



# **Consultation regarding the temporary expansion of Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy, Derby**

## Introduction

*At Saint Benedict we develop the character of all those in our community through our curriculum and culture.*

Central to Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy is our Catholic mission, excellence in teaching and learning and our sense of community. We have an exciting opportunity to extend that offer to more students over the coming two years, in a planned and carefully managed way to the benefit of the whole school and wider Derby city community.

This consultation sets out how, working closely alongside Derby City Council (DCC), we are looking to temporarily expand the number of school places at Saint Benedict. We are at an early stage but your feedback is very important in shaping the proposals. This consultation focuses on the provision of these additional places for a two-year period only. Any building works will be subject to normal planning permission application consent requirements.

Following a high level of growth in primary pupil numbers over previous years, pupil numbers are now increasing in secondary schools. Based on current projections, the number of Year 7 students is predicted to peak in 2023-24. DCC is responsible for planning to ensure sufficient school places across the city. We are pleased to be working closely with DCC to try to find a solution to the increased number of students likely to come through from September 2023.

Saint Benedict has a strong reputation across the city. The school is rated good by Ofsted and has been praised for its “positive and inclusive culture that staff and pupils have embraced.”

## Our Proposal

Working alongside DCC, St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust (SRSCMAT) is looking to temporarily provide an additional 90 Year 7 places from September 2023, and a further 90 Year 7 places from September 2024, which would then gradually make their way through the school.

St Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy	Current admissions number	Proposed admissions number (for September 2023 and September 2024)	Temporary Increase per year group
	245	335	90

Under the proposals, the capacity for the school would temporarily increase as follows:

Academic year	Year Group (excluding post-16)					
	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Total
2023-24	335	245	245	245	245	1,315
2024-25	335	335	245	245	245	1,405
2025-26	245	335	335	245	245	1,405
2026-27	245	245	335	335	245	1,405
2027-28	245	245	245	335	335	1,405
2028-29	245	245	245	245	335	1,315
2029-30	245	245	245	245	245	1,225

The Senior Leadership Team at the school is working closely with SRSCMAT to develop proposals for an exciting new building project, to provide additional accommodation so the school can meet the needs of the proposed additional pupil numbers. Whilst the number of additional pupils is for a temporary period, we are working closely with DCC to bring forward proposals for a temporary new build that will benefit all pupils. Detailed feasibility work is currently underway to develop the scheme and any new building works will be the subject of a planning application in due course.

There is sufficient land on the Saint Benedict site to accommodate the proposals set out above, and the school would be able to accommodate the additional pupils whilst the proposed temporary building works are completed.

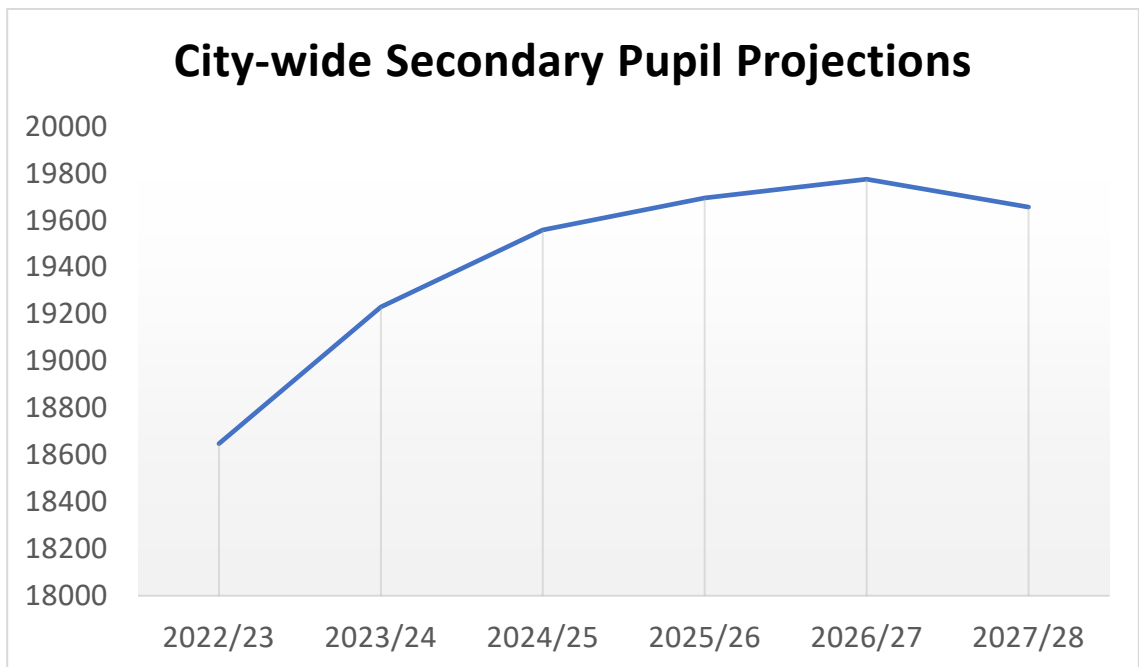
The proposed changes will not result in changes to the school catchment area or its admissions arrangements.

