

BISHOP WILKINSON CATHOLIC EDUCATION TRUST (BWCET) IS CONSULTING ON A PROPOSAL TO OPEN A SATELLITE PROVISION OF ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL, BLAYDON (STM) ON ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL, HEXHAM (SJM) SITE TO INCLUDE Y9, Y10 & Y11 STUDENTS.

Proposal:

To establish a satellite site of St Thomas More Catholic School, Blaydon for students at St Joseph's Catholic Middle School, Hexham extending the age range from Y5 – Y8 to include Y9 – Y11. The proposal is to initially open with 25 pupils in Y9, September 2024

[Responses to the proposal can be made by completing this short form.](#) Please take the time to read the information below before making your response.

Background:

St Joseph's Catholic Middle School is a school in Bishop Wilkinson CET, located in Hexham, Northumberland, in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The school is rated good by Ofsted and the Diocese. The school currently offers 360 places for students Y5 – Y8. The school is in the catchment area for St Thomas More Catholic School, Blaydon.

There is a history of students transferring at the end of Y8 to STM to continue their Catholic education. STM is the nearest Catholic secondary school in the area and the only faith school accessible by the families in the Hexham area and surrounding villages. SJMH and STM have worked in close partnership over the years and in closer partnership since joining BWCET. The current headteacher at SJMH was a deputy headteacher at STM. The proposed satellite site is a natural evolution of that work, and the schools are excited by the prospect of providing Catholic education for Y9 – Y11 in Hexham.

This proposal is to create a clear educational pathway for pupils and their families in Hexham, to include Y9 – Y11 in the school by creating a new satellite provision, located on the SJMH site. The provision will be entirely led by STM school and will be based in a dedicated learning space on the middle school site. The learning space will comprise of a large classroom and breakout space for breaks and lunch. Additionally, pupils will be able to make use of other areas of the middle school, including the dining facilities, hall, specialist teaching rooms and extensive grounds.

Whilst at the SJMH site the pupils will study STM curriculum, due to the small numbers the pupils will benefit from a more personalised learning experience. As they are already known and loved by BWCET staff, the pupils will benefit from the nurturing Catholic ethos and values that underpin every aspect of school life, enabling all pupils to flourish. It is hoped that by providing this local solution pupils will also benefit from increased opportunities for work experience with local businesses.

BWCET does not anticipate any detrimental effect on those students already enrolled or schools in the local area. STM is an extremely popular school and is currently at capacity. The creation of this satellite facility will enable us to continue to offer excellent education to our existing students, with an improved pathway for pupils Y9 – Y11 in Hexham and the local area.

The 25 places created by this proposal would be in addition to existing provision. SJMH is currently a 3 form entry middle school, if this proposal is successful, the Trust would be looking to consult to reduce the current 90 PAN to 60. If the change was agreed this would decrease the overall capacity from 360 to 315:

Y5 – 60 pupils – SJMH

Y6 – 60 pupils - SJMH

Y7 – 60 pupils - SJMH

Y8 – 60 pupils - SJMH

Y9 – 25 pupils – STM@SJMH

Y10 – 25 pupils – STM@SJM H Y11

– 25 pupils – STM@SJM H

Total 315

The satellite site will be a full part of STM. Pupils will be taught by BWCET staff and will be taught the STM curriculum.

Currently when pupils reach the end of Y8 parents apply for places at the local high school. Unfortunately, over the last few years a number of our pupils have failed to be admitted to the high school. Consequently, the pupils have had to travel outside of the local area.

The creation of a STM satellite will:

- Provide the parents of pupils at SJMH with a choice
- Reduce the need for daily transport which is currently impacting negatively on the environment and is a financial burden to parents
- Provide opportunities for a more personalised curriculum

What will the impact be for other providers locally?

The Trust cannot foresee any impact upon other local schools as the small number of places will be for the current pupils at SJMH. The Trust does not intend to market this provision outside of the school.

What is the consultation process?

Consultation Timeline:

The consultation is open for 3 weeks between **Monday 10 June and Monday 1 July**, and we are keen to hear thoughts from all of those involved in the school, the parish, the wider local community and our local neighbours.

Consultation Events:

We are holding consultation events on **Wednesday 26 June at 18:00** for parents, governors and external parties. To join this meeting on the day, please click [here](#).