



# St Paul's School

*The Statutory Proposal that  
St Paul's Primary School grow into an  
all-through 3-16 school at the heart of the city*

*for submission to the **Newcastle City Council**  
by **The Governing Body of St Paul's Primary School***

**31st January 2022**

## Introduction

Since 1862, St Paul's School has served the community which lives in the west end of Newcastle upon Tyne by providing a **co-educational, faith-based** education as part of the work of Elswick Parish, St Stephen & St Paul.

For 100 years, the school provided such an education for both **Primary and Secondary** age boys and girls, with its concentration focussing on ages 3-11 in the years since the closure of its Secondary provision in 1962.

Over the past decade, the Governors of St Paul's have watched as the demand for high-quality Secondary school places in the inner city has outstripped supply. We now believe that there is a **clear need to increase the number of such places available locally**. Our parents are simply not able to secure places for their children in schools rated by OfSTED as Good or Outstanding; the number of them who **cannot get their children into any of their preferred Secondary schools** has been too high for too long. While the population across the city has been growing, accompanied by significant increases in new housing stock, the development of new schools has been **concentrated in other parts of the city**, leaving the Inner West behind. We believe that the time has come to redress that balance.

Given our **longstanding and ongoing commitment** to our community, we as the Governors of St Paul's are now responding to this need, in line with the commitments of the City Council<sup>1</sup> by moving to re-establish our School as a **provider of Secondary as well as Primary school places** as soon as possible.

We believe that our strong and sustained reputation for service, inclusion, community cohesion, effective financial management, and consistently high standards of personal and academic performance, make this Proposal credible, timely and uniquely placed to provide what our community needs and deserves.

As well as submitting this Proposal for Enlargement to the relevant authorities, we are delighted to share the details of this vision with everyone with an interest in the inner city, and especially with the parents and carers of children currently living in the Inner West. This is not just a vision for those who attend St Paul's Primary School; it is a vision to serve all of those who live along the West Road and Riverside, and who are looking for Secondary provision close to home.

Our Proposal asks two **key but distinct** questions:

- **first**, can we gain the City Council's approval to enlarge the current St Paul's School starting with Year 7 only, and growing one Year Group each year thereafter, until all Year Groups 7-11 are full, four years later?
- And **second**, if our case for such growth is approved, will the City Council assist us in our efforts to seek out and secure appropriate accommodation to allow us to start our first Year 7 in September 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter?

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<sup>1</sup> "working with our education partners, improve the outcomes of Newcastle's children and young people who are most disadvantaged and thus give them a better start in life, at least equitable with their peers"

– Mark Patton, Assistant Director Education and Skills, Newcastle City Council **Education and Skills Annual Report 2019**

## Consultation

As part of the statutory process for enlargement, we are required to hold a period of Consultation during which this Proposal document can be made freely available to all interested parties. This is so that anyone may comment, object, support or ask questions about the Proposal, in order to achieve the very best outcome for everyone.

This period of Consultation will run for **five weeks** from the publication of this document on **Monday 31st January 2022** and closes on **Friday 4th March 2022**. We may then submit any final modifications arising from the Consultation to the Newcastle upon Tyne City Council and their decision will then be expected **within two months**, in the early days of May 2022.

## The Consultation closes at 5pm on Friday 4th March 2022.

So please do send us any comments by that date. We are keen to answer questions, expand on the detail which follows, and receive any ideas as to how our plans might be modified or improved.

We are also holding **Information Meetings** as follows:

- **Tuesday 8th February**      **St Paul's Parents**      **9.00am** in the School Hall  
repeated at **5.30pm**
- **Thursday 10th February**      **Public Meeting**      **6.00pm** in the School Hall

If you would like to send in a comment or question, or ask one of our team to speak to any interested groups or individuals during the Consultation Period, please write to

The Chairman of Governors  
St Paul's Primary School  
Victoria Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE4 7JU

or email us at      [admin@stpauls.school.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stpauls.school.sch.uk)  
or phone us on      0191 273 3667

We have been greatly assisted in our planning up to this point by a number of people with a deep interest in education and in Newcastle city, including the **Officers at Newcastle City Council**, the **Diocesan Director of Education**, the **Regional Commissioner's Office** and the **Department for Education Estates Team**. We look forward to keeping these channels open in a continuing spirit of co-operation and transparency as we take this Proposal forward.

Thank you.

**Revd George Curry**

Chairman of the St Paul's Primary School Governing Body

**Rob Frame**

St Paul's Primary School Governor and

Chairman of the Governors' Enlargement Working Party

## The Current Position

### 1. Where are the Secondary schools?

There are currently **SEVEN** Secondary schools and **THREE** Catholic Secondary schools within Newcastle which offer Secondary school places to children approaching Year 7.

Gosforth Academy is not included in those numbers as it is a school serving children aged 13-18 as part of the three-tier system which operates alongside Middle and First schools. Nor is the North East Futures UTC included, as it is a specialist provision for young people from right across the North-East region, and students can only begin there at the start of Year 10. Nor are the Independent fee-paying schools included.

In terms of admission, the three Catholic schools allocate places largely on the basis of **the faith of the child**, and/or the child's attendance at a Catholic Primary school, whereas the seven non-Catholic schools offer places on the basis of **how close the child lives** to the school. Simply living close to one of the Catholic Secondary schools does not therefore benefit a child's application, unless the school has places left when all of its Catholic applicants have been accommodated.

There is no Secondary faith school for children other than Catholic faith schools; indeed Newcastle is the **largest city in England** without a Church of England Secondary school.

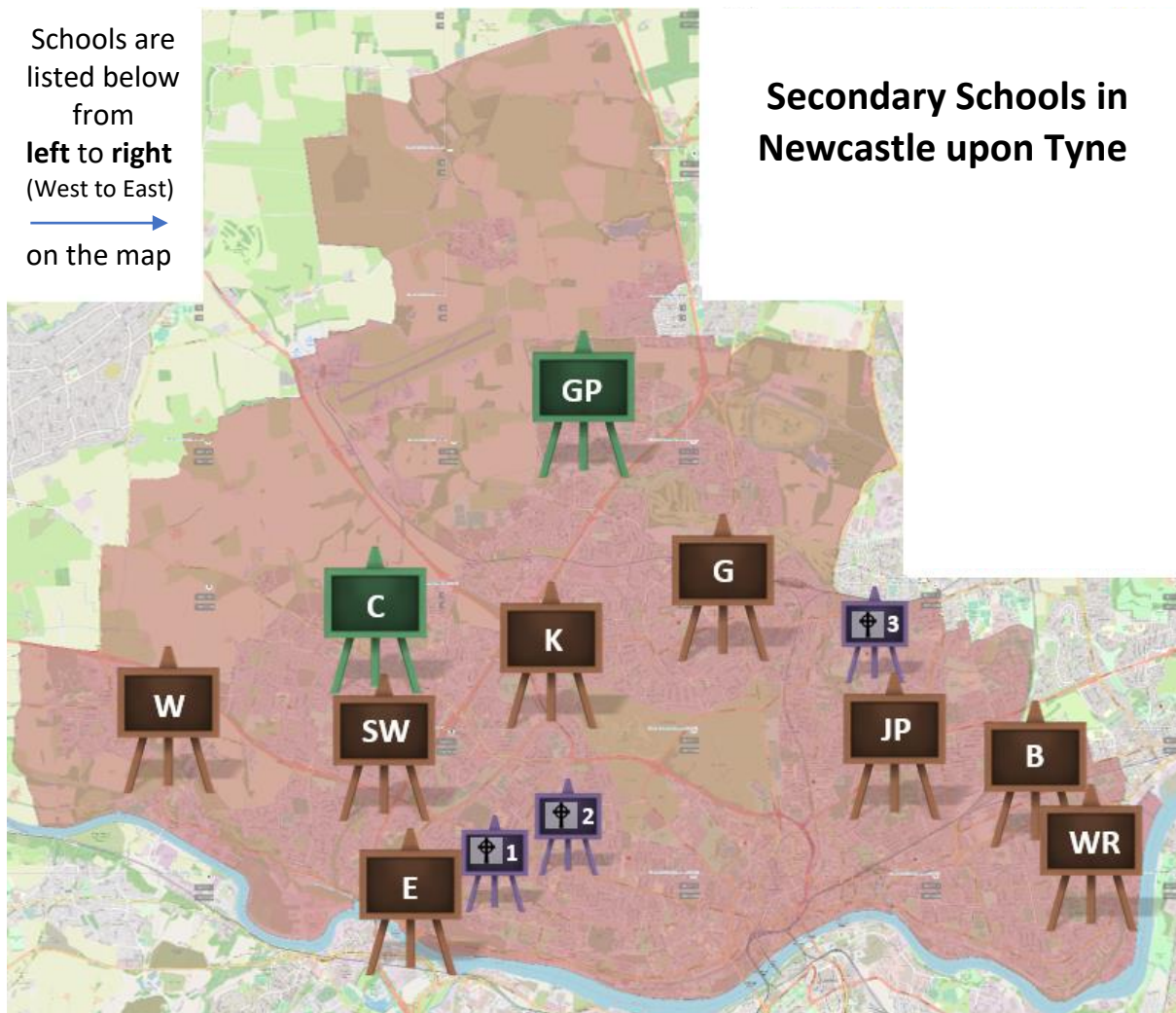
**Two new Secondary schools** are being built to serve the major new housing developments underway in Great Park and Callerton/Westerhope, with a start date of **September 2023** published for both. Until then, and because there are already insufficient places in existing Newcastle schools, both of these new schools, **Great Park Academy** and **Callerton Academy** have been enabled to 'open early' in accommodation specially provided at Gosforth Academy and the former Discovery School respectively. Neither will be faith schools and both will operate admissions on the basis of how close applicants live to their **new sites** and **not how close they live to either Gosforth or the Discovery site**.