## Why Now?

This expansion scheme is needed to ensure DCC can deliver its statutory duty to provide enough school places. Following a high level of growth in primary pupil numbers over previous years, pupil numbers are now increasing in secondary schools. Secondary school expansions were opened in Derby in September 2018 and September 2019, through close partnership working with schools and academy trusts, to help meet the increasing demand for places.

Pupil numbers and projections are regularly updated, monitored and reviewed. Based on projections, city-wide Year 7 pupil numbers will peak in 2023/24 and will remain high in 2024/25. The graph below sets out current city-wide secondary pupil projections.

SRSCMAT is supporting the proposal on the basis that it provides the means for additional students to study at Saint Benedict and compliments our longer-term vision for the school.



As a result of projected pupil numbers, DCC has worked closely with secondary schools to identify opportunities to put in place temporary admission number increases (bulge year groups) to ensure sufficient school places in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy, SRSCMAT and DCC are working together in partnership to develop proposals to provide an additional 90 Year 7 places in 2023/24 and 2024/25, resulting in an increase in admission number for the school from 245 to 335 for those two academic years. The proposal is for the bulge year groups to roll through the school, year by year, and the school would then revert to its current admission number of 245 from 2025/26.

### What the proposal means in reality

The school, SRSCMAT and DCC are working closely together on plans to develop Saint Benedict and provide additional accommodation. To accommodate these new students, it is proposed that a new temporary building scheme will be developed on site to support the exceptional curriculum offer in place at the school.

Once final plans have been agreed they will be shared publicly, and relevant planning permission will be sought. Any comments about the proposed buildings can be made as part of that separate process.

### Our Longer Term Vision

It is a known fact that Saint Benedict needs investment in its buildings. SRSCMAT continues to champion the need for investment to rebuild the site. The proposals in this consultation very much compliment, rather than detract, from our longer-term desire for a school re-build at some point in the future.

First and foremost, we are not expanding in a way that compromises the quality of education. The proposal will not mean more pupils per class but rather expanded provision with additional staff, additional classes and additional space.

The nature of school funding means that additional students provides additional funding. First and foremost, that will be spent recruiting extra staff so as not to compromise the quality of education. It also provides the opportunity for targeted work to improve the wider fabric of the whole school whilst we continue to explore funding for a wider re-build project for the site.

## How much will it cost?

A feasibility study is being undertaken to determine potential costs. We will then continue to work closely with DCC to obtain the capital funding to undertake the changes proposed. Subject to feedback from the consultation, it is hoped that SRSCMAT would then enter into a grant agreement with DCC for the funding of the works. Funding proposals would be subject to DCC's normal democratic approval processes.

## St Ralph Sherwin CMAT Trust Board support

The Trust Board support this proposal and recognise the potential this expansion has in further enhancing the Catholicity, quality of education, curriculum offer and community asset the school provides.

## Have your say

Having read the proposal, we would very much value your feedback.

You can complete an online form here: <https://forms.office.com/r/xBt2JxUPwe>

If you would rather print the form, which is attached to this document, you can complete it and post it back to:

Temporary Expansion Consultation  
St Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy  
Duffield Road  
Darley Abbey  
Derby  
DE22 1JD

Please ensure you include your name and address otherwise the response will be rejected.

You can also collect a hard copy of the form from the Saint Benedict Academy office.

All responses must be received by **4pm on the 22 December 2022**.

## Then what happens?

All responses will be carefully considered. If the proposal is to proceed, the outcome of the consultation will form part of an application put to the Department for Education for approval. We will also publish the outcome of the consultation on our website. The proposal would also be subject to DCC approval for the capital funding required to provide the additional accommodation, which would need to be approved by the DCC Cabinet.

# Consultation Form

## Proposal to temporarily expand Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy, Derby

Please let us know your views

**Do you agree with the proposal to temporarily expand Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy, Derby from September 2023? (circle your answer)**

**Agree**

**Don't know**

**Disagree**

**Please tick the description that best applies to you.**

- A parent/carer of a child at the school
- A parent/carer of a child in an Early Years setting
- A parent/carer of a child at another school
- Someone who works at the school
- A Governor of the school

Someone else with an interest – please give details

**Additional comments:**

### **Your Details**

Name:

Address:

Post code: