

Educational consultation on the proposed expansion of South Marston CE Primary School

<p>Consultation:</p> <p>A proposed extension to South Marston CE Primary School to meet the demands of the expanding village population. This is a consultation on the school extension and its ability to meet the educational needs of the village's primary pupils.</p>	
<p>Scope of consultation</p>	<p>In line with statutory requirements, DfE guidance and the requirements of SBC, the consultee groups are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DBAT Trustees • Diocesan Board of Finance • Diocesan Board of Education • Swindon Borough Council • South Marston Parish Council • Parochial Church Council, the Church Incumbent, and the Arch Deaconry • South Marston Academy Council • South Marston Staff • South Marston Pupils and Parents • Wider South Marston and surrounding area community • Other local schools (as identified by SBC and the Diocesan Board of Education)
<p>Consultation start date</p>	<p>Wednesday 17th March 2021</p>
<p>Consultation end date</p>	<p>Wednesday 28th April 2021</p>
<p>Consultation lead</p>	<p>Jez Piper, CEO Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust</p>
<p>Consultation feedback</p>	<p>To rachel.parr@dbat.org.uk, e-mails to be titled SMAR CONSULTATION, by consultation end date</p>

Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
Background	3
Funding	3
THE CONSULTATION PROCESS.....	4
Timeline	4
VISION AND ETHOS	5
REQUIREMENTS AND IMPACTS	5
Proposal Requirements presented by the School and the Trust to Swindon Borough Council.....	5
IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY	7
Benefits of expansion plans	7
Potential disbenefits and mitigations	8
PROPOSED SCHOOL PLANS.....	11
SUMMARY.....	11

INTRODUCTION

Background

There is significant housing development currently planned for South Marston village totalling between 1,000 and 1,100 new homes over the next 3-4 years. The developer has set aside a site and Section 106 funding to build a new 1 Form Entry (1 fe) primary school. However, the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust, Swindon Borough Council and the Academy Council (local governance) believe that a more cost-effective solution would be to expand the existing South Marston CE Primary School from its existing 0.5 fe to 1.5 fe. The expanded 1.5 fe primary school would have a much greater long-term financial and educational viability than either the existing 0.5 fe academy or a new 1.0 fe academy. As such, the project for the expansion of South Marston CE Primary School was originally agreed in 2013.

It is anticipated that construction will need to begin in October 2021 for completion in time for a planned opening in September 2022.

Funding

In September 2019, the Cabinet of Swindon Borough Council agreed to support the project and forward fund it, and it was included in their capital programme. The Section 106 agreement was subsequently finalised with the developers. The costs of the extension are therefore to be met from £3.15 million Section 106 funding which has been allocated by Swindon Borough Council to provide the additional school places.

An agreement has been signed by Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT), Swindon Borough Council (SBC) and South Marston Parish Council (SMPC). Under this, DBAT is able to lease a section of the recreation ground adjacent to the existing school, to accommodate the building of the extension. Permission for the change of use of the recreation ground has already been obtained.

Delays, including the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, have increased costs. As a result, the Cabinet of SBC approved an increase of £1.8 million for the project on 9th September 2020, enabling DBAT to formally commission SBC to procure the building.

SBC began design work in May 2020 and have completed various surveys of the site. Following input by the school, the Local Board and the Trust, initial plans were presented to the school and its governing body and approved mid-Dec 2020. It is intended that a planning application will be submitted by SBC in April 2021 with planning approval expected by June 2021.

This consultation with parents and the community is planned to take place broadly at the same time as SBC's application consultation which commences in March 2021.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

This document forms one part of the consultation process to seek feedback and views from stakeholders in the proposed expansion of South Marston CE Primary School. The consultation will take place over a **6-week period** and consultees will be able to provide feedback through:

- Writing to the school directly
- E-mail to rachel.parr@dbat.org.uk. E-mails must be titled **SMAR CONSULTATION**.
- Invitation to an online meeting, hosted by the Trust, on behalf of the School and Local Board. The meeting is scheduled for **5.30pm on Thursday 22 April 2021**:
 - <https://zoom.us/j/99544469771?pwd=K2F4RDYQjBidVN1bENTbk05K1JSUT09&from=addon>
 - Meeting ID: 995 4446 9771
 - Passcode: 103172

All consultees will receive:

- **A letter of invitation to respond**
- **A copy of this consultation document**

All responses must be submitted by **3pm** on Wednesday 28th April **2021**, following which the Trust undertakes to respond with a feedback document for all parties by 7th May 2021.

