



# Proposal Document

*Proposal to Expand a Voluntary Aided Mainstream  
School by Enlargement*

**St Thomas More Catholic Primary School**

## **Introduction**

Birmingham City Council, as the local authority for Birmingham, is consulting on a proposal to expand St Thomas More Catholic Primary School by enlargement of the premises to increase the net capacity (pupil numbers) from 315 to 420.

Remodelling work is proposed at the existing accommodation and additional land has been identified for the building of the extension to the school where necessary for additional classrooms and ancillary space required to implement the proposal.

These changes are explained in the sections below. We are issuing a public notice on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and this will be followed by a representation period that will run for 4 weeks until 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

## **School Information**

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school located in the Sheldon ward. The school caters for pupils aged 4 to 11. The school is currently a one and a half form of entry school. The school historically operated as a two form of entry school (60 places/ two classes per year) and there are currently two classes in year 5 and 6 that offer up to 60 places. The school has taken an additional 15 places in Reception in September 2015. The school can currently accommodate up to 360 pupils and in January 2016 there were 352 pupils on roll.

## **What changes are proposed?**

We are proposing to expand St Thomas More Catholic Primary School so that the school will be able to admit 60 pupils in each year group Reception to Year 6 on a permanent basis. The growth of the school will be gradual as 60 children will be admitted into Reception each year and work their way through the school. The school have agreed to take an additional 15 places in Reception in September 2016 and places have been offered.

## **Why do we want to do this?**

Birmingham City Council is proposing the above prescribed changes, in line with our Additional Primary Places (APP) Programme.

Birmingham City Council as the local authority for Birmingham has a statutory duty to provide sufficient schools. The city of Birmingham has a growing population with one of the youngest populations in Europe and the number of births in the city has risen rapidly over the last few years. To compound this Birmingham is also experiencing high levels of in year growth due to net migration into the city. Our projected pupil numbers show that we needed to provide an additional 600 Reception places in the city by September 2017.

The schools within Sheldon ward are popular and its school places in high demand. Forecasts project the need to increase the number of places locally to support the needs of local families and those choosing these schools.

### **Why has this school been chosen?**

Following the publication of our Education Sufficiency Requirements in November 2015, all schools were invited to submit a proposal if they were interested in expansion. The Governing Body of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School submitted an expression of interest (EOI).

The EOIs were evaluated against the Basic Need criteria as follows:

- i) The schools' location relating to areas requiring additional places.
- ii) Standards in the school: it is expected that schools that expand will be Outstanding or Good
- iii) The capacity of the school to provide suitable accommodation on the site, within existing space and within planning / buildability constraints. Schools that have already been expanded under Additional Primary Places Programme (APPP) and have spare capacity in particular class groups due to the nature of the phased growth
- iv) Popularity of the school
- v) Potential of any expansion to create overprovision or reduce diversity of provision in an area

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School has received a judgement of "Good" in their last Ofsted inspection and we believe the school will be able to sustain the planned growth. The school is central to the area that has seen an increase in the birth rate, it is popular with local families, has enough space to accommodate additional classrooms and we believe will be able to cope well with the additional pupils. Given the level of demand for local school places we also believe that the expansion is unlikely to cause overprovision locally.

### **How will this affect pupils at the school?**

Pupils will notice some changes but those are likely to be limited. The school will grow by 15 pupils in the Reception year group. The school has already taken up to an additional 15 places in Reception in September 2015, and are due to take up to an additional 15 in September 2016. If the school is permanently expanded the school will continue to take a further 15 pupils in future Reception classes. It is anticipated that the school will be operating at 60 in each year group by September 2020. The school might decide to organise the school differently to ensure educational continuity as the school grows, this will, as always, be the school's decision. Please be reassured that the high standard of education and care for your child will remain. The alterations will enable existing and future pupils to access high quality learning spaces and facilities.

### **How will this affect staff?**

Staff will generally be unaffected; however, a larger school might offer more opportunities for professional development.

### **Will there be changes to the school building?**

The proposed increase in places means we will have to do some work at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. The expansion will include remodelling of the existing accommodation and provision of additional classrooms. The additional places in September 2016 will be accommodated in existing space at the school. Please note that any changes to the school building may be subject to planning permission.

### **Will this definitely happen?**

There is a statutory process we must follow to make these sorts of changes to schools. We will publish full proposals in September 2016. There will be four weeks for people to formally comment on the full proposal - this is referred to as the 'representation period'. Within two months of the end of the representation period the Council's Cabinet Committee will make a final decision. It is only at that point that we will be able to say with certainty that the school will be expanded permanently.

### **What will happen if this proposal is rejected?**

If a decision is taken that St Thomas More Catholic Primary School should not be permanently expanded, apart from the additional places planned for September 2016, the school will continue to operate at its current size. Further additional places will have to be provided at another school which is likely to mean that some parents will have to travel much further to take their child to school; this will possibly leave this school open to an increase in admission appeals, which can result in larger class sizes.

### **How can I make my views known?**

We will be issuing formal proposals in September 2016. The consultation period will be for four weeks. During this consultation period, you have the opportunity to let us know what you think about the proposed enlargement. You can make your views known by visiting [www.birmingham.gov.uk/schools/stthomasmore](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/schools/stthomasmore) (live on 15th September 2016) or by writing to:

School Organisation Team  
Education and Skills Infrastructure  
Directorate of Economy  
PO Box 15843  
Birmingham  
B2 2RT  
Email: [eds.enquiries@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:eds.enquiries@birmingham.gov.uk)  
Tel: 0121 303 8847

### **What happens next?**

The following timescale for the proposal to be implemented is for guidance only. At any point during the process, the proposal might be withdrawn or rejected by the City Council. The dates set out below meet the government requirements for us to

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consult fully with the people affected by the proposal and every effort will be made to keep to them.

### Possible Timeline for Expansion

Action	Date
Proposal document distributed	Week commencing 27 <sup>th</sup> June 2016
Statutory notice published	15 <sup>h</sup> September 2016
Beginning of 4 week representation period	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2016
End of 4 week representation period	13 <sup>th</sup> October 2016
Final decision made	15 <sup>th</sup> November 2016
School is permanently expanded	1st September 2017