Since 2004, six of the existing seven Secondary schools have either been **rebuilt or established in brand new buildings**. The seventh, Benfield, has benefitted from a £17m refurbishment. The only new school buildings built in the inner city since 2008 are the UTC (see above) and the 13-18 Discovery School, a specialist school which **opened in 2014** but was **closed in 2018**.

When the admissions rules on **faith** and **proximity** are added to the fact that there is no local Secondary school in the Inner West, the result is that our children not only have the **farthest to travel** to get to school, but they are also left with the **least and last choice** after all other children have been placed. This then means our children are spread out thinly across all of the city's schools and are often separated from their Primary school friends.

The impact upon the community identity within the Inner West is marked, and the effect on our children is in real need of attention. It would not be so bad, perhaps, if all of the schools in the city were Outstanding but this is not yet the case; and because popular schools fill up with those living closest to them, our children are left at the mercy of where the final few remaining places are. **How good, therefore, are the schools to which our children must go?**

Schools are listed below from **left to right** (West to East) on the map



## Secondary Schools in Newcastle upon Tyne

**W** **Walbottle Academy**  
built in 2008

**SW** **Studio West**  
new build in 2014

**E** **Excelsior Academy**  
new build in 2008

**K** **Kenton School**  
rebuilt in 2008

**G** **Gosforth Academy**  
rebuilt in 2002

**JP** **Jesmond Park Academy**  
rebuilt in 2004

**B** **Benfield School**  
built in 1967 and recently refurbished

**WR** **Walker Riverside Academy**  
new build in 2011

Secondary schools generally allocate places on the basis of how close children live to them. However, the city's Catholic Schools offer places to children from **all across the city** and on the basis of their **faith** or **feeder** school.

- ✙ 1 **St Cuthbert's Catholic High School** - boys
- ✙ 2 **Sacred Heart Catholic High School** - girls
- ✙ 3 **St Mary's Catholic School** - boys and girls

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New Schools under construction **to open in 2023**

**GP** **Great Park Academy**

**C** **Callerton Academy**

**Temporary** buildings elsewhere have been provided by the Newcastle upon Tyne Council and the Department for Education to allow **both of these schools** to open 'early' from **2021-2023**.

2. What are the current standards being achieved within these schools?

Newcastle City Council rightly aspires that all schools in the city are **at least Good** in terms of their **OfSTED** grading. The OfSTED evaluation seeks to give a comprehensive overview of each school, rather than simply focussing on examination performance alone. However, OfSTED Inspections are not carried out annually and so it is impossible to keep fully up-to-date with the standards across all of the city’s schools by using OfSTED Grades alone. It is therefore wise to refer also to schools’ **ongoing examination and attendance data**, which is available annually, when gauging the quality of schools’ provision overall.

Of course, the Covid pandemic has had a dramatic impact on all schools, on their academic outcomes and attendance figures, and on their children’s social development and general well-being. Reference, however, to data gleaned **before** the pandemic does give a sobering overview of the quality of Secondary education available to non-Catholic children in the city.

Overall, the seven Secondary schools currently offering Year 7 places are made up of

- **none** which are **Outstanding (0% of these schools)**
- **two** which are **Good (29%)**
- **three** which **Require Improvement (43%)** and
- **two** which were judged **Inadequate (29%)** and have since been taken over by new Trusts.

Of the remaining schools, St Cuthbert’s is graded as **Requires Improvement**, Sacred Heart and St Mary’s are rated as **Outstanding**, and so is Gosforth Academy, although it does not offer Year 7 places because it is a 13-18 High School.

Of the Secondary schools without faith-based admission policies, the closest to the Inner West are Excelsior and Kenton, both of which are graded **Requires Improvement**. Both also had weak academic and attendance figures in the year before the pandemic struck.

*Figures shown for 2018-2019*

	GCSE Progress 8	Attendance	
		Overall	Persistent Absence
National Average (Secondary)	-0.03	5.5%	13.7%
Excelsior Academy	Well Below Average -0.60	5.8%	15.9% <sup>2</sup>
Kenton School	Well Below Average -0.62	10.1%	29.4%

Tracking school performance back over time, there has been a longstanding challenge facing Newcastle in terms of Secondary school standards, whereas the standards being achieved in our **Primary schools have been consistently good**, and continue to be so.

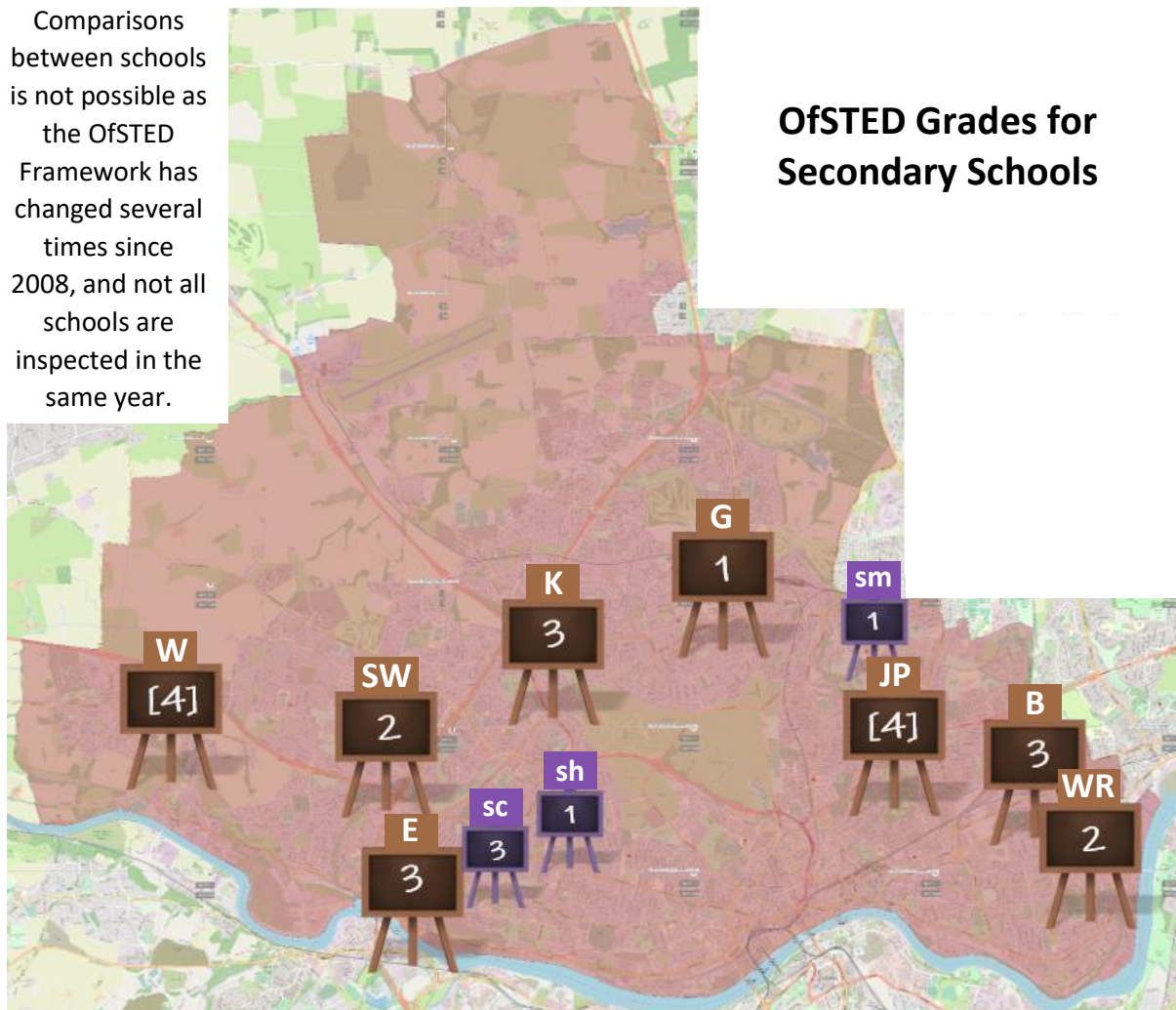
There may well be many factors behind this apparent ‘dip’ in standards after Key Stage 2, and Secondary schools are working hard to improve progress and attainment. However, at present, those standards are lagging behind both National Standards and our own Primaries.

