Oct 2022	21	22	20	21	19	103
Oct 2023	21	23	24	23	21	112
Oct 2024	13	21	23	24	21	102
Oct 2025	17	13	21	23	24	98
Oct 2026	17	17	13	21	23	91

The school is currently built to support 125 pupils, with 113 pupils currently on roll.

The Pupil Admission Number of Pinvin CofE Academy for Years R-4 will remain at 25.

#### ***2. St. Nicholas CofE Middle School***

It is proposed to merge St Nicholas' CofE Middle School with Pinvin CofE First School, if the proposal to change the age range of Pinvin CofE First School from to 2-12 is approved. St. Nicholas CofE Middle School will then cease to exist and all children and Year groups currently in the school will be provided for in the new **Pinvin CofE Academy**.

The Pupil Admission Number of Pinvin CofE Academy for Years 5-7 will remain at 112.

Children would remain at the Pinin CofE Academy for Years 5, 6 and 7. Children in Year 7 would then transition to a High School for Year 8 onwards.

**NB: The school will continue to accept children from other schools into Year 5. These children will remain in the school throughout Years 5, 6 and 7.**

Historic and Forecast number on roll at St Nicholas' CofE Middle School:

	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Total
Oct 2022	64	73	75	212
Oct 2023	43	65	73	181
Oct 2024	50	43	65	158
Oct 2025	45	50	43	138
Oct 2026	45	45	50	140

The school is currently built to support 336 pupils, with 181 pupils currently on roll.

### **Why are these changes being proposed?**

Currently, both St. Nicholas CofE Middle School and Pinvin CofE First School operate as much as possible as one school. The leadership team and a single Local Academy Board oversee provision across both schools with a high priority placed on consistency and progression through a high-quality whole Federation curriculum. However, there will be substantial benefits from merging the two schools into one.

These proposals are expected to provide the following benefits to the Pinvin schools and local families:

- every child will have a clear and transparent education journey;
- the new school will be supported to deliver good education outcomes in a stable and known education system; and
- The new school will be able to deliver a full curriculum and remain sustainable and financially viable.

#### **1. Benefits for pupils / families from provision in one through school**

Parents and carers of children starting at the school in Year R or Key Stage 1, will have the choice to continue their child's primary education in one setting, without the need to change school for the start of Year 5. This will provide continuity of education throughout the primary years leading up to the SATs in Year 6.

Approaches to teaching and learning would be consistent across the full age range.

Key Stage 2 will be able to work alongside one another in the same building; facilitating greater consistency and collaboration between classes.

Staff subject expertise will be more easily accessible and subject leaders will be better able to monitor and support learning across the whole 2-12 age range.

More continuous relationship between the school, parents, carers and outside agencies can ensure that all pupils, but particularly those with special educational needs, are supported effectively through to the end of Year 6 / 7.

There will be greater opportunity for siblings to attend the same school.

Greater sharing of pupil progress information across successive year groups.

Support of pupils with additional needs will be more consistent, as a result of shared staff knowledge and consistency of approach.

All teachers across the Pinvin Federation are qualified to teach across the whole primary age range and have previous experience of working in schools offering full primary provision.

The staff have a range of expertise which covers the full primary curriculum. In addition, the school works closely within the DoWMAT to share best practice and ensure teaching provision and the quality of education is up to date and of high quality.

The proposed changes will have no detrimental impact on the quality of education for any of its pupils.

In addition, the new Pinvin CofE Academy will benefit from all the specialist facilities currently on offer to the existing middle school pupils; especially with regard to PE, Science, and Music.

## **2. Organisational Benefits**

The benefits of operating just the one school are significant; there would be a substantial reduction in the number of tasks and returns the school would be expected to undertake.

Contracts would be simplified and staff will be employed across the whole school without the complications of cross charging.

Currently, as two schools, the Federation receives two Ofsted and two SIAMs inspections. Reducing each of these to one would greatly support the personal well-being of all staff.

Finances across the Federation will be more efficiently managed, both at school and Trust level.

Greater accessibility for joint Professional Development, mentoring and staff collaboration.

Being able to move lower KS2 classes up to the current middle school building will alleviate the cramped conditions in some of the current KS1 classrooms. All children will be taught in purposeful, spacious classrooms.

### **3. Pyramid Changes**

Changes to the Pershore tier structure over recent years has resulted in a gradual move towards a 2-tier system. This process will culminate in a change of age for each of the first schools in the area to primary schools, where they will retain their Year 5 and 6 children. The existing middle schools will close. Undertaking the proposed merger at this point, will ensure the full process is completed in a smooth and orderly manner, with little or no negative impact on the children and families the schools serve.

The proposed changes will remove some of the confusion parents experience when looking at their child's school journey. Parents will know that children arriving in Reception at the Pinvin CofE Academy for the start of their educational journey will be assured of a place, through the Early Years, through KS1 and into KS2 and beyond to Year 7, without the need for applying for places or worrying about transition. For pupils joining in Year 5, transition procedures will continue to ensure the move to Year 5 at the new Pinvin CofE Academy is as smooth as possible.

