

Notes from the consultation event regarding the proposed expansion of Balshaw Lane Primary School - 16th June 2016, held at the school

Event attended by Helen Gregson (Headteacher), Keith Fielding (Chair of Governors), Nicola Watkinson (Pupil Access), Sarah Welch (Property), Steph Rhodes, Kaarina McCooey and Andrew Curtis (School Planning Team).

Appointments with Officers:	Steph Rhodes, LCC Kaarina McCooey, LCC
------------------------------------	---

Parent of 2 children at the school, local resident and member of PTFA

From a parents perspective it was thought to be a brilliant opportunity for the school – both in offering better facilities and also teaching arrangements for the pupils of the school. Overall, a bigger school will be better for the community and local children requiring places at the local school. The family live just down the road from school and cope with the traffic, because they expected volume of cars to increase at certain times of the day when they bought the property.

Parent of 1 child at the school and member of PTFA

Felt the proposal was a great idea as local school places are definitely needed. Concerns were raised regarding the size of the current school hall which it was felt would not be big enough to hold all the children and that should the hall be expanded then the play area would be reduced. The parent felt that as the number of children would be increasing then so should the size of the play area.

Parent of 2 children at the school, volunteer TA and member of PTFA

Brilliant idea for the school to expand especially moving towards two forms of entry rather than split year groups. It was felt that the continuity for children would be beneficial as they stay with their friends for the whole way through school. Concern was raised about the play area for children, as numbers of pupils were to double, but outdoor space wasn't. The parent also raised the question of the size of the school hall and also the impact of the building work and disruption this may cause the children.

TA at school and parent of former pupils

Strongly in favour of the proposal as it was felt that due to growing demand the school currently cannot take all the children from one family when they apply to attend mid-year. They felt that this can lead to children suffering emotionally being split from siblings, and also causes additional pressure for parents having to drop-off at two schools. An expansion would also stop the split year groups, meaning that children could stay in the same classes with their friends as they move through school.

Parent of 1 child at school and prospective parent of 1 child and Parent Governor at the school

Fully approves the proposals to expand school. Raised concern over there only being one access point into the school and when parents park on the cricket club they have to walk all the way around the school site to gain access at the main entrance. Could an access point be introduced from the cricket club car park? The parent also asked whether the school could buy some land from the cricket club and turn it into a car park for the school with a path leading to school.

Parent of 1 child at the school and prospective parent of 2 children

Happy with the proposal as it will allow a bigger intake into the school. The parent lives near Tesco and was concerned that their twins may not meet the admission arrangements to get into the school. It was felt that should the school enlarge this shouldn't be a problem.

Parent of 1 child at the school and TA at the school

Great idea to expand the school. Can definitely see the need for an intake of 60 children and this would also mean that there would be 2 class bases for each year group which is more manageable. The parent felt that the area needs the additional school places and felt that the school has large enough grounds to enable the proposed expansion.

Teacher at the school

The teacher felt that 2 forms of entry would be much better than the current system of split age groups. It was felt that lesson planning would be easier and that parents would find the system easier without worrying about how the split classes affects their child. There would be good support from new teachers who would join the school. The teacher felt it was important to ensure the 'old' classrooms have some money spent on them to make them feel 'new' then they weren't known as the 'old/new' rooms.

Parent of 1 child at the school and prospective parent

Happy for the school to grow larger as local children will gain from the benefits this would offer. Has no worries about the school having an intake of 60 children, but is concerned about outdoor space for an increase in pupil numbers. The parent felt it would be simpler moving into 2 class bases per year group rather than the current split age group classes.

Raised concern over parking, as the one way system doesn't appear to work. The parent walks to school, but is concerned that they have to be vigilant as traffic is parked on the pavement which makes walking difficult and dangerous. Asked whether access could be made to the school from other parking sites, such as the cricket club. Concern was also raised about the disruption that may be caused whilst the building work is being undertaken.

Parent of 1 child at the school and prospective parent

Supports the proposal with no real objections except traffic issues. The parent lives in Astley Village and both walks to school and drives to school on occasion. They felt that safety needs to be considered on the walking routes into school as traffic is a real issue and is dangerous.

The parent is not religious and finds there aren't many schools in the area that are community, so agrees that additional places are required at the school. They also feel that the school will be better with 2 forms of entry rather than the current split age groups.

Parent of 1 child at the school and teacher at the school

2 forms of entry is good from a teaching point of view as it is hard work teaching mixed-age classes and makes lesson planning easier. The teacher also thought the move from mixed-age classes will alleviate parents worries and concerns. A benefit will also be having a 'teacher buddy' in the classroom next door to gain support and ideas. It was felt that the school has a lovely community feel, and doesn't think this will change as the school grows.

The teacher raised concerns around parking for parents and also was worried about disruption whilst the building work was undertaken. They stated that their child moves into Y5 whilst the building work is ongoing and those 2 years are very important to them.

