



**St Ralph  
Sherwin**  
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

## Proposal to Change the Age Range of St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy

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### Consultation Document

**Date:** 03.07.2026

To: Parents, Carers, Staff, Local Providers and Stakeholders.

### Proposal to Change the Age Range of St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy

The St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust is consulting on a proposal to change the age range of **St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy** from **3–11** to **2–11**, with effect from **September 2027**. This consultation is being carried out alongside Derby City Council to determine whether the school could benefit from early years funding made available by the local authority. If this first stage consultation is successful, the Trust would still need to ensure the proposal is financially viable and seek approval from the Department for Education, which would require a second consultation.

The purpose of this proposal is to enable the school to expand its early years provision by offering education and care for eligible two-year-old children. This would increase the availability of high-quality early education and childcare places, support families, and improve access to provision within a nurturing Catholic environment.

### Why is this proposal being made?

A growing need for additional early years places has been identified and extending the school's age range will enable children to benefit from high-quality education and care from the age of two.

As a Catholic school, St Alban's serves families from a wide geographical area across Derby and surrounding communities. Many parents actively choose the school because of its Catholic ethos, inclusive values and strong reputation for educational excellence. There is an increasing demand from families seeking early years provision that reflects these values and provides a secure foundation for children's future learning.

By extending its age range, the school will be able to meet this demand and provide children with the opportunity to begin their educational journey within a familiar, caring and supportive environment.



## Rationale for the Proposal

St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy has a strong reputation for delivering high-quality education, pastoral care and inclusive practice. The school attracts pupils from across Derby and beyond, rather than solely from its immediate locality, reflecting the value families place on its Catholic character and welcoming community.

Extending the school's age range will further strengthen the educational experiences available to children and families by:

- Increasing access to high-quality early years provision.
- Supporting children's learning and development at a crucial stage of their growth.
- Enhancing continuity between early years education and primary education.
- Providing families with greater stability and consistency throughout their child's educational journey.

Children who access provision from the age of two will benefit from becoming familiar with the school's routines, expectations, environment and staff, helping to support their confidence, wellbeing and readiness for Reception.

### This development aims to:

1. Increase access to high-quality early years education and childcare for families.
2. Support children's learning, development and school readiness from an earlier age.
3. Provide a seamless transition into the school's Reception classes.
4. Meet the growing demand for funded childcare places and support working parents and carers.
5. Strengthen opportunities for early identification and support for children's individual needs.

### What is being proposed?

If approved, the school would:

1. Extend its age range to admit children from the age of two.
2. Establish and operate a dedicated early years provision for eligible two-year-old children.
3. Increase access to high-quality early education within a nurturing Catholic environment.
4. Provide a seamless educational pathway from age two through to pre-school, Reception and Key Stages 1 and 2.
5. Strengthen provision for families across Derby who choose the school because of its Catholic character, inclusive ethos and educational standards.



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The proposed provision would offer greater flexibility and support for families, including those who travel from different parts of Derby to access a Catholic education. Children would benefit from a consistent educational experience within a familiar setting, helping to build confidence, security and positive relationships from an early age.

Families would also have opportunities to develop stronger partnerships with school staff at an earlier stage of their child's development, supporting children's learning, wellbeing and successful transition through the school.

### **What impact will this have on current pupils?**

The Trust has carefully considered the impact of the proposal and is satisfied that:

1. There will be no negative impact on the quality of education currently provided.
2. Existing pupils will continue to receive the same high standards of teaching, learning and pastoral care.
3. School accommodation, staffing and resources will be planned effectively to meet the needs of all pupils.
4. Earlier access to the school environment will further strengthen children's transition into pre-school and Reception.
5. The proposal will enhance the school's ability to support children and families through earlier engagement and intervention where appropriate.

There is a commitment to ensuring that the expansion of the early years provision complements and strengthens the school's existing provision while maintaining the highest standards of education, safeguarding and pupil welfare.

### **Inclusion and Special Educational Needs**

St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy is proud of its inclusive ethos and commitment to meeting the needs of all learners.

The school hosts an **Enhanced Resource Provision (ERP)** and has significant experience in supporting children with a wide range of additional and special educational needs. The proposed extension of the age range would provide opportunities to identify and respond to children's needs at an earlier stage, enabling families to access support, interventions and specialist services as soon as possible.



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This early engagement has the potential to improve outcomes for children by ensuring that appropriate support mechanisms are in place from the beginning of their educational journey.

The proposal will not alter the school's commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity or high-quality provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Any changes will be carefully planned to ensure that effective safeguarding, appropriate staffing and high levels of support continue to be maintained.

### **What impact will this have on staff?**

The Trust does not anticipate any adverse impact on existing staff as a result of this proposal.

The introduction of provision for two-year-old children may create additional staffing opportunities to ensure that statutory adult-to-child ratios are maintained and that the quality of education and care remains of the highest standard. Any recruitment required would be undertaken in accordance with the school's established procedures.

The proposal builds upon the considerable expertise already present within the school, particularly its strong track record of inclusive practice and the specialist knowledge developed through its Enhanced Resource Provision.

Staff will continue to receive professional development and training where appropriate to support the successful implementation of the proposal and ensure that children receive a high-quality early years' experience.

### **Conclusion**

This proposal represents an exciting opportunity to enhance the school's provision for children and families. Extending the age range from **3-11** to **2-11** would allow more children to benefit from the school's Catholic ethos, high-quality teaching, inclusive practice and strong pastoral support from an earlier age.

The proposal supports the school's long-term vision of serving Catholic families from across Derby while continuing to provide an excellent, inclusive and nurturing education for all children, enabling them to flourish academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.



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## Consultation Process

The Trust is committed to seeking the views of all interested parties before making a final decision.

The consultation period will run from:

**Start Date:** 03.07.2026

**Closing Date:** 16.07.2026

All comments received during this period will be carefully considered before a final decision is made.

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## How to Share Your Views

Your views are important to us.

Please send your comments, questions or feedback by:

**Microsoft Form:** [Proposal to change age range at St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy – Fill out form](#)

**Email:** [consultation@dsa.srscmat.co.uk](mailto:consultation@dsa.srscmat.co.uk)

**Post:** St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy, Newstead Avenue, Chaddesden, Derby, DE21 6NU

**Closing Date:** 16.07.2026

Following the consultation period, the school and St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust will review all responses and communicate the outcome to parents, carers, staff, local stakeholders and the Local Authority.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal and share your views.



## Consultation Response Form

### Proposal to Change the Age Range of St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy

We would welcome your views on the proposal outlined in this consultation document.

**Do you support the proposal to change the age range of St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy from 3-11 to 2-11?**

- Yes – I support the proposal
- No – I do not support the proposal
- Undecided

**Please provide any comments, suggestions or concerns:**

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### Your relationship to the school (optional)

- Parent/Carer
- Staff Member
- Governor
- Local Resident
- Childcare Provider
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (optional)**

**Date**

Please return this form to **St Alban's Catholic Voluntary Academy** by **16.07.2026**.



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