



Consultation on the expansion of
St Mary's Church of England Academy
Rook Tree Lane, Stotfold, Hitchin, Hertfordshire Stotfold SG5 4DL

To provide additional school places in Stotfold in response to the significant residential development within both the catchment area and Stotfold in general.

Dates – Friday, 15th September to Friday, 13th October 2017



Background

New Lower School places have been provided in Stotfold as a result of significant and continued housing development in the area, which the community are well aware of.

565 dwellings have been built in Stotfold since 2011, primarily within the Fairfield Park and Roecroft Lower School catchments areas. Both these schools have been expanded to accommodate the additional pupil numbers but even with this both schools are currently over-subscribed.

Currently, a further 178 houses are expected to be developed within the town.

In 2013/4 the Central Bedfordshire Council proposed, funded and oversaw a new building on the St Mary's site consisting of four rooms; two of which would be classrooms to accommodate the predicted increase in pupil population.

Following an Ofsted Inspection in March 2014, St Mary's was graded 'Requires Improvement', which reduced the immediate pressure for additional pupil places with some parents electing for their children to attend Roecroft or Fairfield Park.

Significant work was undertaken resulting in a 'Good' rating from Ofsted when they inspected St Mary's in May 2016. The combination of this and the impact of further housing developments have resulted in an increased demand for places within the school.

Our proposal

Prior to the completion of the new building in 2015, the Published Admission Number (PAN) for St Mary's was 240 (five year groups of 45, plus a discretionary 15). The PAN was increased to 300 (five year groups of 60) from September 2015.

The growing demand for places at St Mary's has resulted in the provision of additional classes at the school. This enables us to have two single-aged classes per year group, by using the available accommodation within the new building.

As St Mary's is an Academy, the Governing Body determines the Admission arrangements for the school. The proposal is that the Admission Criteria will not change from its current position. This will enable us to serve the catchment area of Stotfold as at present.

Why are we consulting with you?

As we are an Academy, the increase in our numbers is deemed a 'significant change' by the Department for Education (DfE) and we need to seek their approval for this change and for an increase in our funding agreement.

Although the increase in our PAN has been in place since 2015, the delay in the increase in the number of children seeking places at the school has meant that we have not needed to apply to the DfE for approval for a 'significant change' to the size of the school and to our funding agreement with them until now.

In order to gain their approval for this 'significant change', the DfE requires us to prove

- that there is a need for this expansion

- that the expansion at St Mary's will not be detrimental to other local educational establishments and
- that we have consulted with all interested parties and allowed them the opportunity to express their views

We have proof of the need for the additional school places within Stotfold along with evidence that our increase complements the expansion of the other schools within the town. We are now inviting responses to this consultation. All of the evidence plus the results of this consultation will then be submitted to the DfE, which will be used as part of their decision making process.

Please reply to this consultation

Below and continued on page 4 of this document, you will find some frequently asked questions which you may find useful. A drop in meeting will be held on Monday, 2nd October 2017 at 6.00 pm where you will be able to visit the Academy, look at the facilities available and ask any further questions you may have.

The timeline for the process will be:

<i>Consultation Period begins:</i>	<i>Friday, 15th September 2017</i>
<i>Staff meeting:</i>	<i>Monday, 18th September 2017</i>
<i>Drop-In meeting:</i>	<i>Monday, 2nd October 2017 at 6.00 pm</i>
<i>Governor meeting:</i>	<i>Monday, 2nd October 2017</i>
<i>Consultation closes, final date for submission of written responses:</i>	<i>Friday, 13th October 2017</i>
<i>Feedback of responses to all parties:</i>	<i>Sunday, 22nd October 2017</i>

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. When will the new classrooms be available?

- A. The school extension has already been developed. Currently only two of the rooms are directly used for teaching. The additional two rooms will be utilised for teaching as required.

Since its opening in 2015, the extra space has enabled us to use one of the rooms for external training purposes, giving not only a central location for this to take place but also, a small additional income to school.

Q2. What impact has the expansion had on the current pupils and their use of the site?

- A. The new build was undertaken in 2015 and was located on an unused grass area and the staff car park. Due to the increased need for staff parking, part of the school playing field was taken to accommodate additional parking space. To compensate for this, Central Bedfordshire Council has secured an additional piece of adjacent meadowland as green play space for the children.

Q3. Are there sufficient funds to cover all costs involved?

- A. Central Bedfordshire Council has funding streams that support schools and academies in times of growth and these funds have been accessed since 2015.

Moving forward, the increase in pupil numbers should secure the funding required to maintain the financial viability of the Academy.

Q4. With extra pupils on site, how will this affect St Mary's pupil population?