Support staff, cleaner and lollypop lady

Both children were former pupils at the school. Supports the proposed expansion as the additional places are necessary but is worried that the school will lose some of its current 'homeliness' due to its increasing size. Concerned that 'little teams' may appear due to the numbers of staff, rather than working as one team as currently happens. The hall size was raised and the question asked about how the hall would be expanded into the courtyard. It is felt that the current staff are fantastic and that any new staff would be made to feel extremely welcome. It was re-iterated that the proposed expansion is required for the area and it would be a shame if the school had to turn away pupils because it wasn't big enough.

Deputy Head at the school

Brilliant idea as there is an increased number of children in the area and the school is perfect to expand. It was felt that the proposed layout looks great and the whole process has been relatively painless to date. The school has a good family atmosphere which will continue as the school grows gradually from Reception upwards. It was felt that single age classes will be easier to manage and will help children and parents enjoy their time at school much more than in mixed age groups.

Grandparent of 1 child at the school

Happy with the proposal as the area requires more school places for the number of children coming forward. Concern was raised over traffic which can be horrendous, and if school is to grow then so will the amount of traffic. The Grandparent asked if the school car park could be expanded to alleviate some of the parking issues.

Grandparent of 1 child at the school and 1 prospective grandchild

It was felt that the proposal was a good idea, but that it was important to put up a proper building, and not just a portacabin.

Parent of 1 child at the school and former Welfare Assistant at the school

No qualms about the size of the school and is happy to support the proposal but wanted some concerns raising.

The parent lives at the bottom of Bredon Avenue and is really concerned about the amount of traffic and also the speed of the traffic. Would new families be encouraged to walk to school? A further issue was raised that more parents are parking over resident's drives, and was there anything that could be done to prevent this.

Parent of 1 child at the school and prospective parent

Happy with the proposal and fully supports it.

The parent lives locally and agreed that traffic is bad, but explained that there is a good one way system in place, although this will probably get worse with an increase in numbers of pupils. The parent felt the school will be much better having 2 forms of entry rather than split age classes.

2 Staff at the school one of whom is a local resident

Both members of staff approve the proposal stating that it is a really good idea. From a teaching point of view the 2 forms of entry will be much easier to manage and plan for. Also they felt it would be good for the children as they will keep the same set of friends as they move through the school.

They both raised concerns about the traffic and children's safety. They explained that often you can't walk on the pavement because the cars are parked on it and on both sides of the road, which can be dangerous. They asked if the staff car park was to be made larger.

Appointments with Officers:	Nicola Watkinson, LCC Sarah Welch, LCC
------------------------------------	---

Parent

If local authority are extending places in Primary schools what will the impact be on high school places. Supportive of the proposals for expansion but voiced concerns about high schools and geographical priority areas.

Teacher

From a teaching point of view – 2 form entry is better for teaching the curriculum. Have to now teach the curriculum for a single age group so teaching mixed age classes is very difficult. Currently teaches years 5 and 6 and has to teach and prepare the year 6 pupils for SATS but not the year 5's. It

is proven to be better to teach single ages so an expansion to a 2 form entry school would be a positive move for the pupils.

Secretary at the school

Agree with a 2 form entry but traffic and parking can be an issue. Can have problems with deliveries to the school and residents do sometimes complain about parking but it would be a good thing for the school.

Teacher

Split year groups are very difficult to teach. 2 curriculums and planning is difficult and parents often don't like and agree with it. It is easier for single aged classes as they can target and support children more appropriately. Traffic could be a problem though.

Teacher

Supports expansion. School better as a 2 form entry. New curriculum needs to be tailored to individual year groups so difficult teaching in a mixed age class. Easier for planning and will have year group partners which means teachers can play to each other's strengths.

Teacher

Feels the expansion is positive. 2 form entry gives teachers better ability to teach and deliver better lessons. It would be easier to differentiate lessons. Currently teaches reception and year 1 so has to deliver the early years curriculum and the national curriculum. The school is currently struggling for space so the expansion and new intervention rooms would be positive.

Grandparent / Guardian

Excellent idea. Do not like mixed year group classes and will be better as a 2 form entry. Concerns: Outside space and high school places also problems with residents and the increase of traffic.

Parent

Agree that classes should be split into 2 with 30n in a class but concerns re: safety of children when the building work is taking place. Also how will more children impact on the school? School is already outstanding will this still be the case with extra children.

Resident

Agree with expansion but need adequate parking. Parking outside house all day long not just at pick up and drop off time. Understands if you live near a school then there will be some school traffic but there are dozens of cars parked all day long. There is currently a tree outside the school and if that was removed there would be space for extra parking. Are there guidelines for the numbers of parking spaces which should be provided? Can struggle to get in and out of drive due to inconsiderate parking by members of school staff. Need to take the practicalities of the locale into consideration.

Resident

Full agreement with the increase in intake however the parking situation is getting out of hand. Poor parking means cannot get in and out of driveway and any visitors cannot park. Parents aren't too bad it is the members of the school staff and cars which are parked all day long. Large field at the front of the school which could be used for parking as it is never used for the children. If there is an incident emergency vehicles would not be able to get through. Access from the cricket field could help as that goes straight out onto the main road.