Timeline

Consultation opens	Wednesday 17 th March 2021
Presentation and Q&A Open Meeting with DBAT, Local Board and School panel (by Zoom)	Thursday 22 nd April 2021
Consultation closes	Wednesday 28th April 2021
Consultation response (from DBAT)	Friday 7 th May 2021

VISION AND ETHOS

South Marston Church of England Primary School has served the community of South Marston for over 140 years, something we are incredibly proud to be able to say and something that we will take into the next exciting chapter of our school's future.

Today, families from surrounding areas also choose our school because of its Christian background, its traditions, and its family feel. At the heart of South Marston village, we are proud to be part of the wider community and have strong links with our local church, St Mary Magdalene.

The staff and Local Board of our school aim to provide a happy, secure and stimulating environment, which is inclusive of all. Our mission statement is "Achievement for all," we foster a family ethos where everyone is valued and is able to make a unique contribution to the life of the school. We strive to encourage all stakeholders to become lifelong learners and see our role as pivotal in ensuring our pupils leave with the tools to embark on the next stage of their education successfully. As a part of DBAT, we share the Church of England's Vision for Education 2016, "Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good", which includes four basic elements *wisdom, hope, community* and *dignity*. We aim to deliver values-led education with the very best outcomes for our children and young people.

As we expand, our ethos will remain at the heart of our school. During this next exciting part of the school's journey of growth and development, we are committed to ensuring our school continues to serve the community. We will continue to know our pupils well, encourage our families to be a part of our school and strive to provide the best foundation for learning that we can.

REQUIREMENTS AND IMPACTS

Proposal Requirements presented by the School and the Trust to Swindon Borough Council

The School and the Trust submitted initial requirements to the SBC, in September 2019. It was required that the design of the expanded school:

- *Supports Core Educational Purpose*. The design of the school should support the school's core educational purpose: it needs a sympathetic ambiance that fits within the local context.
- *Supports the Relationship with the Local Community*. The design and operation of the school needs to underpin our relationship with the local community.
- *Underpins Teaching and Learning*. The core purpose of the school must be supported by creating and sustaining the best possible teaching and learning environment.
- *Provides a Quality Environment*. The school needs to be welcoming and safe. It must be a quality environment that is an uplifting place to work and learn and that has a permanent feel.

- *Supports Flexible Use.* Large and small spaces must support class teaching, small breakout sessions, privacy, counselling, and quiet contemplation when needed. This should also facilitate innovative teaching strategies as educational trends and practices develop.
- *Blends Old and New.* The school's character must be appropriate to the setting and should not present a stark exterior. This will require thoughtful incorporation and utilisation of the existing (including Victorian) school buildings with external features being in harmony with village heritage and design.
- *Enables Worship.* The visual connection with, and accessibility to the village church should be preserved; and the design should enable worship and reflection.
- *Facilitates Incorporation of Technology.* The building should allow the easy integration of new and emerging technologies in order to enhance teaching, learning, management & administration.
- *Enables Flow and a Sense of Space.* Good size classrooms and cloakroom areas with connecting spaces (including with the older buildings) should enable easy flow between activities and processes throughout the day.
- *Maximises Play and Sports Opportunities.* The external and internal area should maximise opportunities for play and sports and there should be easy access to outdoor environment and feeling of connection to the open spaces of the recreation ground.
- *Provides for Access and Wider Community Use.* The school must be welcoming to all and provide the facility for community use. This should include ways of sectioning off parts of the building as needed.

The School and Trust view that it is essential for the site to ensure:

Safeguarding. This is of utmost priority:

- A secure means of entry for visitors and deliveries will be separate from areas accessible by children, and which is to be located in the new central body of the school to give visibility and control across the whole of the front of the school, including the road to the front.
- Various access gates will allow secure pedestrian routes to the school. This will promote pedestrian drop offs and pick-ups but must be balanced with protecting the school perimeter. Access will be controlled from the school office.
- The ability to 'section off' areas such as car parking allows for future community use and at the same time, maintaining pupil safety. This sectioning off can be controlled by key-cards and electronic locks for both internal and external areas, and is already successfully achieved in other Trust schools. Alternative usable entrances into the school allows for potential community access into the school, within the school day, where there is capacity for community use.