#### **Who can propose and decide the changes?**

##### **For Academies:**

##### ***Expansion & Change of Age Range***

Academy schools that are rated 'good' or 'outstanding' at their last inspection, are in good financial health, and are proposing a change that is not contentious or subject to objections from the LA, may propose to expand their physical capacity and / or change the age range of their school by up to two years (including adding nursery provision but excluding adding or removing a sixth form) by following a fast-track process. Academy Trusts proposing to change the age range of their schools by three years or more, those which want to add or remove a sixth form, make any age range change which is contentious, or which will set a precedent for schools in their local area, must submit a full business case.

The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) is the decision maker for proposals for Academy schools. The RSC will consider a range of factors and make a balanced judgement when deciding whether to approve or reject a proposal. The RSC may also defer the approval pending further evidence. Where proposed changes are particularly controversial and could attract adverse public or press attention; the RSC may choose to escalate such proposed changes to the Secretary of State for a decision.

##### ***For the Amalgamation of schools:***

In ALL cases, proposed changes to amalgamate an academy with (an)other academy/academies will require a full business case. There are two ways to do this:

I. The academy trust may propose to close one (or more) academy and expand the remaining academy. The amalgamated academy will retain its school number, as it is not a new school, even if its age range has changed.

II. Alternatively, the academy trust may propose to close all the academies involved and replace them with a new school.

### **Changes to Admissions Policies**

#### **Published Admissions Number (PAN) where an enlargement of premises has not taken place.**

Changes to admissions policies include alterations to the Published Admissions Number (PAN) of schools, as well as changes to feeder school links and other changes affecting admission to a school. Admission authorities must set a PAN for each 'relevant age group' when determining their admission arrangements. If an admission authority of a mainstream school wishes to increase or decrease PAN, without increasing the overall capacity of the buildings, this would be classed as an admissions change, not a prescribed alteration. The statutory process described in this guidance would not need to be followed (please see the [School Admissions Code](#) for further details of the processes admission authorities must follow).

#### **Admission Arrangements**

An age range change may, in certain circumstances require changes to admission arrangements in order to implement the change. In such cases, schools must follow the admissions variation process.

An amalgamation is also likely to require an in-year variation of the school's admission arrangements. A request for an alteration to admission arrangements, in line with process, can be made at the same time as the school makes an application for a significant change.

Please click [here](#) to view the consultation on school admission arrangements for the Pinvin CofE Academy for 2024-2025.

#### **Accommodation Required**

No additional school buildings are required as part of this proposal as there is currently existing capacity within the Middle school for additional classrooms. The school will move towards managing classes by moving Years 3 and 4 into the current middle school building to bring the whole of KS2 (Years 3,4,5 and 6) together in one building..

Over the past four years, the Pinvin Federation has benefitted from over £100,000 from the Conditions Improvement Fund, designed to support improvements to academy buildings. This has enabled the Trust to make substantial renovations to the building and to provide new security fencing. The buildings are bright and spacious and there is ample capacity to support the school's intention to become one school catering for pupils from Nursery to Year 7.

#### **School Transport**

Changes to schools can have an impact on transport for individual pupils. However, the current Transport policy is designed to support schools and pupils in a settled education



planning area, therefore, the policy is currently out of line for all options during transition phase but would be suitable once a single pathway is in place.

To manage this, for those pupils attending a school at the time of the change ordinarily eligible for transport support, special transport arrangements may be put in place to assist during the transition phase. Once the changes have been implemented any new pupils joining the school will be subject to the normal application of the transport policy.

### **School staff**

The overall number of children across the Federation will remain unchanged and therefore, there are no expected changes anticipated in the number of staff for the new Pinvin CofE Academy.

### **Vulnerable pupils**

It is envisaged that the change to a single tier system will make education transitions clearer and more straightforward and supportive, in particular pupils from vulnerable backgrounds.

There is a strong Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community within the wider Pershore area and a specific assessment will be undertaken to ensure pupils from this community are supported during this change.

### **How the decision will be made**

The four-week representation period commences on DATE and closes at noon on DATE December 2022. A Public Notice has been issued on the school website, around the school and in the local area. The following stakeholders will also be directly notified:

- Parents and carers of pupils attending the school
- Staff and Governors of the school
- Neighbouring schools
- Local, District and County Councillors
- Local Member of Parliament
- Cabinet Member Responsible for Children and Families
- Any other known local stakeholders

At the conclusion of this consultation period the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) will decide (on behalf of the Secretary of State) whether proposals are in line with the needs of the local area. Any objections to the proposal will be considered before a final decision is made as to whether to proceed with the proposal.

### **How to submit a response**

Responses can be made on-line via the following link and must be received by noon on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

<https://forms.office.com/e/7TQnSk7aTh>

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