



WHY WE ARE CONSULTING

This consultation is being carried out by Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi-Academy Trust and the Local Governing Body of St Felix RC Primary School, Haverhill, with the full support of the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia.

St Felix became a 3-11 nursery and primary school in September 2011 following a major area school reorganisation in the Haverhill area, implemented by Suffolk County Council. St Felix was reorganised to take 45 pupils in each year group.

The school has already published a Planned Admission Number of 45 for first entry to Reception (Year R) in September 2021. We now want to reduce this number to 30, so that only up to 30 pupils can be admitted to that year group. To do this, we need the agreement of the Regional Schools Commissioner to vary our published number. Before we ask for this agreement, we are consulting you and a wide range of other stakeholders on the proposal.

In the longer term, we would also like an admission number of 30 to apply to each Reception year (Year R) after the initial reduction in 2021. This means that over time, as 30 rather than up to 45 children are admitted to each new Reception group, the school would reduce from its present number (278) to 210 pupils.

This consultation is only about entry for September 2021 – for changes in future years we will be consulting again in the autumn of 2020.

WHY WE WANT TO REDUCE THE ADMISSION NUMBER

Since 2011, entry numbers to Reception at St Felix have been variable – sometimes reaching 44/45 but in other years being well below this number.

Our expected number of pupils for Reception (Year R) entry in September 2020 is 35. This means that five of our seven year groups will be smaller than the admission number of 45, one of them having only 23 pupils. We will have to run nine small classes which will be costly in terms of teaching and support staff.



We cannot afford to fund this model of class organisation in future years. Our budget planning shows that as early as 2022/2023 the school will enter a deficit budget, which cannot be sustained in the long-term. Like all schools, we have a number of fixed financial costs, such as the costs of running and maintaining our site. All possible savings have already been made in these areas so no further savings can be made while still safely operating the school.

WHY WE THINK AN INTAKE OF 30 WILL BENEFIT THE SCHOOL AND ITS FAMILIES

An admission number to Reception (Year R) of 30 will allow us over time to run seven classes, one class for each school year group.

The class structure in each year group will be consistent and will be clear to parents and children. All children will normally be able to stay with the same class group peers throughout their time in school, deepening friendships and social relationships to support effective learning.

The school will more easily be able to organise its infant children in class sizes which meet the legal requirement of no more than 30 in an infant class.

As classrooms become available for other uses, we intend to repurpose them to extend wrap-around care and nursery provision.

We will be able to plan our forecast budgets with greater certainty and avoid using our reserves or running into a long-term deficit.

As our budget planning becomes more certain, we will be able to support other aspects of our School Development Plan and accelerate improvements in teaching and learning, including addressing some of the needs arising from our OFSTED inspection in September 2019.

More widely, we hope that an admission number of 30 will help the County Council plan pupil places and admissions in the town with more certainty. It will contribute to the removal from the system of school places which are not needed.



THINGS WE NEED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

Will things change for children already in the school?

No. If our proposal is approved, nothing will change until September 2021 when only 30 pupils will be admitted to Reception (Year R). Admission numbers for children in years 1 to 6 will stay at 45 until those year groups have left the school.

The nursery will be unaffected.

Will there still be sufficient places for Catholic families?

Yes, on present patterns, Catholic children account for just over half of the children in the school; after the change, there will still be 8 or 9 places in each year group (about 60 in the school overall) for children who are not Catholics but who would like a place at the school. This typically represents approximately 30% of places for children who are not Catholic, which is similar to most other Catholic schools in the Diocese.

If St Felix is reducing its intake, will there be space in other Haverhill primary schools?

Yes, the County Council has spare primary school places in the town at present and this is forecast to continue. Major new housing growth in the north-east and north-west of the town will bring additional school places closer to residents' homes than to St Felix.

How will any necessary reduction in staff be managed?

The reduction in staffing needed to take the school from 278 to 210 pupils (nine classes to seven) will be a gradual process over six years. There are established processes for managing staffing reductions and we will take every opportunity to consult with staff who may be affected and their professional associations. In addition, we will take into consideration any other employment opportunities within the Trust - or otherwise will support affected staff in seeking alternative job opportunities.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The proposed change can only initially be made for the school year beginning in September 2021.

Before we can bring in the variation from 45 to 30 for September 2021, we must have the agreement of the Regional Schools Commissioner. This requirement is set out in the statutory School Admissions Code.

We are consulting on this document until Friday 7th August 2020. Between now and then, you can let us have any comments on the proposal by:

- completing and returning the online consultation form which can be found [here](#) , or
- emailing the form attached to this document to consultation@gmail.com, or
- sending a hard copy of the form to Consultation Response, St Felix RC Primary School, School Lane, Haverhill, CB9 9DE.

Once the consultation is complete and we have considered all the comments, we can then make a formal request to the Regional Schools Commissioner for the initial reduction to take place in September 2021.

If it is approved, we will publish it on the school's website as part of the School's Admissions policy.

Then between October 1st 2020 and January 31st 2021 we will consult again on continuing the Reception (Year R) admission number of 30 for future years (ie entry for September 2022 onwards).

We hope that you will agree with our reasons for seeking to reduce our Reception (Year R) admission number to 30 for the future, starting in September 2021.

Please let us have your responses to one of the addresses above so we can take your views into account.

**ST FELIX CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, HAVERHILL
A CONSULTATION ON REDUCING OUR ADMISSION NUMBER**



Consultation on a proposal to reduce the admission number to Reception (Year R) at St Felix RC Primary School, Haverhill in September 2021

How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to reduce the admission number to Reception (Year R) at St Felix RC Primary in September 2021? Please tick one box.

Agree

Neither Agree or Disagree

Disagree

Don't Know

Please give your main reasons for your answer.

We would like to hear from many different people as your views will help us to decide whether or not we should seek approval for this change.

We will process your personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations, which means that we will not give your personal data to any third parties.

Your comments will be anonymous - your name or anything that could identify you will not be included in any report. However, we cannot guarantee that this information will be withheld if it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Please tell us who you are if you wish to:

Parent of St Felix School

Local councillor

Parent of another school in local area

Local resident

School in local area

Local Authority

EYFS provider in local area

Diocese

School Staff

Local Parish Council

Other (please specify): _____

Any change would at this stage take place for admission to Reception (Year R) in the school year 2021/22 only and is subject to approval from the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Please return this form to one of the addresses in our Consultation Document by **Friday 7th August 2020**.