

Saint John Wall Catholic School

A Catholic School For All



Mission Statement

'To educate each and every unique child in our care to hear and respond to what God calls them to be'



Consultation on Proposed Closure of the Sixth Form at Saint John Wall Catholic School, Handsworth, Birmingham



Introduction by the Governing Body and Executive Principal of Saint John Wall Catholic School.

The Governing Body with the support of the Senior Leadership Team of Saint John Wall Catholic School, following much discussion, has decided to consult on the proposal not to recruit new sixth form students from September 2016. If agreed, the proposal would mean that the sixth form at Saint John Wall Catholic School would close at the end of August 2016. It would only affect the sixth form and not mean any changes to the rest of the school.

The future of school sixth forms has been highlighted in the media for some time, particularly in the light of recent changes in the way post-16 students are funded in schools and colleges. The funding has gradually declined over the last two years and this had particular impact on small sixth forms, which we are.

The average sixth form college has around 1,700 students, while the average school sixth form has over 200. Economies of scale apply, so it is more expensive per student for schools to provide a sixth form and they may have to subsidise sixth form students from other funding, such as that for 11 to 16-year-old students. The Department of Education recognises that sixth forms with less than 200 students are at risk of not being viable financially. Saint John Wall Catholic School currently has a total of 23 students in the sixth form (in Year 13) and, since it was established as an independent and self-funding centre in September 2014, has never had more than 25

Given these numbers, we have regretfully come to the conclusion that we are unable to provide the breadth of courses, including a wide range of vocational and A level subjects, that sixth form students need. The current numbers are too small to produce courses that are viable educationally and economically at Saint John Wall Catholic School. Also, a small sixth form does not provide as broad a social experience, nor is it as easy to prepare students for the wider environment of higher education or the work place. Over the last few years most of our students in Year 11 choose to go elsewhere for post-16 provision. Each student has unique needs but overall these factors have affected the demand for sixth form places at our school. In reaching the decision to consult on the future of the sixth form, governors want the best options and learning experiences for our students and have concluded that closure is the right option. In addition, disappointing GCSE outcomes in 2014 (23%) and 2015 (32%) have limited students' choices as following academic A levels requires high grades at GCSE. Moreover, utilising specialist teachers in the Sixth Form takes them away from the fundamental needs at Key Stage 4, and the need for raising students' attainment and achievement in Year 11. This is a moral responsibility of the school to establish sound educational standards for all students.

Changing the age range from 11-18 to 11-16 will allow resources to be focused on improving the learning experiences and outcomes for Years 7 to 11 in the main school. Our aim is to become an outstanding 11-16 school and to do so we believe that we must concentrate our energies and expertise on that age range.

This consultation will run from Wednesday 24th February 2016 to Wednesday 23rd March 2016 at 12 Noon and will give parents, students, staff and other local stakeholders the opportunity to let us know what they think. We will be holding open surgeries at the school on Tuesday 1st March 2016 between 3.15pm and 4.15pm and 4.20pm and 5.20pm and representatives from the Governing Body and the staff of Saint John Wall Catholic School will be available to answer individual concerns on a one to one basis. **Your views are important to us, so please either complete and return the attached form by Wednesday 23rd March 2016 (12 Noon) or email the school at enquiry@sjw.bham.sch.uk. by this deadline date.**

In their planning for the future strategic direction of the school, the Governing Body of Saint John Wall Catholic School will consider all responses in their final decision about whether or not to close the sixth form.

Mr A F Quinn
Executive Principal

Mrs P Lake
Chair of Governors

Saint John Wall Catholic School

Consultation on Possible Closure of the Sixth Form - Some Facts and Figures

How large is a viable sixth form?

A school or college sixth form has to be large enough to be viable and sustainable in order to be able to provide a wide enough range of high quality courses. It has been recognised that sixth forms with fewer than 200 students are unviable, particularly in the light of the more recent funding changes where sixth form provision is now funded per student, instead of per qualification. The implications of these reforms over the last two years have meant that some providers have been forced to cut courses whilst others have been forced to close.

Saint John Wall Catholic School, has a provision for all students in Year 11 and a maximum of 30 external students but, in reality, never having had more than 25 in is not a viable sixth form and would have to be funded from other funding streams such as that for the 11-16 students.

How many students choose the sixth form at Saint John Wall Catholic School?

Saint John Wall Catholic School has always had a small sixth form.

Number of Sixth Form Students at Saint John Wall Catholic School:

2014-15 25 students (Year 12)

2015 -16 23 students (Year 13)

For a number of years, the majority of our Year 11 students have chosen to pursue post-16 education at a college or school other than Saint John Wall Catholic School. The school is unable to offer the breadth of subjects or types of qualification that students would like to follow. This means that students must either go elsewhere or pick from a limited range offered, rather than choose what they would either like to do, or would be more suited to, in preparation for Higher Education or employment.

What would this mean for the current Sixth Form students?

There are currently no Year 12 students at Saint John Wall Catholic School although a number of Year 13 students are currently completing Y12 modules or re-siting GCSE English and Mathematics as a statutory passage into Higher Education. The School worked with twenty six students who briefly entered Y12 in September 2015 individually to ensure that they had access to the best provision for their particular needs and preferences. This resulted in all of these students taking up courses in other establishments. The current Y13 students have continued their studies without interruption. This has included those students in Y13 who are currently completing Y12 modules or re-siting GCSEs as mentioned above.

What would this mean for Year 11 students?

Students in Year 11 would no longer be able to continue their post-16 education at Saint John Wall Catholic School. They would be given support and guidance to choose another school or college best suited to their needs and preferences.

The strong post-16 provision in the Birmingham area, delivered by schools and colleges, has the economy of scale to offer a wide range of qualifications, at varying levels. Such diversity within different institutions offers courses suited to all abilities and learner needs.

Saint John Wall Catholic School at the moment only offers a limited range of level 3 vocational courses and GCSE English and mathematics resit and selected A Levels.

The growth of other school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and further education has led to good quality, accessible programmes of learning in the wider area, with an increase in curricular choices and a good range of excellent facilities to support leavers. Across Birmingham and Sandwell, pathways for all students are catered for which will give our students those experiences needed.

Future post-16 provision for Year 11 students at Saint John Wall Catholic School is being provided in consultation with a number of post-16 providers to ensure that there is good curriculum provision for current and subsequent Year 11 students.

Implications for school staff

The closure of the sixth form provision at Saint John Wall Catholic School could lead to a reduction in the number of staff and this would be part of an on-going process of staff re-structuring which the Governing Body and Diocese support.

Saint John Wall Catholic School's Statement of Action Proposal

Saint John Wall Catholic School is proposing to close the sixth form to new students from August 2016 onwards by changing the upper age limit from 18 to 16 years. Provision for the current sixth form students would be maintained and protected. All courses for the current students would be continued through to their completion in June/July 2016. The school would continue to work with individual students leaving Year 11 in June/July 2016 to identify suitable establishments to meet their needs and preferences. This means that the sixth form would finally close in August 2016 and Saint John Wall Catholic School would be a school for secondary students aged 11-16 years.

The Governing Body of Saint John Wall Catholic School would welcome your views during the consultation period which runs from February 24th 2016 – March 23rd 2016

You may respond to the consultation by either completing the Response Form on the next two pages, by letter to the school, or by emailing enquiry@sjw.bham.sch.uk. All responses should be sent, or handed in to Mrs Quirke at Saint John Wall Catholic School by 23rd March 2016 at 12 Noon.

Saint John Wall Catholic School

Consultation on Possible Closure of the Sixth Form - Response Sheet

Your views about the proposed closure of the Sixth Form at Saint John Wall Catholic School.

Please use this space to tell us your views about the proposed closure of the Sixth Form at Saint John Wall Catholic School.

This section asks you for some information that will help us analyse the results of the responses and to see who has taken part. Your response will be anonymous and you will not be identified by any of the information you provide.

I am a: (Please tick and complete all those that apply to you)

Parent/carer. Your child's/children's school(s):

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Student. Your school/college:

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Governor. Your school/college:

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Staff member. Your school/college:

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Local Resident. The area of Handsworth in which you live:

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Other. Please tell us:

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PLEASE RETURN TO MRS QUIRKE BY WEDNESDAY 23RD MARCH 2016 AT 12 NOON