

Consultation - Esteem Multi-Academy Trust
Proposal to Increase Planned Places at Bennerley Fields School

Overview

Bennerley Fields School is part of Esteem Multi-Academy Trust (EMAT). It provides education to pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The school meets the varied and complex needs of children in all Key Stages up to KS4. Derbyshire County Council is the main commissioner of pupil places at the school and pupils come from across Derbyshire to access the specialist provision.

Each year, Bennerley Fields School is approached by Derbyshire County Council to accommodate additional pupils. The school consistently operates at full capacity, with a substantial waiting list of SEND pupils eager to attend. An exciting opportunity has arisen for Esteem Multi-Academy Trust to build an additional three classrooms on the Bennerley Fields School site. This will help address the increasing demand for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) places across Derbyshire County.



As part of a strategic initiative to meet the growing number of SEND students, we are thrilled to be proposing that our school will be constructing three new classrooms. These classrooms will be designed to accommodate an additional 24 places initially, with the potential to increase to 30 places over time.

As this proposal constitutes a “significant change”, we must consult in accordance with the Department for Education guidance. This document outlines the consultation process. We are committed to ensuring that all our stakeholders are fully informed and have appropriate opportunities to provide their input and share their views as part of this expansion.

Why Are We Expanding?

Over the past five years, Bennerley Fields School has seen significant growth, increasing our student capacity from 89 to 103 students. This increase reflects the ongoing need for more SEND places in our community, as requested by Derbyshire County Council. As you may know, there is a growing demand for specialised educational spaces and resources to support SEND students throughout the county.

While our school has been proud to offer a nurturing environment for SEND students, we are currently at full capacity and have no extra places available for students until the new classrooms are built.

The figures below are showing the total number of consultations for each year and the number of places that we are able to offer, they give an indication of the demand for places at Bennerley Fields School:

Year	Total No of Consultations	Places able to be offered
2019/20	64	10
2020/21	118	11
2021/22	99	14
2022/2023	161	11
2023/2024	124	9
2024/2025	133 (up to March 2025)	8

What Will the New Classrooms Provide?

The construction of these new classrooms will create much-needed capacity for the school, offering:

- 24 additional SEND places to start, expanding our ability to serve more students in need.
- The potential for an increase to 30 places over time as the classrooms are optimised and additional resources are incorporated into the space.
- A supportive, purpose-built environment designed to meet the diverse learning needs of students with SEND.

This expansion is in direct response to the directive from Derbyshire County Council to provide more SEND spaces throughout the county, ensuring that all students have access to high-quality educational opportunities tailored to their individual needs.

Timeline for Construction

The building of the new classrooms is anticipated to be completed by September 2026. We will ensure that all construction work is carried out with minimal disruption to the daily activities of the school. During this time, we will keep all stakeholders informed about key milestones and any potential impacts on school operations.

The Importance of This Expansion

This expansion is crucial to:

- Address the increasing demand for SEND places in Derbyshire County.
- Ensure our school can continue to provide a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for students with SEND.
- Support the long-term growth of our school while meeting the needs of our local community.

Approval needed from the Department for Education

When an academy trust proposes changes to a school's characteristics, as outlined above, the Department for Education requires specific criteria to be met, including a formal consultation process. This process must be completed before any changes can be implemented, in accordance with the Academies Act 2010. The publication of this document marks the beginning of the consultation process led by the Esteem Multi Academy Trust, ensuring that all stakeholders can share their views on the proposal.

The guidelines for the process are set out in [Making significant changes to an open academy](#).

The Consultation Process

This marks the beginning of the consultation process, offering stakeholders an opportunity to share their views on the proposal. The consultation process will follow these steps:

1. Launch of Consultation

- a. This document will be distributed on Friday 5th April 2025, and a notice of consultation will be published on the Esteem Multi-Academy Trust website.

2. Consultation Period

- a. The consultation period will run for three weeks, closing Friday 25th April 2025.

- b. During this time, stakeholders are invited to review the proposal and submit their feedback.
- 3. Review Feedback**
 - a. At the end of the consultation period, the Trust will review and consider all submitted comments.
 - 4. Submission to the Regional Schools Commissioner**
 - a. Once all feedback has been considered, the Trust will submit the proposal, along with the consultation responses, to the Regional Schools Commissioner as part of the significant change process.

How to Share Your Views

The Esteem Multi Academy Trust welcomes feedback through the following channels:

- **In Writing To:**
- Governance Manager, Esteem Multi Academy Trust, Suite 43, Sherwood Park, Lake View Drive, Nottingham NG15 0DT

- **Via Email:**

info@esteemmat.co.uk

- **By Completing the Consultation Form:**

The form is included at the end of this document and is also available as a separate Word document. Please complete and return it as instructed.



EMAT CONSULTATION FEEDBACK FORM

ESTEEM MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

This form gives you the opportunity to comment on the proposals for Bennerley Fields School.

Your feedback is important to us and will be considered as part of the consultation process. Your details will not be passed to any third-party organisation and will only be used internally for the purpose of understanding your views on the proposal.

Please fill in your details below, and your comments, and return to the address at the bottom of the page. Alternatively, this can be emailed to: info@esteemmat.co.uk

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel/Email: _____

Comments:

Please return to: Governance Manager, Esteem Multi-Academy Trust, Suite 43, Sherwood Park, Lake View Drive, Nottingham NG15 0DT