

To Students, Parents/Carers, Staff, School Leaders & Stakeholders

**The Trustees of Fortis Trust, who oversee Bradfields Academy are proposing to increase the total number of pupil places (PAN) of the academy by 100 places. This will require a 2-storey building with parking facilities to be built within the existing academy campus to accommodate this expansion and address existing issues of overcrowding.**

## **1. Why do we need to increase the total PAN of the academy by 100 places and to build an additional building?**

Fortis Trust Board of Trustees in conjunction with Medway Council would like to increase the total PAN of Bradfields Academy by 100 places. By increasing the number of available spaces within the academy it will help the local authority to address the current lack of available places for young people aged 11-19 years who have Education & Health Care Plans (EHCP) due to having ASD and complex special education needs and disabilities. Currently there is an expected shortfall of over 500 specialist places within Medway per year until 2026. Often young people who have an EHCP and require specialist educational provision do not secure a school place within Medway and as such they are sent to be educated out of the area. This is not only costly but requires children with often very complex needs to have very long daily journeys to and from school; they often lose their sense of the local community and become socially isolated from their potential peers within their home area.

The demand for this is clearly evident, currently the academy has to decline over 60% of the applications for a placement due to the lack of available spaces particularly for secondary and post 16 placements. Walderslade and surrounding areas are also experiencing growth in housing, therefore, more places are required. Medway Council fully supports this proposal:

*'Medway Council is very supportive of the proposal to expand of Bradfields Special Academy. The Academy has a vital role in ensuring that our most vulnerable pupils receive the highest quality care and education possible. Medway Council is working closely with the academy on the proposed expansion and is making funding available for the project. The expansion will provide almost a third of the 315 places we are seeking to create in special schools over the next four years, and this programme is itself over 60 per cent of our aspiration for about 535 specialist places, including 220 resourced places. All these places are key to the development of sufficient SEND provision across Medway to meet increasing demand for secondary specialist places'.*

**Mr Kiernan, Assistant Director, Education and SEND, Medway**

Bradfields Academy is an Ofsted Outstanding provision which is very popular with families across Medway. The academy has a successful track record, with particular emphasis placed on supporting young people successfully to move onto further education or into employment. This success has led to the academy facing the challenges of pressure for places.

Overtime the academy has expanded to try to accommodate and support the demand, however, this has led to increased class sizes and a distinct lack of physical learning space and facilities. The expansion will, therefore, include the construction of a 2-storey building which will provide 17 extra classrooms, a PE space and specialist facilities which will alleviate the current issues of overcrowding and support the provision of 100 new places. Should this proposal be approved, we hope to be able to open the new building and provide the extra spaces for young people from September 2022.

## **2. Are there plans to show how this expansion will be delivered on site?**

Initial scoping of the site has shown there is sufficient space to accommodate the increased number of students through building an additional building. Fig. 1 shows the existing layout of the academy campus. Fig. 2 shows the proposed position of the new building, which will sit within the confines of the existing campus buildings. This is to ensure that there will be minimal impact and disruption to the neighbouring schools and houses.

Fig.1 Current Campus



Fig. 2 Proposed site of new building



## **3. How will the Academy deal with any possible increased traffic, congestion and parking?**

The vast majority of students will be transported to the academy on dedicated school transport in the form of 6 additional minibuses. The academy will ensure that all student transport can be accommodated onsite which will prevent any potential congestion on Churchill Avenue. The academy is already working towards increased provision of parking facilities on site. All staff parking needs will be fully accommodated on site, as part of the new build further additional parking facilities will be created to ensure local roads are not impacted upon.

#### 4. How will the increase in PAN happen and how many young people will there be within each year group?

Currently, the allocated place number for children joining Year 7 each year is 36. We will be looking to increase each year group by up to 19 students in Key Stage 3 and increasing by each year group across Key Stage 4 & 5 by up to 20 students. Our aim is to gradually phase in the increase of students over the two year period commencing September 2022. Please see the table below for detail of the proposed changes:

Key Stage	Year group	Current number of students	Proposed increase in places	Places per year group if proposal approved
3	7	43	12	55
3	8	49	6	55
3	9	38	17	55
4	10	35	20	55
4	11	38	17	55
5	12	32	8	40
5	13	29	11	40
5	14	25	9	34
	Total	289	100	389

#### 5. The consultation process – indicative timeline

We are undertaking a consultation period on this proposal for Bradfields Academy as required by the statutory process for school expansion. Below is an outline of the timeframe for the consultation period.

Date	Activity
22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2020	Public consultation period lasting for four weeks
6 <sup>th</sup> October 2020 3pm-5pm	Virtual meeting available for stakeholders and interested parties to attend to discuss consultation. For a Teams invite link please email the trust on <a href="mailto:office@fortistrust.co.uk">office@fortistrust.co.uk</a>
20 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Public consultation closes
27 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Significant change form sent to Department for Education (DfE)
January 2021	Formal Decision made by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)
1 <sup>st</sup> February 2021	If application successful, preparation for construction of the new building will begin (subject to planning permission).

## 6. How can I give my views?

There are a number of ways to give us your views on this proposal:

- Complete the response form available on our Trust website:

<https://www.fortistrust.co.uk/>

- Complete the response form available on Bradfields Academy's website:

<https://www.bradfieldsacademy.co.uk/>

- Send your response form to:

Miss M Sweetlove  
Fortis Trust,  
Bradfields Academy  
Churchill Avenue  
Chatham  
Kent  
ME5 0LB

- Email your response to: [office@fortistrust.co.uk](mailto:office@fortistrust.co.uk) with the title – *CONSULTATION RESPONSE* by the morning of Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020
- Due to Covid-19 we are unable to accept hand delivered responses.

## 7. What happens next?

This consultation stage closes on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020. A report summarising the responses received during the consultation period will be prepared. This will be presented to the Regional Schools Commissioner who will recommend the future direction of the proposal.

Yours sincerely



Miss M Sweetlove  
Principal