<sup>2</sup> Excelsior Academy’s Attendance data is reported as a whole all-through 3-18 school, and not separately as per Primary and Secondary. Nationally, attendance figures are generally worse in Secondary Years.



Comparisons between schools is not possible as the OfSTED Framework has changed several times since 2008, and not all schools are inspected in the same year.

## OfSTED Grades for Secondary Schools



**W** **Walbottle Academy**  
**Inadequate** February 2019

**SW** **Studio West**  
**Good** June 2019

**E** **Excelsior Academy**  
**Requires Improvement**  
March 2020

**K** **Kenton School**  
**Requires Improvement**  
February 2019

**G** **Gosforth Academy**  
**Outstanding** May 2008

**JP** **Jesmond Park Academy**  
**Inadequate** November 2019

**B** **Benfield School**  
**Requires Improvement**  
June 2020

**WR** **Walker Riverside Academy**  
**Good** June 2014

Schools are awarded one of four distinct Grades:

- 1 Outstanding
- 2 Good
- 3 Requires Improvement (RI)
- 4 Inadequate

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✠ **sc** **St Cuthbert's Catholic High School – boys**  
**Requires Improvement** June 2021

✠ **sh** **Sacred Heart Catholic High School – girls**  
**Outstanding** December 2022

✠ **sm** **St Mary's Catholic School - boys and girls**  
**Outstanding** June 2009

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Schools whose Grades are noted in [...] have not been inspected since being taken over by new Academy Trusts. The Grade given is therefore the **latest one available to parents**, even though it was achieved before their takeovers.

It is accepted that we cannot simply compare the outcomes at **St Paul's Primary School** with those being achieved in our Secondary schools. However, we can still point to both the academic and other standard data pertaining to our school, and to our OfSTED rating, as evidence of our ability to deliver a high quality, all-round education which bears comparison with other schools in the city and across England.

#### St Paul's OfSTED Inspection Gradings:

**Good** (2017) and also **Good** in three of the four previous Inspections dating back to 2006.

#### Figures shown for 2018-2019

		Year 6 Progress		Attendance	
				Overall	Persistent Absence
National Average (Primary)		0.00		4.0%	8.2%
St Paul's	Reading	Well above Average	+3.20	3.2%	6.1%
	Writing	Average	+1.40		
	Maths	Average	+0.40		
Meeting <b>Expected</b> standard in <i>Reading, Writing</i> and <i>Maths</i>				National Average:	65%
				Newcastle Average:	66%
				<b>St Paul's Average:</b>	<b>74%</b>
Meeting <b>Higher</b> standard in <i>Reading, Writing</i> and <i>Maths</i>				National Average:	11%
				Newcastle Average:	12%
				<b>St Paul's Average:</b>	<b>18%</b>

For us, we believe the emerging picture makes clear that

- Inner West children live **farthest away** from a Secondary school when compared to all other children in the city;
- Under the 'closest-to-the-school' rule, Inner West children have the **least and last choice** of Secondary school, unless they are Catholic or the two Catholic schools closest to us are undersubscribed (St Cuthbert's and Sacred Heart); and
- OfSTED and other data for the Secondary Schools closest to the Inner West are **below the standards sought by the Council** (Excelsior, Kenton and Walbottle), with Studio West being the exception, with an OfSTED rating of Good in 2019.

Given all of this, parents in the Inner West can only hope that the **Parental Preference process** is able to give them a **genuine and equal opportunity with all other Newcastle parents** of getting a Year 7 place for their child in the school of their choice.

We believe that education policy should always seek to provide a good choice of school for every child, **regardless of where they live**. It is therefore crucial to examine how well our Inner West parents are served by this Parental Preference process.

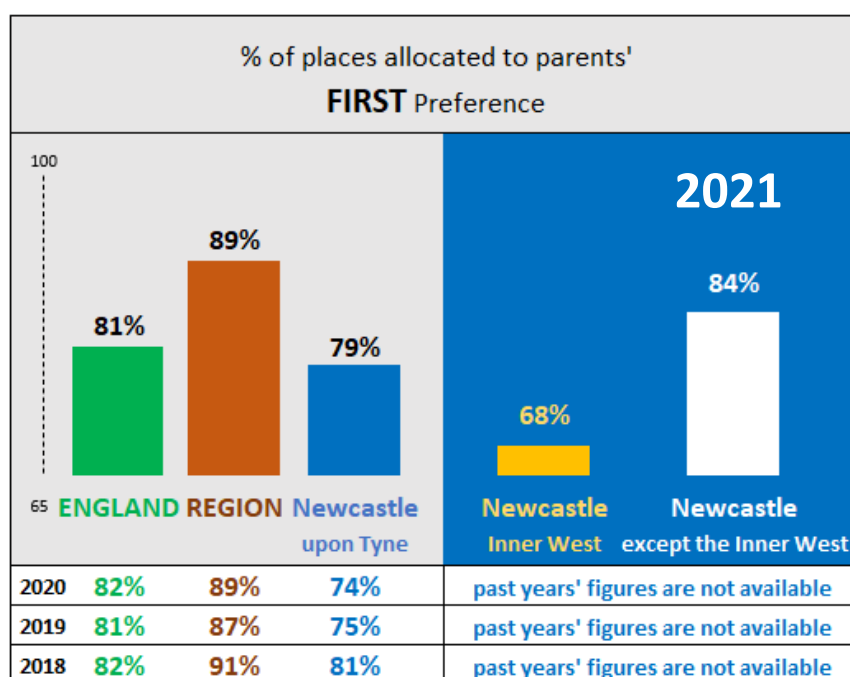


### 3. Does the Parental Preference process operate equitably across the city and are Inner West parents able to benefit from this process in terms of getting their children into the school of their choice?

The allocation of Year 7 places each Spring is an anxious time for almost every parent in England. It is obviously not possible for every child to gain a place in the 'best school in town' as there are almost certainly not enough places in that school to meet demand.

However, every Local Authority strives to ensure that as many parents as possible can get their child into their **preferred school**<sup>3</sup>. And if not their first choice, then their **second, third** or even **fourth** choice. This is the measure against which all Local Authorities are assessed, and against which the fairness and equity of provision within the system can be judged.

The diagrams that follow indicate the success or otherwise of parents in securing a place in their **FIRST** preference school in each of the last four years, 2018-2021. They are classified in five groups, showing the figures across England, within the **North East region**<sup>4</sup>, in Newcastle as a whole, and finally, those living in Inner West or elsewhere in the city.



This table clearly shows that

- The **North East region** consistently outperforms England as a whole, in terms of providing parents with a Year 7 place for their child in their **First Preference school**.
- However, Newcastle consistently underperforms against our own **regional average**, and against England as a whole, on the same statistic.
- Worse still, looking **inside the city** in 2021, parents living in the Inner West only had a **68%** chance of being allocated their First Preference. This is a **huge disadvantage** compared to parents living elsewhere in the city, whose chances were **16% higher (84%)**.

