

Analysis of Consultation responses

Consultation

The consultation document asked whether people supported the expansion of Barrow Primary School, to increase the number of pupils admitted to Reception year at the school from 20 to 30 with effect from September 2019.

All responses received, together with the notes of the public consultation event, have been made available via the councillor's information portal, Councillor First.

A total of 28 responses were received:

- 21 via completion (either manually or on-line) of the questionnaire provided; and
- 7 individual emails – 3 from parent/guardians of pupils currently at the school, 1 from a parent/guardian of a future pupil at the school, 1 from a member of staff from the school and 2 from an interested member of the local community.

Of the 28 responses, the following information was obtained with regard to the view as to whether or not there was support for the proposal to expand the school:-

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Totals
9	4	1	2	12	28

Of the 28 respondents, 28 (100%) gave a reason for their response.

The responses came from the following categories of people with an interest in the school:

17 (61%) from parent/guardian of pupils currently attending Barrow Primary School;
3 (11%) from parent/guardian of a future pupil at Barrow Primary School;
3 (11%) from members of staff at Barrow Primary School;
2 (7%) from school governors at Barrow Primary School; and
3 (11%) from interested members of the local community.

From the responses, the following comments were received:-

Support

Of the 13 respondents (46%) that agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to expand Barrow Primary School, the following points were raised:

- 1 of the respondents felt that the class sizes are too big;
- 2 of the respondents felt that there will be no more split class sizes;
- 10 of the respondents felt that due to housing developments more school places are needed;
- 1 of the respondents felt that the school has a good reputation and headteacher;

- 1 of the respondents has concerns of places not available for local children in 2018;
- 1 of the respondents felt that an expansion would improve facilities at the school;
- 1 of the respondents felt that this should be managed proactively to avoid crisis management when children are allocated places on appeal;
- 2 of the respondents felt that expansion would reduce the play area/outside space;
- 1 of the respondents felt that the site is not big enough to accommodate new classrooms;
- 1 of the respondents felt that the playing field is muddy and not useable;
- 1 of the respondents felt that the playground has previously been reduced due to expansion of the staff car park;
- 2 of the respondents felt that there are no parking facilities including drop off and pick up;
- 1 of the respondents stated that there are safety issues crossing the road to get to school;
- 1 of the respondents felt that there is a need for road safety measures, speed bumps, speed camera; and
- 1 of the respondents expressed concern that the building work will cause disruption and noise.

Opposition

From the 14 responses (50%) that strongly disagreed and disagree with the proposal to expand Barrow Primary School, the following reasons were provided:

- 1 of the respondents felt that due to housing developments more school places are needed
- 3 respondents felt that the school hall and facilities are too small;
- 2 of the respondents felt that the class sizes are too big;
- 2 of the respondents felt that it was a poor consultation booklet with no FAQ or proposal plan;
- 6 of the respondents felt that expansion would reduce the play area/outside space;
- 1 of the respondents felt that the site is not big enough to accommodate new classrooms;
- 2 of the respondents felt that the playing field is muddy and not useable;
- 2 of the respondents felt that flooding is a problem;
- 2 of the respondents felt that the playground has previously been reduced due to expansion of the staff car park;
- 8 respondents felt traffic is an issue at school time;
- 10 of the respondents felt that there are no parking facilities including drop off and pick up;
- 4 of the respondents stated that there are safety issues crossing the road to get to school;
- 4 respondents felt that a new school should be built;
- 1 respondent felt that Whalley Primary School should be expanded;

- 2 of the respondents expressed concern that the building work will cause disruption and noise;
- 1 of the respondents felt there will be a drop in pupil performance and increase in staff sickness due to larger numbers and stress; and
- 1 respondent felt the after school club provision should be increased.

Response

How stage 1 consultation is carried out is not prescribed in regulations and it is for the proposer (in this case Lancashire County Council) to determine the nature of the consultation and its length. There is no prescription around the level of information provided at stage 1 consultation. Stage 1 consultation is intended to provide parents and the local community with information as to the local authority's proposal, including the reasons for it, and to provide an opportunity for individuals and groups to respond to the proposal. This process is designed to reveal the issues that are of concern to the community and to inform the decision making process as to whether to proceed with the proposal.

An initial assessment indicates that the site would be able to support the expansion. A feasibility study has been carried out for this proposal to address the site constraints and drainage issues. Should the proposal for enlargement be approved, following the necessary period of statutory consultation, this expansion could comprise of an additional two class bases, cloaks/WC accommodation in order to maintain the necessary WC to pupil ratios, 160m² Hall, and 45m² Kitchen. Provision to extend the school's IT infrastructure to the new class bases and new fixed and loose furniture would be provided to the new spaces.

