

Rhodes Avenue Primary School Expansion Project

This project is part of the Haringey Council's Primary and Pre-school Programme

Q&As

Responding to your questions on the early design proposals

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Theme	Response
Dining	
<p>How will the dining space, which is not being increased in size, accommodate such a significant increase in the number of pupils?</p>	<p>It's envisaged that the existing dedicated dining space and the adjacent infant hall will support dining for a 3 form of entry school.</p> <p>We're currently working with the Head Teacher and the Catering Team to look at space, furniture, service points and the number of lunchtime sittings.</p>
Play & Outdoor Spaces	
<p>The proposals suggest that the current infant playground will become the playground for all children aged 9-12. Will this be big enough?</p>	<p>The space available around the site exceeds Government guidelines. The guidance does not divide between each year group.</p> <p>Although the design feasibility proposal indicated a split in the use of external play space between foundation (nursery and reception), Key Stage 1 (year 1 and 2) and Key Stage 2 (years 3 to 6), the school expansion group and the design team are continuing to work together to see how best external play space could be developed as a whole.</p> <p>There is also aspiration to enhance existing play space for all ages and offer a variety of uses, colour and material.</p> <p>Currently, reception, year 1 and year 2, have very limited access to green space during play time. The expansion project is aiming to offer flexible use of space around the site which will stimulate children of all ages and offer a wider range of play activities.</p>
<p>Do the current plans mean that 360 junior children would be expected to use a space currently used for 180 infants?</p>	<p>No. Although labelled on the feasibility design, the external play space is seen as one space.</p> <p>We aim to offer a flexible and diverse use of external play space and we are continuing to review how this could be supported though staggered play times and timetabling.</p>

<p>Will play equipment be installed?</p>	<p>We are currently at a very early stage of the design process and the design of external play space requires further development.</p> <p>However, as noted above, we do envisage that the design will provide variety and stimulation.</p>
<p>What will be done to compensate for the loss of green space?</p>	<p>The design does not intend to reduce existing green space around the site. The design will also increase current use of the existing 'quad' area, which we understand is not available during play times.</p> <p>It is intended to retain the existing green space and the established trees adjacent to Rhodes Avenue.</p> <p>The design will look to minimise the need to remove existing trees/shrubs around the site. Planning and conservation will require the replanting of trees and shrubs lost.</p> <p>Current boundary line data indicates that there is an area of land between the spinney and year 6 block/play centre which falls within the Rhodes Avenue boundary. We are continuing to discuss the use of the space with the Planning and Conservation team. We are proposing to retain this as habitat and provide a safe and fully accessible area for educational purposes and play. This habitat is expected to offer an additional area of 570m² to the existing site.</p> <p>We are very mindful that foundation and Key Stage 1 pupils currently have very limited use/access to existing green spaces around the school during play time and the design hopes to achieve a more flexible use of play space across all ages.</p> <p>We are also mindful that traditional British weather can often make green play spaces unusable.</p>
<p>Will there be more or less outdoor space per child once the new playgrounds are finished?</p>	<p>The design presented at the feasibility stage offers a slight reduction in outside play space from 8,440m² to 8,140m². However, this continues to offer play space in excess of government guidelines for a 3 form of entry school.</p> <p>Government guidance (BB99) does not separate external play space between key stages. It offers guidance on a variety of play spaces such as soft play, games area, hard play and habitat.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guidance for a 2 form of entry offers an external play area of 5,122m². • The guidance for a 3 form of entry offers an external play area of 6,593m². • The guidance does not suggest a minimum provision. <p>Rhodes Avenue continues to exceed the Government guidance offered within BB99 by 1,537m².</p> <p>External play space is also categorised as ‘confined sites’ or ‘except confined sites’.</p> <p>The definition for a ‘confined site’ is when the school is not able to offer playing fields onsite as with Rhodes Avenue, but provides this off site. This is the case for the majority of schools in London.</p> <p>‘Except confined sites’ is where the school is able to provide playing fields.</p>
<p>What will be the size of the outdoor play space at once the expansion is completed?</p>	<p>Please note the response above.</p>
<p>How will the outdoor space at Rhodes compare with the outdoor space at the expanded Coldfall Primary School (in size)?</p>	<p>It is not possible to compare either external play space or internal accommodation across the borough. The comparison to be made is with regard to Government guidance offered within BB99.</p> <p>The expanse of external play space at Coldfall Primary School sets it apart from the majority of primary schools across the borough. The excess is grassed, which in terms of use means that there are limitations during wet weather.</p> <p>The volume of external play space at Coldfall Primary School is historic. It was not increased in size to accommodate expansion and limited investment was made externally.</p>
<p>I’m very concerned about the idea of staggered playtimes. Can this work?</p>	<p>We are continuing to explore with the school expansion group a variety of options for sharing play space such as timetabled play and staggered play times. We are presently scheduling a visit to an existing 3 form of entry school with a view to observing how this has been achieved and how this could be successfully implemented at Rhodes Avenue.</p>