<sup>3</sup> The Education Act 1996 Section 14.3A 'increasing opportunities for parental choice'

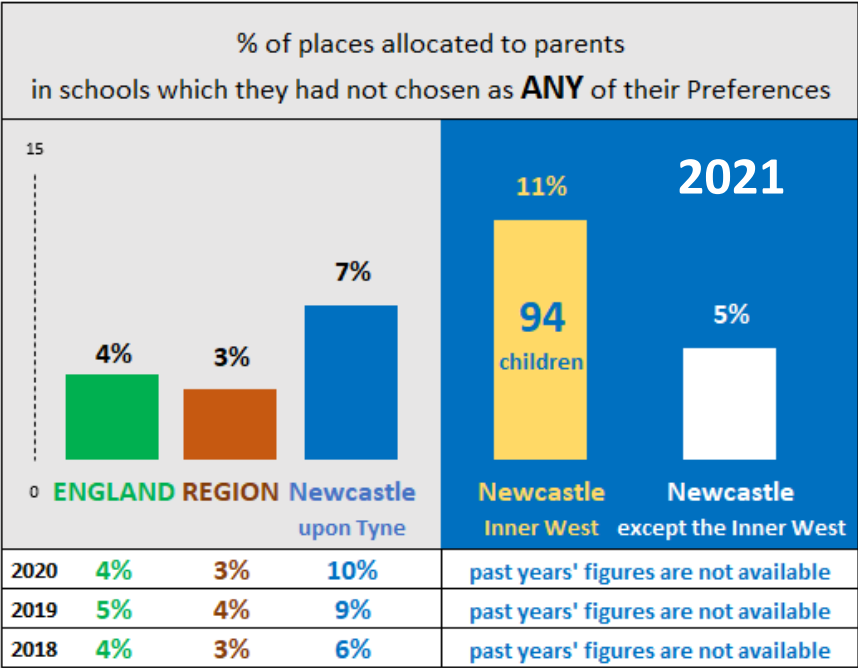
<sup>4</sup> The **North East Region**: Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, **Newcastle upon Tyne**, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees and Sunderland

It is unclear whether or not Inner West parents experienced this same **disadvantage** in 2020, 2019 and 2018, as data for those years is not available to us. However, it is not just a failure to secure their **First Preference** that is hitting so many Inner West families; it is the fact that far too many of them are not getting **ANY** of their four preferences.

It is obviously disappointing if you cannot get into your first-choice school; to be told that **you cannot get into your first four choices** is traumatic.

The following chart shows that **94** Inner West children faced this reality in 2021, resulting in them having to accept a place in a school which their parents **did not choose**. This deep stress and strain for parents and children is the tough reality of school place allocation across England and, regrettably, some are caught in it every year.

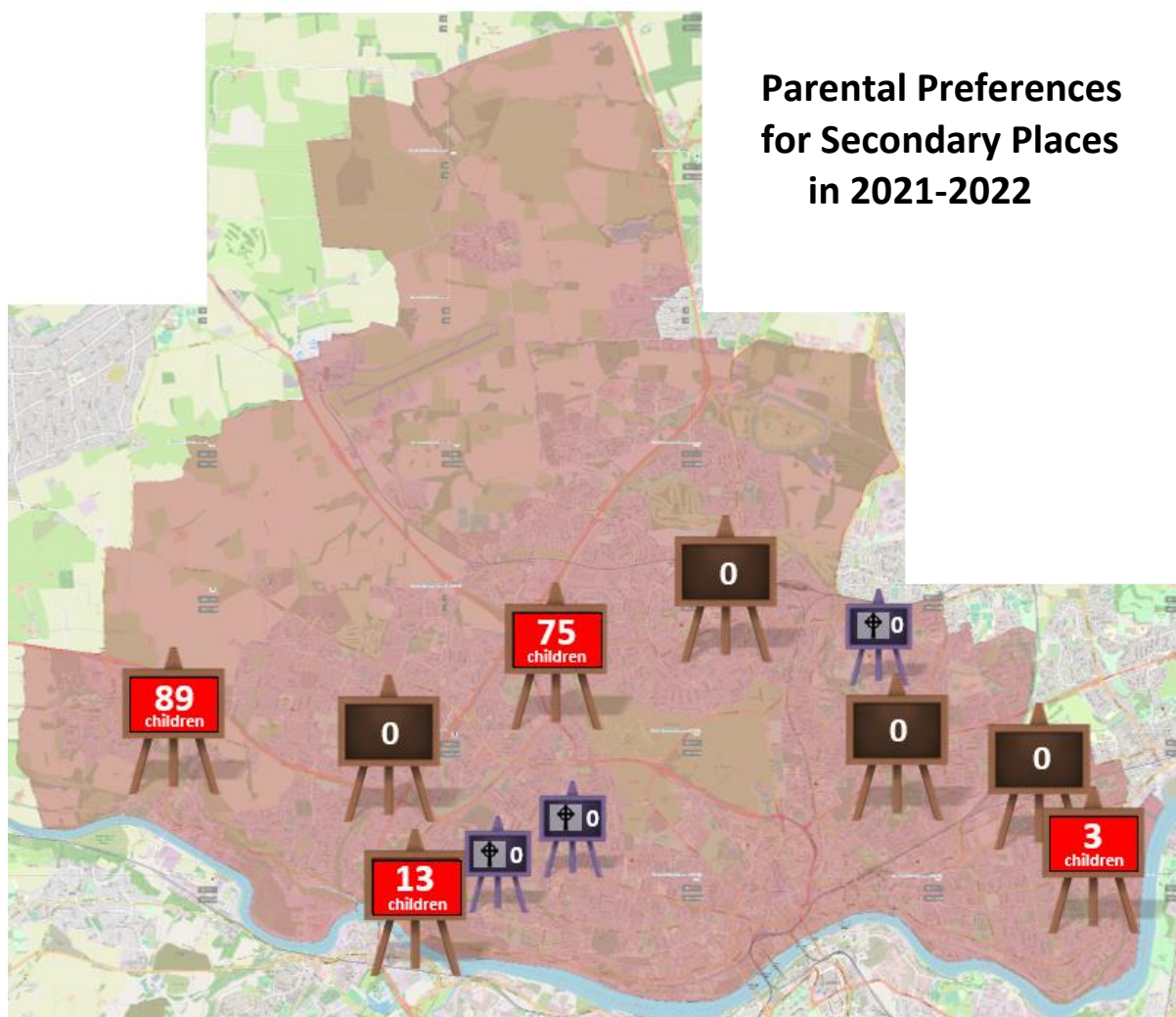
However, this does not mean that there should be **such a disparity in one city**, our city, whereby **more than double** the number of affected children in Newcastle come from the same single area of the city – the Inner West.



By considering the **geographic challenges** and **school under-performance pressures** alongside the **least and last option** for Inner West parents, it is clear that the Parental Preference process adds even further **disadvantage** to Inner West children.

Our children are also very likely to have to travel to school by bus or car, rather than on foot or on a bicycle, **impacting on their fitness** and **increasing emissions** across the city. Leaving home earlier each morning creates an extra pressure not to be **late** and living further away means they are not as free **to stay for after-school Clubs**, especially on darker winter nights.

Children of faith, of whom there are many within the Inner West, have no non-Catholic faith school option, forcing them to look **outside the city** to find such places. Newcastle's Catholic schools are heavily over-subscribed but are set up to cater for Catholics first and simply do not have enough places to go round. Because of this, although two of them are located in the Inner West, only just over half of their pupils actually **live** in the Inner West.



## Parental Preferences for Secondary Places in 2021-2022

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**W Walbottle Academy**  
\*57% 27% 89 children

**SW Studio West**  
\*145%

**E Excelsior Academy**  
\*72% 5% 13 children

**K Kenton School**  
\*60% 22% 75 children

**G Gosforth Academy**  
No Y7 places offered

**JP Jesmond Park Academy**  
\*76%

**B Benfield School**  
\*101%

**WR Walker Riverside Academy**  
\*93% 1% 3 children

Percentages in **green** show the level of **under-subscription\*** for places (ie the number of first preferences compared to the total number of places allocated)

Figures in **red** show the **percentage of places** allocated and the **number of children attending** whose parents **did not choose this school** as **any** of their four preferences.

- 1 **St Cuthbert's Catholic High School – boys**  
\*150%
- 2 **Sacred Heart Catholic High School – girls**  
\*166%
- 3 **St Mary's St Mary's Catholic School - boys and girls**  
\*166%

\* Subscription rates **below 100%** show schools with more places available than parents wishing to apply (known as being **under-subscribed**).

\* Subscription rates **above 100%** show schools with more applicants than places available (**over-subscribed**).