- A. The PAN for St Mary's was increased from 240 to 300 in September 2015. The increase in pupil numbers, up to PAN across each year group, will enable us to have two single aged classes per year group and will alleviate the immediate pressure of school places for the families of Stotfold.

Recreational facilities have been a focus over the past two years with a number of additional facilities being funded and installed. These include new colourful activity playground markings, sports boards and a large all year round climbing frame. As already mentioned in Q2, the Central Bedfordshire Council has secured an additional piece of land which will be used as green play space from spring/summer 2018.

Q5. How will admissions be managed?

- A. St Mary's works closely with Central Bedfordshire Council's Admissions Team to plan the implementation of the increased pupil numbers to ensure facilities and staffing are maintained at an appropriate level and not over-stretched or compromised.

Q6. Will the catchment area remain the same?

- A. There are no plans to change the catchments area for St Mary's or any of the other Stotfold Schools at the current time.

Q7. How will this expansion impact on staffing?

- A. St Mary's employed two additional teaching staff in 2016/17 to implement the move to single age classes in Key Stage 1, which has been a great success. The increase in pupil numbers and ability to employ additional staff members gives us the opportunity to increase our knowledge base and enjoy the benefits of staff with additional skills and interests.

Q8. Did Central Bedfordshire Council consider alternative solutions other than the expansion of St Mary's Academy?

- A. The Council has expanded all three schools within Stotfold in order to meet the increased demand for school places from the growing pupil population. All three current Lower Schools are successful, have excellent reputations, are financially viable and maintain good relationships with the local community; the expansions enable each school to build on their current success and provide inspirational learning environments for the pupils in their care.

Q9. How will the increase in pupils and staff impact on the school's immediate neighbours?

- A. Children attending St Mary's will predominantly be from catchment; so within walking distance of the school. The extension of the staff car park will ensure sufficient parking space for staff. The School will continue to work with Central Bedfordshire Council, via the School's Travel Plan, to reduce the need for car journeys.

Q10. Why does the Department for Education require you to consult on the expansion, two years after the new build was completed?

- A. Central Bedfordshire Council agreed in December 2013 to fund the new building, with the intention that the additional 75 places would be delivered with effect from September 2015, in response to the projected number of lower school places that would be needed within the town from 2015 onwards.

The Ofsted downgrading of the school to 'Requires Improvement' in March 2014 meant that the predicted annual increase in demand for places at the school did not materialise.

A combination of Ofsted's subsequent rating of 'Good' in May 2016 and the impact of further housing developments have resulted in an increased demand for places within the school. The increase in places requires the school to apply to the DfE for an increase in their 'funding agreement' with the department. The DfE classes the request for the increase in funding, to match the increase in numbers, as a 'significant change' for which the school is required to carry out a consultation with its stakeholders.



CONSULTATION ON THE EXPANSION OF ST MARY'S CE ACADEMY, STOTFOLD

- Q1 Are you a..
- Parent of a child/children at St Mary's CE Academy, Stotfold
 - School employee of St Mary's CE Academy, Stotfold
 - Governor of St Mary's CE Academy, Stotfold
 - Resident of Stotfold
 - Other
- Please specify:

- Q2 Do you support the proposal to expand the pupil capacity of St Mary's CE Academy, Stotfold, in order to provide the additional places required as a result of residential expansion in Stotfold?
- Support Do not support

- Q3 Are there any comments you would like to make about this proposal?

The following information will help us see how far we have been successful in getting the views of different parts of our local community. The answers will not be used to identify individual respondents. Our data protection statement is detailed at the foot of this form.

- Q4 Are you.. Male Female
- Q5 Are you.. Under 16 years 16-19 years 20-29 years
 30-39 years 40-49 years 50-59 years
 60-70 years Over 70 years
- Q6 Do you consider yourself to be disabled? Yes No
- Q7 To which of these groups do you consider you belong?
- | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian / Asian British | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> White British |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black / Black British | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Ethnic |

Group

If 'Other Ethnic Group' please specify: _____

- Q8 What is your postcode? _____

Thank you for sharing your views

Please return your form to St Mary's CE Academy, Rook Tree Lane, Stotfold SG5 4DL

Or email to office@stmarysacademystotfold.co.uk

To arrive no later than 4.00pm on Friday 13th October 2017.

Data Protection Act 1998

Please note that your personal details supplied on this form will be held and/or computerised by St Mary's CE Academy for the purpose of analysing feedback to the consultation on the proposed expansion to St Mary's. The information collected may be disclosed to Governors of the school and its' partners involved in this consultation. Summarised information from the forms may be published but no individual details will be disclosed under these circumstances. Personal details will be safeguarded and will not be divulged to any other individuals or organisations for any other purposes.