



## ST JAMES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, HEBBURN

May 2025

Dear Parent/Carer/Community Member,

As part of our commitment to providing the best learning environment for our children, we are excited to inform you about a proposed opening of a school nursery at St. James' Catholic Primary School. This is an exciting opportunity that would enable the school to provide early education places to children prior to their entry to school at four-years-old. We are happy to announce that we can accommodate a 15-place nursery. This consultation sets out the proposal to implement this plan.

The Board of Directors of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust, in partnership with the Local Governing Committee of St. James' Catholic Primary school, are supportive of the proposed changes and have agreed to increase the capacity of the school from 210 pupils to 225 pupils. Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust will fund this additional provision.

### **The Proposal:**

The purpose of this consultation is to provide information about our proposal and seek the views of St. James' families and the wider community. Currently, children who join St. James' at the age of 4 years old, come from a variety of settings within the locality. Under the new proposals, children aged 3 years upwards, would formally become part of the same structure as the school.

### **Lowering the school ages from 4 to 11 years to 3 to 11 years, increasing the capacity of the school from 210 pupils to 225 pupils**

Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust in partnership with the Local Governing Committee of St. James' is consulting you on a proposal to lower the admissions age to enable us to open a new Nursery Class. This change would be anticipated to come into effect from 1st September 2025 and would ensure the school meets the needs of local families and children.

### **Why are we proposing to lower the entry age of children joining our school?**

We want to support the government's policy on providing early years education for children in the local community through a secure, stimulating and high-quality early year's nursery setting. This will

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complement our existing provision for children in our reception class. In addition, the nursery will offer the following:

- Parents will be able to claim the universal entitlement for 3 - 4 year olds.
- Eligible working parents will be able to claim early years additional entitlement for 3 - 4 year olds.
- Nursery places will be available Monday to Friday - both 15-hour and 30-hour places will be available.
- Nursery provision for 3-year-olds will raise the standards and improve seamless transition of children entering our reception class.

Our aim is that local children will attend nursery and then successfully transition to our reception class. This will enable learning opportunities to be maximised across the early years for children initially from 3 to 5 years of age.

Please note there is no automatic right for nursery-aged children to gain a reception place at the school. Parents of nursery-aged children would need to apply in the normal way for admission to the primary school.

### **Will the proposal have any impact on the school's admission arrangements?**

The number of children is predetermined by the local committee in consultation with the Local Authority. The current Pupil Admission Number (PAN) at St. James' is 30 in each year group, reception to year 6.

### **What will the impact be on local nursery provision?**

The government are proposing increasing the number of nurseries in schools. There are also This a number of new housing developments which are either already under construction, or are about to begin in the next 12-36 months. The vast majority of these are family homes. This means that there will be a higher demand for Nursery places across the local area. The government is predicting an increase in birth rates so our new provision would provide places for these children. It will support families with siblings in school and provide additional choice for those wanting to select nursery provision with a catholic ethos.

Additional nursery places at St. James' will support families with siblings in school and provide additional choice for those, with and without faith, who are wanting to select nursery provision with a Catholic ethos.

### **Do the governors and staff support the proposal?**

Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust in partnership with the Local Governing Committee of St. James' support the proposal, as they believe our school community and future pupils would benefit from the lowering of our school age to allow for nursery provision.

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## Will there be extra traffic and how will you reduce the impact of this?

There may be a small increase in traffic. However, initial enquires indicate that the nursery would be either filled by siblings of those children already coming to St. James' or families living within walking distance of the school. The school's current, well-established, drop off and collecting arrangements can accommodate this increase in traffic.

## Responding to the Consultation

We believe that community input is essential for the success of this project. To ensure that the views of parents, guardians, staff, and community members are fully considered, we invite you to participate in our public consultation. Deadline for responses is 12.00 noon on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025

## What do I need to do?

Please complete the consultation questionnaire via this link <https://forms.office.com/e/Cqf7YgKpE0>

Responses will be received throughout the consultation period, which begins on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May. These will be analysed and the results published on the school's website.

We understand that this project will affect not only current families but also future generations, and we are committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure a smooth and positive process.

## I have a question – who can I ask?

If you have any questions regarding the education consultation, please contact the Headteacher via the following email: [info@stjameshebburn.co.uk](mailto:info@stjameshebburn.co.uk).

## The consultation process:

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May - Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 - **Public consultation period.**

June 2025 - **Consultation responses will be considered by the Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust Board of Directors and a decision made as to whether to proceed with an application to the Department for Education.**

Thank you for your ongoing support in making St. James' Catholic Primary school a wonderful place for our children to grow and learn.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs Francesca Heslop  
Headteacher

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