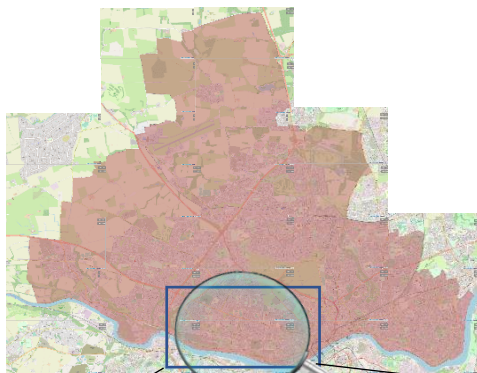
#### 4. What impact is all of this having upon our Community?

Let us be clear. This build-up of pressure is not just facing the children who complete their Year 6 at St Paul's Primary. Children attending **all of the schools in the West End** face the same pressures and the impact reaches into their families and into the community as a whole. At its worst, it can feel as though the Inner West is in danger of being forgotten.

But **educational disadvantage** is just one of the pressures facing the Inner West.

The National Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) provides a weighted measure which combines **seven** fundamental indicators of **Income, Employment, Education, Health, Crime, Housing** and the **Living Environment**.

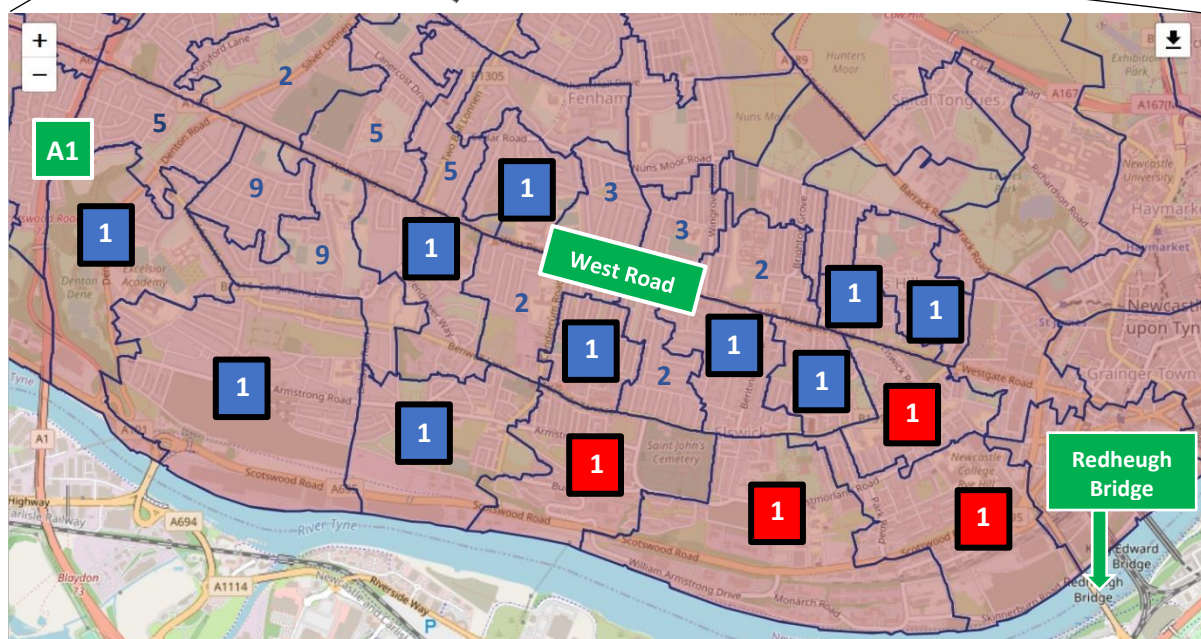
It divides the map of England into small districts in which approximately 1,500 people live and there are 32,844 of these districts in all (called LSOAs<sup>5</sup>). When measuring IMD, these districts are grouped into 10 separate categories, with the most deprived 10% of districts in the country being classed as Category 1 districts, and the least deprived 10% classed as Category 10.



In Newcastle's Inner West, we have **25 of these LSOA districts** along the West Road and Riverside.

Of these 25, **14** are among the **most deprived 10%** of all districts in England (shown below in **BLUE**).

And the **4** districts around St Paul's and Elswick are listed in the **most deprived 1%** of districts in the whole country (shown below in **RED**).



IMD Profile as at January 2022 for Newcastle upon Tyne

<sup>5</sup> LSOA is the abbreviation of *Lower Layer Super Output Areas*

We note above that many believe education policy should always seek to provide a good choice of school for all children, regardless of where they live. Some would even say that those who live in the **more disadvantaged areas** need the **best schools** in order to build hope and ambition within their communities and young people.

Of course, many people are **proud of living in the Inner West**. They choose to live here and, whilst some are not able to move to areas closest to the best schools because of the cost of housing in those areas, others are. And yet **they choose to live here**; this is where they feel 'at home' and where their sense of identity and community is strongest. Our **cultural diversity** is enriching, and the variety of **languages, histories and faiths** is broad and enlightening. Some of our community are **recent arrivers** but they find a welcome in our streets, our shops, our places of worship, and our Primary schools; and the Council's own plans foresee many more families being attracted to the new homes coming to our district.

Yet we have **no Secondary school in our midst** to serve them and meet their needs.

Much is said about '**levelling up**' communities in the North of England where serial disadvantage has resulted in many families feeling left behind. Unquestionably, Primary education in Newcastle can be proud of its provision, and much effort is being put into improving both the physical fabric and educational quality of the city's Secondary schools. We believe the time is ripe **for our community** to also see something of this same sense of energy, hope and investment, and this is why we are proposing to enlarge St Paul's in order to provide exactly such educational improvement, *"in our community, for our community"*.

This is also why we believe that St Paul's is the ideal base upon which to build that provision, given our history of service, our open-hearted approach to inclusion, our long-established service to our community, our Christian conviction to embrace those with all faiths and none, and our track record of working with others to play a full part in inner city life.

It is because of this deep conviction that we are pursuing this vision so vigorously and asking the relevant local and national authorities and representatives to address this matter along with us, and so to re-invigorate our community with hope and confidence as soon as is humanly possible.

#### **4 But is it possible to add more Secondary school places into the city if the arithmetic says there are already enough places to go around?**

As perhaps you can see by now, we believe that the **best and fairest** allocation of school places is not just a question of **arithmetic**. It is possible to have 'enough' Secondary places but what is to be done if those places are not in the right place (**geography**) and/or are not in **Good or better** schools where parents want their children to go (**quality**)?

The City Council works extremely hard every year to achieve all of these objectives for parents, although it is no longer able to organise the school system as it could in the days before Academies and Academy Trusts. That said, through collaborative working, the Council has still been able to manage some of the clear **arithmetic** challenges caused by population growth in recent years, including the recent bulge in school numbers which has been working its way up through the age groups and has now reached the Secondary Years.

In this regard, the Council has always managed to secure enough Year 7 places. In 2021, the number of children seeking Year 7 places was 2,593<sup>6</sup> and their placement meant that several schools had to take **more than their planned numbers** and the opening of Callerton Academy had to be brought forward by opening in temporary accommodation in the former Discovery School. By doing this, the Council was able to make the *arithmetic* work.

However, the Council is not able to guarantee that all schools are **good enough** to meet parents' Preference choices (*quality*) nor that they are close to families' homes (*geography*).

Most recently, this pressure grew to the point at which new places had to be created in schools which are **not graded as Good or better** by OfSTED. In 2019, the Council had to agree to an increase in the Year 7 intake of three Secondary schools which were graded **below Good**, an action **only permitted when there is no viable alternative**<sup>7</sup>. We believe that an enlarged St Paul's can remove these pressures and become that 'viable alternative'.

Nor can the Council control the number of places offered by any one school, in any one year, due to the independence now given to Academies. Studio West, for example, is hugely over-subscribed and yet, having offered 120 places in 2021, it is **reducing that number to 90** from 2022. At the other extreme, over 300 places are on offer at both Kenton and Walbottle, although **neither is able to fill its places through parental preference**.

Kenton's decision to reduce its Year 7 intake from 342 to 300 in 2022 should reduce this imbalance after it admitted **75** children in 2021 whose parents did not choose it as any of their four preferences. **28 of these children were from the Inner West**. Walbottle admitted **89** such children in 2021, **66 from the Inner West**, but it has not chosen to downsize. However, it is clear that, if there had been an enlarged St Paul's in existence at the time, **94 Inner West children** could have had a viable and more local alternative.