<p>What are the calculations for the play space for KS1 and KS2 under the new plans against the existing space allocation?</p>	<p><u>Existing nursery</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard play – 290m² • Soft play – 360m² <p><u>Proposed Foundation</u> (nursery and reception)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard play – 665m² • Soft play – 665m² <p><u>Existing KS1</u> (reception, year 1 and 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard play – 1500m² • Soft play – 950m²* <p>*Approx 200m² of this soft play space is accessible – remaining space is described as habitat.</p> <p><u>Proposed KS1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard play – 1120m² • Soft play – 1150m² <p><u>Existing KS2</u> (year 3,4,5 and 6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard play – 1120m² • Soft plat – 1625m² <p><u>Proposed KS2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard play – 1500m² • Soft play – 1000m² <p><u>Quad</u></p> <p>Soft play - 710m² This is currently used under supervision only. The scheme intends to incorporate this space as soft play.</p> <p><u>Additional Habitat</u></p> <p>570m²</p> <p><u>Spinney</u></p> <p>The area known as the spinney offers a habitat area of 3125m². This space is an additional educational resource to the school. Government guidance does not separate space in terms of key stages and considers space as a whole.</p>
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	<p>The design aims to remove existing boundaries in terms of a permanent division between play spaces and explore a more flexible approach to play.</p> <p>We are currently reviewing the configuration of external space.</p>
Disruption	
<p>Will all pupils be taught in classrooms used for full-time teaching during the build?</p>	<p>An expansion project will inevitably present difficulties in terms of short term provision and this is often a balance between retaining children on site (rather than off site), phasing the work into manageable elements and exploring a more efficient use of space.</p> <p>As with the disadvantages an off site location would offer, provision of temporary classrooms (portacabins) is often a balance between maximising play space during construction and investing the cost of this into the overall design.</p> <p>The long term gain in providing a new stimulating and innovative environment for pupils and staff will continue to support the outstanding quality of education and teaching currently offered at Rhodes Avenue for many years to come.</p> <p>We are assessing the use of existing space and how this may support the expansion project.</p>
<p>During the building work, where will the children be having their lessons and assemblies?</p>	<p>It is envisaged that children will continue to be taught in spaces comparable to that already provided.</p> <p>We understand that while the development of the year 6 building took place, temporary provision was made within the dining area. Although we appreciate this may not be a favourable arrangement to all, it offered a short term solution and the quality of teaching and learning remained unaffected.</p> <p>Assemblies will continue to take place across the existing junior and infant hall. Works which may be required in these spaces will be carefully considered in consultation with the school expansion group.</p> <p>The design is aiming to deliver a hall sufficient in size to accommodate 3 form of entry school (Government guidance for a main hall is 200m²) by combining the infant hall (175m²) and adjacent dining area. This concept is being further developed.</p>

<p>What type of temporary arrangements will be in place?</p>	<p>The phasing of construction work proposed within the feasibility design presents the possibility of achieving the expansion of Rhodes Avenue in 3 phases.</p> <p>This has been based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Achieving additional reception places from September 2011. ◆ Minimising disruption to the school and supporting its day to day operation ◆ The practicality of the contractor getting access to each part of the building. <p>As the design develops, aspects such as construction phasing, short term decanting and temporary arrangements will continue to be carefully considered.</p>
<p>Can you give parents the reassurance that the temporary classrooms will be a nurturing and supportive environment for learning?</p>	<p>The availability and practicality of existing space compared to temporary provision (portacabins) is to be further explored as the design progresses.</p> <p>We are confident that with the outstanding quality of education and teaching offered at Rhodes Avenue, the infectious enthusiasm displayed by staff and children during classroom observations and considering current limitations placed on the school in terms of classroom size/suitability and condition issues, that we be able to offer a solution, which will continue to support learning throughout the expansion process.</p> <p>Recently expanded primary schools in the west of the borough have improved or continued to retain their OFSTED outstanding rating during some very challenging times.</p>
<p>Will both nursery and reception children be affected by expansion works?</p>	<p>One objective of the expansion project is to create a new foundation base for nursery and reception children.</p> <p>It's envisaged that this will be located around the existing nursery site and is very likely to be delivered under Phase 1 commencing July/August 2010.</p> <p>We have had early discussions with the school about temporary accommodation for the nursery. The school have indicated the potential use of the play centre. We are continuing to work the requirements for each year groups.</p>

