SJI upgrading expected to finish by early 2017

$40 million makeover will allow school to boost its student numbers by about 25%

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St Joseph's Institution (SJI) will complete its campus upgrading as early as the first quarter of 2017, enabling it to increase its student population by a quarter to 2,000.

The redevelopment project, which is expected to cost $40 million, will feature four new facilities - an indoor sports hall, a lecture theatre block and two senior school blocks - as well as refurbishments to existing buildings.

A masterplan for the upgraded SJI campus in Malcolm Road was unveiled yesterday by President Tony Tan Keng Yam, an SJI alumnus. The makeover comes as the 163-year-old school, which moved to its present location in 1988, looks to adapt to changing needs, and accommodate more students taking the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP).

At a ground-breaking ceremony yesterday, charity sector leader Gerard Ee, who is chairman of the SJI Board of Governors, said the school had to upgrade its facilities to ensure it is "designed for learning and interactions, now and for the future".

When ready, the gross floor area of the upgraded campus will increase by about 14,000 sq m. The new indoor sports hall will feature, among other things, student council rooms, plus basketball and badminton courts, while a lecture theatre block will offer a 600-seat lecture theatre, meeting rooms and a new staff room, which is connected to the existing one.

Two senior school blocks, to be built over existing buildings, will feature 32 classrooms with informal learning and interaction spaces, and connected to each other by a link bridge.

Existing buildings will also be refurbished. The canteen, for instance, will be renovated to cater to a larger student population.

Toilet facilities will also be upgraded, and music and arts rooms will be introduced to support IBDP classes. Slippery tiles around the school will be replaced, too.

Sheltered linkways to all buildings, as well as to the nearest bus stop in Whitley Road, will be installed, and there will be modification works on the field and track.

About $12 million of the $40 million for the project was raised by the school, and the rest is from the Ministry of Education.

Since last year, SJI students have been attending classes at a temporary site at the former Institute of Technical Education campus in Bishan Street 14.

The school moved out of its Malcolm Road campus by the end of 2013 as construction was originally planned to begin last year. However, the upgrading was delayed because of site challenges.

Based on the initial plan, SJI was due to return to Malcolm Road by the middle of next year but has extended its stay at the temporary Bishan site till mid-2017.
SJI principal Koh Thiam Seng said: "Parents of the students would want them to move back as quickly as possible but there were constraints. We don't have a large amount of land for us to add new buildings so, we have to try to make sure whatever new buildings we have can be integrated with the old ones, and we have to do it under a certain budget."