The City Council have ambitious plans for the development of more housing across the city (see map on Page 16) and in the inner city especially<sup>8</sup>, **increasing the influx of families into the city centre, and along the Riverside and West Road**. They speak of bringing back to life brownfield sites where former industries once stood, and of the city centre becoming an Education Hub. And yet there is no clear mention of how to provide local Secondary school places to meet either the existing requirement or the clear future demand.

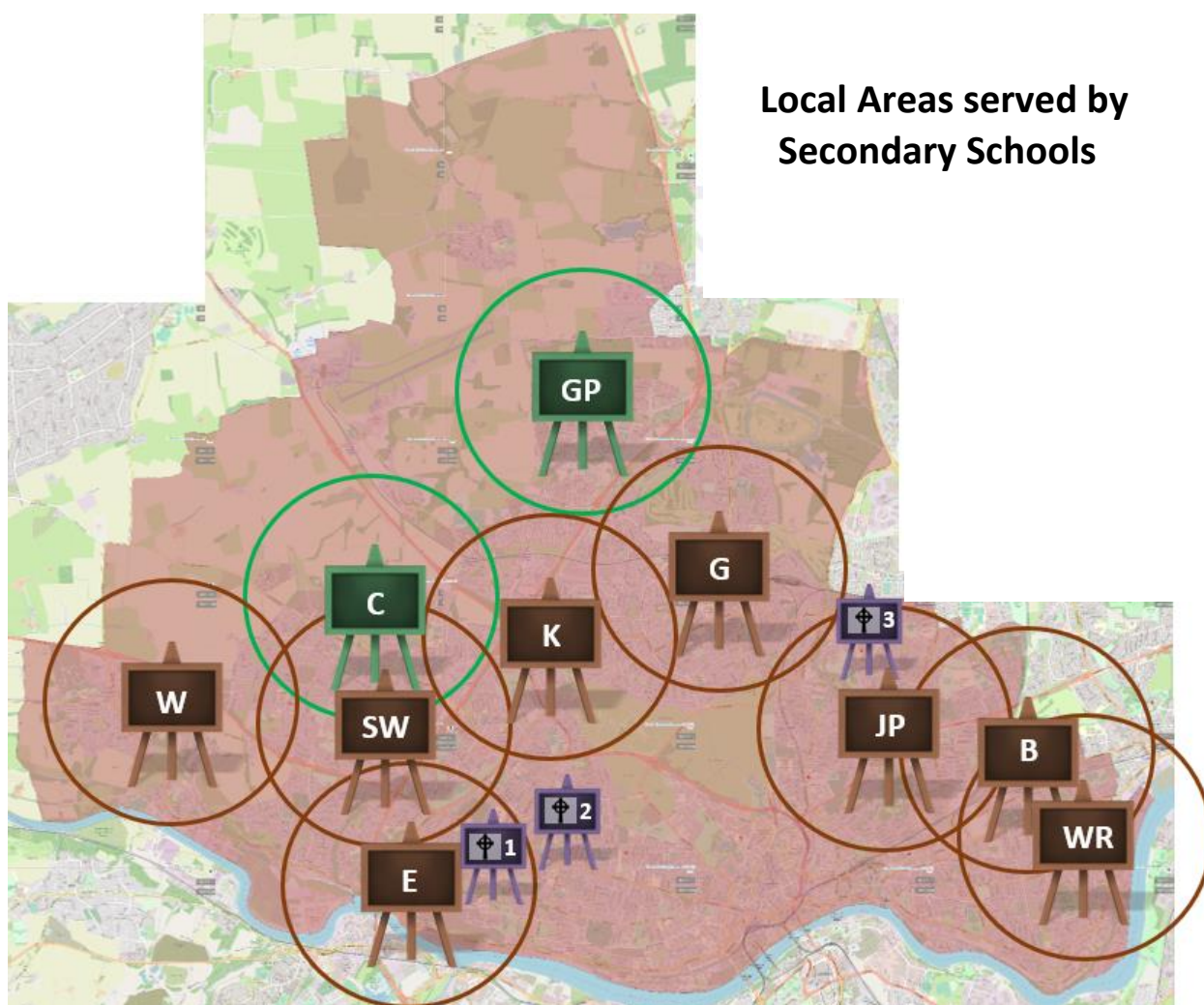
The building works to provide **new school places in Great Park and Callerton** has already begun; we need the same action for the Inner West. The eight Primary school members of the West End Schools' Trust, one of which is St Paul's, may be able to increase their Primary places as housing increases, but the **Secondary demand for places requires action now**.

<sup>6</sup> A number of children take up places outside of the city, predominantly to go to faith schools in Gateshead and Northumberland, and this has meant that numbers looking for Newcastle school places has reduced.

<sup>7</sup> **Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools:** *statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers* [October 2018] Page 4 Para 2. For September 2020 and September 2021, an additional 60 Year 7 places were created in Walbottle Campus (now Walbottle Academy) in spite of it being graded **Inadequate** in February 2019. The same occurred at Heaton Manor as it became Jesmond Park Academy in 2019 (30 new places for 2021 and 2022 created whilst the school was graded Inadequate in November 2019) and 20 places were added at Kenton for the same two years although it was graded as **Requiring Improvement** in February 2019.

<sup>8</sup> **Planning for the Future:** *Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010-2030* and **Development and Allocations Plan:** *Newcastle upon Tyne 2015-2030*





## Local Areas served by Secondary Schools

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The number of Secondary Places offered in 2021-2022 in red

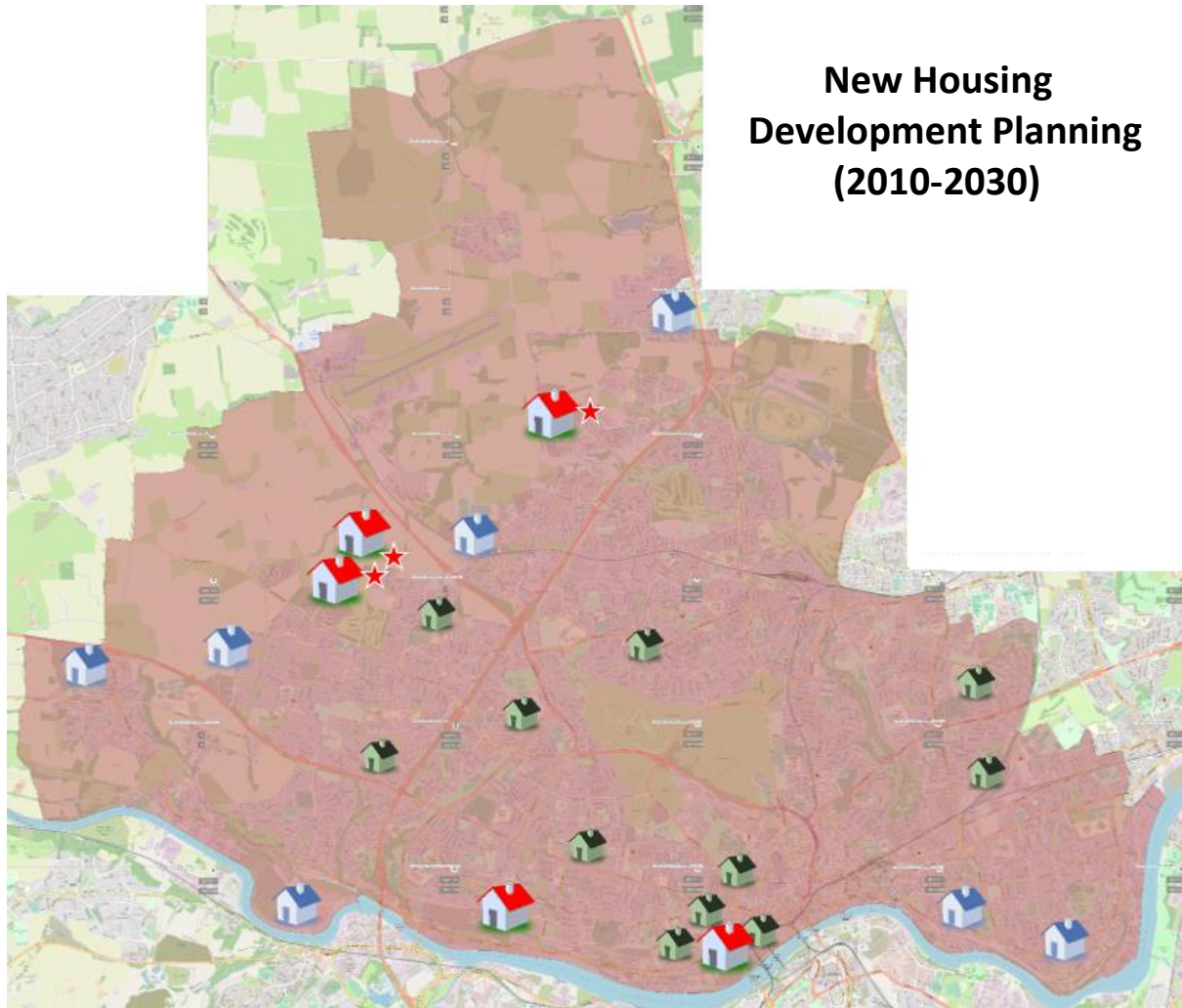
- W** **Walbottle Academy**  
Year 7 places: 327
- SW** **Studio West**  
Year 7 places: 119
- E** **Excelsior Academy**  
Year 7 places: 240
- K** **Kenton School**  
Year 7 places: 344
- G** **Gosforth Academy**  
No Year 7 places offered
- JP** **Jesmond Park Academy**  
Year 7 places: 357
- B** **Benfield School**  
Year 7 places: 204
- WR** **Walker Riverside Academy**  
Year 7 places: 230

