

Consultation Response Form

Proposal to expand St. Bede's School from 1,350 to 1,650 places, from September 2019

Please give us your views. Please tick the box that best shows what you think of the following questions and also give us any comments you have. You can write on the other side of this sheet if you want more space to write comments.

1. Do you agree with the proposal to expand St. Bede's School from September 2019?

Agree

Don't know

Disagree

Comments:

Based on the data shown within this consultation, offering an additional 2fe at St. Bede's from September 2019 would create a surplus of 73 places in September 2019 and 71 places in September 2020. Even in September 2021 there would be still be a surplus of 25 places which could conceivably be accommodated across the 5 secondary schools (each admitting an additional 5 students above PAN). There is not a demonstrable need for additional places until September 2022.

It should also be taken into consideration that the data quoted within this consultation may not be an accurate picture of actual places required for September 2019.

The equivalent data for September 2018 showed a projected need for 981 places. In practice, despite 1074 first preference applications there are currently 926 students on roll for September (based on information from Surrey Admissions in June 2018, stating that each secondary school other than Merstham Park was full at PAN and 83 students are on roll for Merstham Park). It is well recognised that this planning area sees a number of students move to the independent sector each year, after applying for and often accepting places at local schools.

Therefore introducing two additional forms of entry in September 2019 will result in vacant places at other local secondary schools, at a time when every school is facing significant financial challenges. This is irresponsible.

We understand that there is a desire to offer sufficient places to Catholic families whose children attend local catholic primary schools. The consultation states that 110 places are offered to Catholic families, compared to the 150 places available at Catholic primary schools. In practice, the admissions arrangements for St. Bede's allocates 220 places to children whose parent/carer is a member of an Anglican or Roman Catholic Church; therefore it is possible that more than 110 places are available for children from Catholic families.

It is also important to acknowledge that in September 2017 and September 2018 St. Bede's has already admitted one additional form of entry, without formally consulting to increase its PAN (as bulge classes). A compromise position would be for the PAN to be increased initially to 300 to continue to offer this one form of entry, which would accommodate the additional 30 Catholic places.

It is our usual experience that any school expansion is discussed with local Heads prior to consultation and we have always been assured in our discussion with officers at SCC that any further expansion of St. Bede's would be very carefully considered. This is confirmed in an email

from Oliver Gill to Sarah Lynagh dated 31 October 2017 stating: "In line with the School Organisation Regulations, the formal expansion of the school's PAN is a matter that can only be determined by the LA. I will keep you in the loop about this, but please be assured that St. Bede's cannot simply unilaterally decide on their PAN and, further, that SCC is very sensitive to the need to minimise over-provision in this area at this stage."

It is our firm belief that an increase to a PAN of 330 should not take place for September 2019 as this will create a surplus of places in the area and create financial issues for other local schools, which will ultimately put at risk the quality of provision that those schools are able to offer their students. This is not in the best interests of the community as a whole.

We are aware that the building works to provide accommodation for the additional 2FE are already underway, if not complete, and therefore the Local Authority would retain the option of offering a bulge class for September 2019 (or the following years) in the exceptional circumstance that the demand for places does indeed exceed the PAN available.

Please tick the boxes that apply 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 who may in future attend the school
- A parent/carer of a child at another school
- Someone who works at the school
- A Governor of the school
- Some other link to the school

Someone else with an interest – please give details

GLF Schools, academy sponsor for Merstham Park School

It would also be helpful if you could give your postcode

n/a

Please return to:

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Please tick if you have written comments on the other side