

City Centre Primary School Expansion Consultation

Why do we need to expand more schools?

Southampton, along with many other local authorities, is facing a huge demand for primary school places over the next few years. This is on top of the increase in pupil numbers in 2011 and 2012. While it had previously been anticipated that our expansion plans under the Primary Review Phase 2 would give us enough places, we now know that the city will not have enough places if no other schools are expanded. This is largely due to a rise in the number of children being born in the city.

The proposals

Our pupil forecasts show that at least 3,040 Year R places will be needed at Southampton primary schools by September 2014, with further places likely required in the future. Our Primary Review Phase 2 proposals provided the city with 3,030 Year R places. To make up the difference and to make sure that we can offer places to children who move into the city during the school year, we are proposing to expand the following schools:

Bassett Green Primary School

The proposal is to increase the number of pupils that the school can admit to year R from 60 to 90, from September 2013. This would see the school expand from 420 to 630 places.

Please note that the Published Admission Number of Bassett Green Primary increased from 60 to 90 for one year only in September 2012 to accommodate a higher than expected number of children in the city. This consultation is about the permanent expansion of the school.

Bevois Town Primary School

The proposal is to increase the number of pupils that the school can admit to year R from 30 to 60, from September 2013. This would see the school expand from 210 to 420 places.

Please note that the Published Admission Number of Bevois Town Primary increased from 30 to 60 for one year only in September 2012 to accommodate a higher than expected number of children in the city centre. This consultation is about the permanent expansion of the school.

St John's Primary and Nursery School

The proposal is to increase the number of pupils that the school can admit to year R from 30 to 60, from September 2014. This would see the school expand from 210 to 420 places.

How many places are needed?

We predict that we will need at least 3,040 Year R places in September 2014, with the greatest demand being through the centre of the city from Bassett in the north, down to Bargate in the south. The proposals in this document, if approved, would give us a 3,120 year R places. We need some spare places in the city so that we can offer places to new people who might move into the area during the year. It may be that more places are need in the future but we only have enough funding for these three proposals at the moment.

Why are the places needed?

There has been an increase in the number of children requiring a school place in Southampton over the past few years. The main reason for this is the increase in the number of children being born in the city. We know this because of:

- Child benefit data , which shows how many children there are in the city
- Birth data given to us by the Primary Care Trust

How will the extra places be added?

We do not yet have final plans for how these schools could expand as we need to find out what people think about the proposal before we commit ourselves to building projects. However, we have some ideas and these are set out below.

Bassett Green Primary School – It is proposed that an extension will be added to the school and that some existing school space could be converted into a classroom.

Bevois Town Primary – the possibility of converting a nearby council building into teaching space is being investigated along with the addition of classrooms to the existing site.

St John's Primary and Nursery – as this is not proposed to expand until September 2014, the plans for this school are less clear. At this stage we are investigating the possibility of extending the existing building and/or refurbishing nearby council owned properties.

Why aren't any new schools being built?

Two new schools – Banister & Wordsworth – are being rebuilt and expanded as part of the Primary Review Phase 2. Unfortunately, financial restrictions and a lack of suitable sites means that we are unable to build any brand new schools in the city centre, which is the area with the greatest demand for places.

Why these schools?

The area with the greatest demand for places is the central spine of the city, running from Bassett in the north to Bargate in the south. The three schools which are proposed for expansion are within this area and have space on their sites, or nearby, which could be used to create extra classrooms.

Is there money available to create new schools places?

The Local Authority receives Basic Need funding from Central Government which is used to create school places. At the moment the Local Authority only has enough money to expand the three schools included in this consultation. We may need to expand more schools in the future if pupil numbers continue to rise, but further expansions would be dependent on the Local Authority receiving more funding from Government and further consultation.

Will any schools be closed or opened?

There are currently no plans to open brand new schools or close any existing schools in the city.

What happens next?

We know that extra school places will be needed by September 2014. The consultation on these proposals runs from 27 September 2012 to 25 October 2012. After this, we will look at all the responses we have received and, if there are no great objections to the proposals, we will progress to the next stage of consultation. This involves the publication of notices at all the schools included in the proposals, in the Daily Echo and on the Southampton City Council website. A four week consultation period would follow. We are planning for this to happen in November & December 2012.

The final stage would be to get Cabinet approval to implement the proposals. We hope this could happen by February 2013.

If the proposals are approved they will be phased in over a number of years to ensure that the correct number of school places are added at the right time. If we made all the changes at the same time there would be too many new places in the city with not enough children to fill them. We also have to make sure that none of the existing schools lose pupils because too many places are available elsewhere in the city. We are proposing that the size of each year group would expand year-on-year until all year groups have expanded.

While we are confident that these proposals would add the correct number of school places, we have put forward options which will be implemented in stages. This means that if there is a change in the number of places that are needed, the plans can be changed.

How to have your say

You may have a view on the overall strategy of increasing the size of schools, or you may just want to comment on the school nearest your home. We would also welcome any other suggestions you may have for adding extra school places in the city. It is entirely up to you how you respond.

You can respond to the consultation by writing to: Primary School Expansions, Infrastructure, Children's Services & Learning (OGS), Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton, SO14 7LY, or emailing infrastructureandcapital.projects@southampton.gov.uk

You can also fill in one of our response forms and return it to any of the schools included in the proposals or to the address above.

The consultation closes on 25 October 2012 and all responses should be returned by this date.

We have also arranged drop-in sessions at the affected schools where you can come along and speak to us about the proposals. Please see below for details of these events.

School names	Drop-in venue	Date	Time
Bassett Green Primary School	Bassett Green Primary School	Tuesday 2 October 2012	3.15pm – 4.15pm
Bevois Town Primary School	Bevois Town Primary School	Friday 28 September 2012	3.15pm – 4.15pm
St John's Primary & Nursery School	St John's Primary & Nursery School	Thursday 11 October 2012	9.15am – 10.00am