Each area is shown with a ***Walking and Cycling Radius*** of **1 mile**, as the crow flies, except for the three Catholic schools, which offer places to children from **across the city and beyond**. Living **more than 1 mile** away from school would normally mean travelling by bus or car.

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- ✠ 1 **St Cuthbert's Catholic High School - boys**  
Year 7 places: 197
  - ✠ 2 **Sacred Heart Catholic High School – girls**  
Year 7 places: 225
  - ✠ 3 **St Mary's Catholic School - boys and girls**  
Year 7 places: 238
- 

Under construction, in order to open in 2023


- GP** **Great Park Academy**  
No Year 7 places to be offered as new entries will only be at the beginning of Year 5 and then not again until the beginning of Year 9
- C** **Callerton Academy**  
To provide 240 Year 7 places in its new buildings



## New Housing Development Planning (2010-2030)

 Great Park ★  
Upper Callerton ★  
Middle Callerton ★  
Benwell/Scotswood  
Quayside West

 Hazelrigg  
Kenton Bankfoot  
Lower Callerton  
Throckley  
Newburn  
Byker  
Walker Riverside

 Newbiggin Hall  
Salters Road  
Coach Lane  
Blakelaw  
West Denton  
Heaton  
Fenham  
Westgate  
Loadman Street  
Pottery Lane  
Elswick

**Legend:** each motif represents



**1,000 +**  
homes



**500-999**  
homes



**0-499**  
homes

Newcastle's Planning Strategy since 2010, updated in 2015, envisages the addition of **17,000** more houses within the city by 2030, with **10,800** of those being provided **between 2020 and 2030**.

This map shows where the main areas for residential growth are either underway or anticipated. Sites are grouped into categories according to the size of each Development (see left) and are listed as they appear on the map from the top to the bottom.

The **new schools** at **Great Park** and **Callerton** are due to open in 2023 to cater for areas of new housing which are marked with a **red star ★**

## 5 So, what would an all-through St Paul's School look like?

The key driver within our Proposal is to enlarge St Paul's into an all-through school which will allow

- a) our Primary children to remain with us through to their GCSE years and
- b) all other local children to be able to opt to join us in Year 7.

As such, families who live in the Inner West would have a choice of an inclusive faith school with Secondary places which are

- At the heart of our community
- In a school which parents already trust and with an unbroken 160-year track record of service in the Inner West
- Where faith matters but where admission is open equally to those of all faiths and none<sup>9</sup>
- Where the school is small scale and where class sizes are small too<sup>10</sup>
- In a culture of inclusion, regardless of ability, background or belief
- Welcoming to children who have completed their Primary Years in neighbouring West End schools
- Where friendship groups can be maintained as they move from Primary Years (Year 6) into Secondary Years (Year 7)
- Within walking and cycling distance of their homes
- Driven by a sense of hope and the pursuit of excellence and
- As proof of the commitment we have to our community, that *"no child is left behind"*<sup>11</sup>

In becoming an all-through school, we would revert to our original name from 1862 - simply **St Paul's School** - operating under a single Headteacher and Governing Body and for children from Nursery up to and including Year 11.

It would remain as a Voluntary Aided Church of England School and would actively engage in partnership with other schools, Academies and Academy Trusts, locally and regionally. This would be especially true of the link with Newcastle College and with any local schools to which our students may wish to move to continue their studies into Sixth Form.

Given our place in the heart of the city, we would seek to make concrete practical links with businesses locally as well, securing the very best experience possible for our students in relation to careers and the world of work.

### ■ Ethos and Admissions

Whilst retaining our identity and ethos as a Church of England school, we would operate a **completely open Secondary Admission Process** in line with the Newcastle Admissions processes as we do now. There will be **no preference** given to any child over another on the basis of their faith position, church affiliation or any other religious characteristic. Faith will be treated seriously, as it is in St Paul's Primary School now, but those of all faiths and of none will be equally welcome<sup>9</sup>.

Admissions and pupil numbers in the Nursery and Primary Years will remain as they are now.

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<sup>9</sup> The oversubscription criteria in our current **Admissions Policy** are being revised in parallel with this Proposal in order to remove any faith preference whilst preserving the school's ethos as being clearly Christian

<sup>10</sup> Class size averages in the Secondary Years are deliberately designed to be permanently below 30, with scope for some to be as low as 25 (based on 112 children being spread across 4 classes: 29, 29, 29, 25)

<sup>11</sup> This aim is shared within the **Newcastle City Council Education and Skills Priorities 2019-2020**

The fundamental priority will be to allocate places to those living closest to the front gate of the school and to their siblings, so we can cement and support our community and its families. Our aim is to provide a school for the Inner West, in the Inner West, with an Admissions policy which remains true to these principles.

As a Christian school, we are committed also to the mainstream integration and inclusion of SEND students and will seek permission to support such children through an ARC provision in the school should this be in line with Council policy and if they are willing to lend us their support.

Children in our own Year 6 would have automatic places into Year 7, with the remaining places being open to others as part of the standard Secondary Admissions and Appeals process in place for maintained schools within Newcastle each year. Approximately one quarter of those in Years 7-11 would have completed their Primary Years in St Paul's and the other three quarters would come from other Primary schools but would also live in the Inner West community.

Newcastle already has significant breadth to offer at Secondary level, covering an all-through school, three Catholic schools, a regional UTC, a Sixth Form College, Secondary schools for children aged 11-16, 11-18 and 13-18, several independent and special schools, two single sex Secondaries (one for boys and one for girls), a number of Middle schools providing for Years 7 and 8, and a range of 'community' schools with no faith designation.

However, the **only Secondary faith schools** in Newcastle cater predominantly for Catholic children. An all-through St Paul's would enable the city to re-balance its overall offer by giving **the same opportunity** for parents who are not Catholic to choose a faith school for **their** children.

At present, those of our own St Paul's parents who seek a non-Catholic Secondary faith school are having to apply outside of Newcastle to Gateshead, although by no means do they all gain admission. From informal enquiries, we have been given an estimate that there are as many as 300 children from the Inner West currently attending Emmanuel College in Gateshead (an 11-18 Christian ethos City Technology College), and others are travelling even further to pursue Church of England provision in Northumberland.

▪ **Growth and Speed of Enlargement**

Our enlargement would be introduced incrementally, starting with 112 Year 7 students in the first year (2023-2024) and growing gradually until Year 11 is full (2027-2028). The sizes of the current Nursery and Years 1-6 would remain as they are now.

It would therefore take four years before the school is completely full, with 266 children from Nursery to Year 6, and 560 in Years 7-11, totalling **826** in all<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> **Pupil Number Growth** (figures in green show the '*crest of the wave*' as numbers grow year-on-year)

	Nursery	Reception	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	TOTAL
Current	21	35	35	35	35	35	35	35						266
Opening Year	21	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	112					378
One Year later	21	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	112	112				490
Two Years later	21	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	112	112	112			602
Three Years later	21	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	112	112	112	112		714
Full Maturity	21	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	112	112	112	112	112	826



## ▪ **Year Group Organisation and Curriculum**

Nursery and Years 1-6 would operate as they do now.

Years 7-11 would be made up of 4 standard groups, allowing for pastoral care and oversight as well as academic lessons to operate within smaller than normal class sizes in a range of contexts.