Traffic management and road /car park safety. Traffic management and road safety during drop-off and pick-up periods and the car park / drop off area arrangements must include:

- School safety zone along the front of school and staff car park area. Traffic management and speed controls at the front of the school are managed as part

of the village development and with local authority highways planning. The staff car park area will be securely sectioned off from the areas in use by children.

- Staff / visitor car park to also to include a drop off facility and provision for larger vehicles (busses /deliveries).
- Overflow/temporary car park accessed off Old Vicarage lane. For parent/ carer use until a new facility at the future village community centre is built. This will be removed once that new and permanent community car park is provided as part of the wider village development. South Marston Parish Council has given consent in principle to use additional land for this purpose and SBC are currently drafting the necessary licences and Heads of Terms.

Effective classroom layout and innovative learning environments. Classrooms will provide access to the outside and will be fitted to enable flexible use. Overhead canopy cover will allow outdoor activities in inclement weather. Outdoor learning is a key part of the school's curriculum, and, in particular, being able to weave learning through the inside and the outside classrooms. This improves learning for all children but will also support the school's commitment to those pupils with specific education needs for whom multi-sensory learning can be so valuable.

Non-classroom working spaces. Workspace for staff, currently in short supply at the school, is important for peace, privacy and concentration to plan and manage the learning. The spaces can also meet specific learning needs.

Effective operation for the Pre-school and Reception. Pre-school and Reception Classes must be located side by side to facilitate their operation and management. Covered outdoor provision, with a perimeter fence, is provided for EYFS.

Noise impact on community. Noise impact on nearby dwellings needs to be a consideration in the design and layout of the school site but balanced with the challenges of supervising a play-space which wraps around the building.

Impact of build phase. Continuity and stability of school operation during the build phase are important. The build experience will be an important influence on the pupil cohort that should be positive and enable discovery and learning.

Future Evolution. Design should provide flexibility to support the operational evolution of the school, including education technology and community use.

IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Benefits of expansion plans

School places for local families

An expanded school would mean greater capacity to support our local community and those families choosing to join our school, thus supporting the projected increase in admission numbers in the future. Currently, at the size we are and our Published Admission Number

(PAN), we are already unable to accept pupils living in South Marston despite their wish to be a part of our school community.

Supporting additional needs

Expanding the school brings access to additional resources, including specialist teaching and support staff. It is tremendously important that the school supports all pupils with additional needs, and the expansion of the school will allow us space and access to keep improving our support to all our pupils.

Christian ethos

The expanded school would bring many benefits in terms of enhancing our Christian Distinctiveness further, further exciting development to our curriculum, as well as providing space for community groups. Our connection with the local church will be able to grow also. It will bring opportunities such as expanding the church provision using the school's facilities to enable the church to run groups and provide further space for worship. This expansion would not affect the current Governance structure or admission policy.

Accessing developments in education

The existing school building presents challenges in keeping pace with education technology because of its age and its design. The new extension will afford us opportunities to improve the technology infrastructure for the whole school and continue progress within the Trust's education technology plans.

School facilities

The existing building will not be refurbishment internally although the kitchen will be expanded. The new structure will provide the school with a new hall which will provide opportunities for community use, as well as a modern and adaptable asset for the school itself. The new classrooms will encompass up to date education design elements and meet Department for Education criteria such as natural light, in and outdoor pupil flow, and space. New toilets, a reception and entrance area, and overhead protection in the outside class space are all part of the design.

Potential disbenefits and mitigations

Limitations on daytime/weekday community use

When the school is full, the way in which the community can access spaces within the school will inevitably be limited to weekend or evening use. However, whilst the school is growing into its capacity, some space may be available for use by external groups, during the week and during daytime. Access to spaces 'out of hours' will draw on the experiences in other Trust schools, whereby 'anchor partners' are given keyholder status to manage security routines and duty of care responsibilities.

Community use storage

This will be limited as the school gets closer to operating at full capacity. Storage space in the school is always a challenge, however, there may be scope in the earlier years whilst the

school numbers are building up. Looking to the longer term, storage solutions can be scoped in response to user-needs when there is a better understanding of what might be required.