Replacement of lost 'hard playground' and 'playing field' space as a consequence of the proposed extension would be provided by the incorporation of an all-weather Multi-Use Games Area which would be included as the proposed expansion reduces the area of 'playing field' as defined by s77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to allow for continuity of provision.

The school acknowledges that any proposed increase in pupil numbers is likely to result in increasing traffic and demand for parking, however, they are confident that any issues can be managed. There will be no reduction in the number of staff parking spaces as a consequence of the proposed expansion, and there is currently no drop off/pick up points. There is currently plenty of parking available along the roadside in the vicinity of the school at peak times of day. Parking and traffic issues will be further considered as part of the traffic risk assessment which will be undertaken as part of the application to obtain planning permission required for the permanent new build, if the proposal goes ahead. Pre application advice will be sought from the Highways Development Team specific to this proposal.

With regards to safety issues around pupils crossing the road to get to school, the main road to the front of school is covered by the crossing patrol who is on duty before and after school. There is also a car park available for community use, with a footpath to the school entrance gate. There are no roads to cross when using the footpath from the community car park.

The headteacher and governors are committed to ensuring that the proposed increase in the number of pupils would not make the school feel 'too large' for pupils. The number of individual classes would increase as a result of the proposed expansion to increase the number of pupils admitted to Reception Year from 20 to 30, with effect from September 2019 and for each subsequent year.

The authority has proposed the expansion of an existing school rather than establish a new school, in accordance with both the published School Place Provision Strategy and the Capital Strategy for Schools which state Lancashire County Council will seek to provide additional places, when needed, at existing schools that provide outstanding or good standards of education, as judged by Ofsted, wherever possible.

On 5 November 2015, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools approved a capital improvement programme that provided additional places to regularise admission numbers in areas of growth. At the time, the Langho and Whalley planning area was identified as an area where:

- a) each of the four primary schools had admission numbers that were difficult to manage; and
- b) the significant level of housing development planned in the area within the next five years would mean that there will be a shortage of primary school places.

Officers met with the relevant Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, and Diocesan representatives to discuss the possibility of providing additional places at the schools.

As a result, at a meeting on 7 December 2016, it was agreed that proposals be put forward as follows:

- To increase the number of pupils admitted to Reception Year at Langho and Billington St Leonard's Church of England (CE) Primary School from 40 to 45, with effect from September 2018 and for each subsequent year;
- To increase the number of pupils admitted to Reception Year at Whalley CE Primary School from 40 to 45, with effect from September 2019 and for each subsequent year;
- To increase the number of pupils admitted to Reception Year at Langho St Mary's Roman Catholic (RC) Primary School from 40 to 45, with effect from September 2019 and for each subsequent year;
- To request that a period of statutory consultation commence in connection with the expansion of Barrow Primary School, Clitheroe in order to increase the number of pupils admitted to Reception Year from 20 to 30, with effect from September 2019 and for each subsequent year.

Given that the proposed expansion would be gradual then the noise level would be expected to increase gradually also. All building work, however, causes some disruption and noise but this will, as far as is reasonably practical to do so, be kept to a minimum and full liaison with the school to avoid any important school dates/events will occur.

The headteacher and governors are committed to ensuring that the high standards achieved by the school are maintained should the proposed expansion be approved.

Class size will be smaller, and from expansions at other schools, it has been commented that behaviour has improved and the children are calmer as a result of the expansion.

The school intends to continue to operate the after school club should the proposed expansion be approved, which runs from 3.30pm to 6.00pm every evening. The provision is staffed in accordance with statutory ratios and therefore, according to demand.

Neither in support nor in opposition

1 respondent (4%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal. The following points were raised:

- felt that there are no parking facilities including drop off and pick up;
- felt that the school hall and facilities are too small;
- expressed concern that the building work will cause disruption and noise;
- stated that there are safety issues crossing the road to get to school;
- could impact achievement and character of the school; and
- the path from the car park should be re-covered due to flooding.

Response

The first four comments were raised as objections and have been addressed above.

Should the proposed expansion be approved, the head teacher and governors are committed to maintaining the strong ethos of the school, which together with the school's leadership and staff has enabled the school to be rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

A feasibility study has been carried out for this proposal to address the site constraints and drainage issues.