Students requiring special assistance of any kind would be accommodated as their needs require, subject to available resource, in small groups or 1-to-1.

The curriculum for Key Stage 3 and for Key Stage 4 would be in line with all mainstream Secondary schools, ensuring full compliance with statutory regulations and with a wide choice of options in Years 10 and 11. Academic and vocational qualifications would be offered as appropriate to student abilities and interests.

Given the ***best pathway possible*** principle that students should be able to access a wide variety of choice after Year 11, we would be ensuring the fullest possible engagement with post-16 providers from across the city and within reasonable travelling time and distance beyond.

## ▪ **Community Culture**

St Paul's has always operated at the heart of the community but its enlargement into an all-through school offers huge additional benefits in terms of family connectivity, as well as retaining a true community identity for children who can walk or cycle to school with those who live beside them and with whom they have grown up. The smoothing of the transition phase, as our own Year 6 children move into Year 7, is also a big boon. So is the prospect of the larger part of our Year 7 cohort joining us from feeder schools with whom we already enjoy a close working relationship through the West End Schools' Trust.

With these enhanced community characteristics, we are committed to provide a range of activities which allow families and other adults and young people from within the community to engage with us as 'their' local school and social centre, be that through Adult Education, social and sporting activities, facility hire or landmark events and celebrations.

The Inner West community is rich and diverse, blessed with a mixed population which embraces those who have lived here for generations as well as those who have arrived from different cultures and traditions more recently. However, for such diversity to be celebrated, communities such as ours need a central focal point which encourages them to unite around their differences, rather than divide or isolate themselves into homogenous 'bubbles'. More importantly, our young people thrive most when they have a sense of worth and optimism, rather than a lack of self-esteem and a feeling of being left behind, under-valued and fractured because of the way in which the allocation of Secondary school places denies them true choice and so often separates them from their friends.

St Paul's vision is to be such a focal point, through being a school with which everyone can identify and of which everyone can be proud.

## ▪ **Financial Feasibility**

Our current Primary School operates efficiently and within all of the statutory guidelines relating to financial management. As a Primary school, we always return a modest surplus in terms of our annual income and expenditure and we have built up healthy reserves.

We have scoped our draft curriculum, staffing and operational costs associated with creating 560 new Secondary places across Years 7-11, in line with the best 'small school models' which operate elsewhere. Year Group sizes of 112 are not uncommon and small schools gain much in terms of staff knowing children and their families much better than they can in large schools, and vice versa. All-through schools are also able to make significant economies of scale, for example, by having only one Headteacher.

Because we would grow gradually, there are also diseconomies of scale which are factored into our 5-year Budget Plan. For example, we would still heat, light and insure the premises, even though we would not have a full school for the first four years. Discussions with the **Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)** are designed to clarify the levels of diseconomy funding but, as St Paul's would be an existing school growing in pupil numbers, such diseconomies would be much smaller than for a new Secondary school starting from scratch.

#### ▪ **Management and Educational Capacity**

To date, our Governing Body has run a successful and continuous school in Rye Hill/Elswick for over 160 years – although not all Governors were with us at the beginning! Over that time, we have managed a variety of educational, social, political and urban challenges. As a Church School throughout, we have benefitted from the energy, commitment, resilience and dedication of successive Vicars and Wardens of Elswick Parish of St Stephen and St Paul, and the support and encouragement of the Church of England Diocesan Board of Education.

Our current Governing Body is chaired by the Vicar of Elswick Parish who himself has long experience of school oversight, community service and public governance, locally, regionally and nationally. Our Governors include a number of lay people with the variety of skills relevant to the running of a Church School, ranging from finance, law, education and community service. We have established a Governors' Sub-committee, supported by our Headteacher and a number of experienced leaders in education, to ensure that our vision for the enlarged St Paul's School is firmly grounded in the very best practice and protocols. We continue to add Governors to our number who have particular experience of successfully leading and managing schools which operate as all-through schools.

Our small group of advisers include those with Headship experience in brand new schools which opened gradually, year-on-year, and in all-through schools. They have founded new Secondary schools, including schools which have become highly successful, and they are committed to remain alongside the Governing Body throughout our enlargement process.

Their strong advice has been to **grow gradually** so that this change can be most easily and successfully managed. Evidence shows that adding Year 7 to a school which is already experienced with Year 6 is the most sensible approach, educationally, pastorally, and in terms of management. Each following year is then that much easier to introduce, as the children and staff grow together, and as academic standards can be securely developed.

Beyond ourselves, we have made strong links with other successful school leaders who are running all-through Academies and Academy Trusts, as well as with well-respected Christian-ethos schools operating in the Secondary Years. Through and with the support of our own Diocesan Director of Education, we also have access to a number of Primary and Secondary Church of England schools across the region and with School Trusts connected to the Church, all of whom we are keen to get to know and to work alongside.



## ▪ Buildings

Clearly an enlargement of this sort cannot be accommodated solely within the current buildings of St Paul's Primary School in Victoria Street. As a Governing Body, we have the assurance of the St Paul's Trustees that the site and buildings can continue to be used as part of a new St Paul's all-through school, but we will clearly need to add additional accommodation as well.

The Trustees and Governing Body are comfortable to consider whatever new arrangements are required, be that by adding additional accommodation on our existing site or nearby, or even by relocating at some future date to a single site within the Inner West.

Our first priority is to receive the confirmation from the Council that the need for Secondary places in our community is recognised, and its agreement that St Paul's should grow gradually to meet this need. Then we can progress the matter of accommodation.

This 'two-step' process has been the standard practice for more than a decade as Free Schools and other new schools have first had to 'prove need and demand' for new school places, after which time they are supported by the relevant authorities to identify and secure the appropriate accommodation. Although St Paul's does not have to apply to establish a new school, such as a Free School, we are happy to follow this same process.

That said, given the urgent need which we highlight throughout this document, we have been active as Governors in seeking to identify such potential additional accommodation including an alternative single site. We have spoken with a number of local businesses, property owners and charitable organisations to see what may be possible if our Proposal is successful. We are naturally also aware of the City Plan for the development of areas such as the Forth Yards, Quayside West, the former Calder site and other land within the inner city, and we have spoken about various accommodation options with the City Council's Officers responsible for Education, and with the Department for Education (DfE) itself.

In the case of the DfE, this conversation has focussed mainly on the former Discovery School which is held by DfE under a long-term lease and which is currently being used temporarily by Callerton Academy as they await completion of their new buildings at Newbiggin Hall. Those new Academy buildings are scheduled to be ready for September 2023, at which time the former Discovery School site will become vacant again. Our conversations are therefore based on the concept of St Paul's becoming potential occupants of those Former Discovery School buildings from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 onwards.

Given that the original Discovery School was planned to be a permanent school, the DfE has no firm current alternative plan for its future use. However, as it was designed as a school for Secondary-age students and is currently being used as a Secondary school, and given its close proximity to St Paul's Primary, this appears a sensible potential option for us to pursue. We will also continue discussions around alternative sites with others, so that we are in a position to progress all of these matters if a positive decision on this Proposal is received from the Council in May 2022.

All that remains is for us to await that decision and to hope that, by granting our request to enlarge St Paul's, we can become an all-through school of excellence *'in our community, for our community'*.

## The Proposal

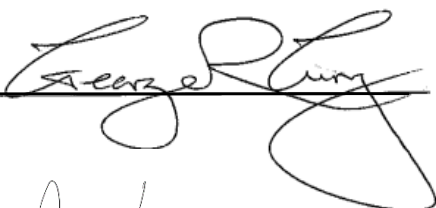

Our formal Proposal, therefore, is as follows:

1. The Governing Body of St Paul's Primary School hereby applies to the Newcastle upon Tyne City Council, as the Local Authority responsible under the terms of the statutory guidance on making significant changes of this sort<sup>13</sup>, for its assent to allow us to enlarge the existing School by adding provision for Years 7-11 incrementally over a period of five years, commencing in September 2023 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Should assent to the above be forthcoming, we also request that

2. Newcastle upon Tyne City Council will give its best endeavours to assist us in the finding of appropriate premises so that this enlargement might be actioned in time for the first Year 7 cohort to start school in September 2023 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body

**Revd George Curry**

*Ex-officio Foundation Governor and Chairman*

**Rob Frame**

*Governor and Chairman of the Enlargement Working Party*

Date: **Monday 31st January 2022**

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<sup>13</sup> Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools: statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers October 2018

## Notes

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# St Paul's School:

## our Proposal

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