Building disruption

The prospect of the building work being disruptive to the routine functioning of the school is highly likely. Because of the very short timelines of this project, the building work is concentrated into the academic year 2021/22, ahead of opening in Sep 2022. The Trust will work closely with SBC and the contractors to manage the impact of this as far as possible. The safety of all pupils, parents and staff is paramount. The building work will be limited to the new area, away from the existing buildings and will be fenced off, therefore limiting risk. The contractor will build the temporary car park first so that the current school car park can then be closed off and used for the construction compound. Whilst the potential physical dangers of a building site are well understood by all concerned, the potential impact of noise and air pollution must also be carefully managed. We would envisage regular on-site planning meetings and adjust timings of school and construction activities so that the two can function effectively. This would also require regular updates to our wider school community including our families and the parish council. We would also make the most of the specialist expertise on the adjacent site, and envisage some extra-curricular activities, demonstrations and talks to support our children's learning opportunities.

Play-space

The existing school footprint is, by Department for Education standards, a sufficient allocation of formal play space (hardstanding available for play). There has been a small amount of additional space planned into the new footprint, which will also allow for better outside pupil flow as well as increasing the amount of play space available. The planned spaces meet requisite space requirements. The school is keen that playground use can also be appropriately staffed. A review of the area of playground that is known to flood and become unusable in very wet weather, will explore drainage options. It is acknowledged that, with more children, it is important that all of the formal play space is accessible, usable and can be properly safeguarded. The school will not have a dedicated Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) but the plans have been compiled with consideration given to there being space for one, should future funding allow. It is worth observing that lifetime MUGA costs can be prohibitive. A higher quality MUGA can generate lettings income, although consideration must also be given to any administrative requirements which would fall to the school.

Admissions and pupil numbers

Growing a school presents financial challenges because the revenue is based on the pupil headcount which, as the school grows, can be out of kilter with the teaching requirement. It will be important, throughout this process, that the quality of teaching is not compromised

by the variations in revenue. The Trust’s Director of Education has taken the lead on managing this and is working closely with the school Principal. A key mitigation in smoothing out irregularities in the school finances is a flourishing nursery which is an important stream of future pupils and government-funded income. A projected pupil numbers table is shown below:

	EYFS (N & R)		KS1 (Yrs 1 & 2)		KS2 (Yrs 3-6)				TOTAL		
	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6			
2022	52	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	140		
Yr Gps		REC/Y1	Y1/Y2		Y3/Y4	Y4/Y5		Y6			
2023	52	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	175		
Yr Gps		REC	Y1/Y2	Y1/Y2	Y3/Y4	Y3/Y4	Y5/Y6	Y5/Y6			
2024	52	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	210		
Yr Gps		REC	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6			
2025	52	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	245		
Yr Gps		REC	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6			
2026	52	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	280		
Yr Gps		REC	Y1	Y1/Y2	Y2	Y3	Y3/Y4	Y4	Y5	Y5/Y6	Y6
2027	52	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	315		
Yr Gps		REC	Y1	Y1/Y2	Y2	Y3	Y3/Y4	Y4	Y5	Y5/Y6	Y6

Drop-off/pick-up transport plan

The drop off arrangements for the school continue in the short term, to concentrate traffic along Vicarage Road, initially focused on the temporary car park to be built to the south of the school (highlighted on the attached plans) with link footways to the Bellway site. Latterly, this is at the permanent car park to be built alongside the new community centre (also highlighted). The permanent car park is not scheduled until 2025. There are walking routes from both car park locations, shown on the plans. The Highways Office is reviewing road speeds and traffic management along Vicarage Road as part of the New Eastern Villages project, to be funded separately from the school extension project. The SBC project team have responsibility for synchronising the overlapping elements of the two projects, such as car parking, traffic management, and drop off zone controls.

Impact on the overall plan for updating and maintaining the older parts of the building

It will be important for the school and the Trust to manage the premises so that the original parts of the site remain good places to work and to learn. The whole school must be used and considered as one, rather than any delineation or preference between the ‘new’ part and the ‘old’ part. This will include making good use of the original school hall, and investing in improvements and education resources across the whole site.

PROPOSED SCHOOL PLANS

Attached as separate documents:

- Site in context
- Elevations
- Link to 'walk-through' video

SUMMARY

The information contained here and in the associated documents is intended to provide you with sufficient information to enable your participation in the consultation process. We look forward to receiving your responses.