<p>Will children have the stability of a permanent classroom for a year?</p>	<p>A programme for moving into temporary accommodation will be required to support construction phasing.</p> <p>We are not able to offer assurances at this stage as to whether provision would be available for a year. However, it would be our intention to carry out moves outside of the school day, i.e. during half term/holidays periods and weekends. This has proved successful across previous expansion projects.</p>
<p>Disabled Facilities</p>	
<p>Will the design offer improved disability access?</p>	<p>The expansion of Rhodes Avenue presents an opportunity to address a number of existing suitability issues, one key area being disabled access.</p> <p>The design aims to improve facilities for disabled pupils and includes areas such as door widths, toilet facilities and levels.</p> <p>The landscape design will also reflect the need for improved accessibility.</p> <p>It is important that we offer improved access for all.</p>
<p>Parking and Pedestrians</p>	
<p>The plans do not offer any solution to the already serious problem of pedestrian access, particular the use of the pedestrian crossing on Alexandra Park Road.</p>	<p>At feasibility stage it would not be possible to offer a fixed solution as the design stage has not been completed.</p> <p>An initial traffic impact assessment was carried out in conjunction with the feasibility study and the existing school travel plan.</p> <p>This suggested that with appropriate road safety improvements an expansion could be supported.</p> <p>A full assessment will be carried out as the design is finalised.</p> <p>An allowance has been made within the project to improve road safety and we will be working closely with the Borough's Sustainable Transport Team in terms of design, procurement and implementation.</p>

<p>What will be done to ensure that enough care and thought is given to expanding the infrastructure - for example car parking facilities to accommodate this expansion?</p>	<p>The school and the Council continue to look to methods of sustainable transport to and from school. We also appreciate that individual circumstances may make the use of cars inevitable.</p> <p>We would wish to ensure the accommodation and play space is designed appropriately for use and maximised to its full potential ahead of other aspects such as car parking provision.</p> <p>The design does not intend to increase school parking provision and may reduce this slightly.</p>
<p>Will the safety of children crossing the road and walking to school be given priority?</p>	<p>The safety of children to and from the school is of the utmost priority.</p>
<p>How is the increased usage by cars and pedestrians going to be managed?</p>	<p>Please note previous responses in terms of traffic impact assessments, road safety improvements and promoting sustainable transport.</p> <p>Additionally;</p> <p>The current school travel plan indicates a very high percentage of pupils and staff who currently utilise sustainable transport methods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 88% of children currently walk to school (less than 10 minutes away) • 11% by car • 1% cycle to school. • 40 staff, 25 travel by car <p>We have used this to calculate the likely trend as a 3 form of entry school and will continue to incorporate this into the traffic assessment studies carried out.</p> <p>The expansion will not dramatically alter the current catchment area for Rhodes Avenue, therefore it is envisaged that a large percentage of children will continue to walk to school.</p> <p>The design will also include provision for cycle racks and shower facilities for staff.</p>

Ethos	
<p>What will be done to protect the current positive atmosphere and ethos of the school?</p>	<p>We are often challenged that an expansion would change the ethos of the school.</p> <p>We have seen other schools expand locally and not lose the values that the parents/carers speak of so highly at Rhodes Avenue. As previously suggested, with the infectious enthusiasm of staff, pupils and parents, we are confident any change would result in positive change, while continuing to support the core principles set out in the school vision statement.</p>
<p>How can the school hope to continue to foster children's creativity, imagination and well being in such a poor space – particularly the play space?</p>	<p>Much of the existing class space is in poor condition as regards to suitability and the ability to maintain those spaces. Recent classroom and playtime observations have only reinforced the objective of enhance the existing environment by offering a more creative and innovative use of space.</p> <p>(Please refer to previous responses regarding use and design of external play spaces.)</p>
Expansion	
<p>Why isn't one of the other nearby schools being expanded instead?</p>	<p>The local schools around Rhodes Avenue all have little or no surplus capacity in Reception classes. We have identified what local parents have called a “black hole” in the area to the south, south-east and east of Rhodes Avenue where parents are failing to get any of their preferences when applying for a school place for their child(ren). Birth rates for the local area are continuing to rise and projections (based on real birth data) shows that we will run out of school places in the local area if we do not take action and provide additional places. St James has been suggested as a school than can be expanded from 1 form entry to 2 forms of entry. However, its September 2009 admissions data and geographical location has led us to conclude that, at the present time, we are not confident that it is sustainable as a 2fe school, or that its location makes it the best placed school to meet the needs of parents whose preferences are not being met.</p>

<p>Will the design plans be independent audited or reviewed by the parents association?</p>	<p>This project will go through a number of design stages.</p> <p>Stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appraisal (Stage A) • Feasibility (Stage B) • Concept (Stage C) • Design Development (Stage D) • Technical Design (Stage E) • Production Information for tender (Stage F) • Tender Documentation (Stage G) • Tender Period (Stage H) • Contractor Mobilisation (Stage J) • Construction to Practical Completion (Stage K) • Post Practical Completion (Stage L) <p>A stage report is presented at Stages B, C, D and F. This report is reviewed by the Council’s Design Stage Review Group.</p> <p>All aspects of the design are reviewed in terms of design, suitability, life cycle, sustainability, cost, procurement etc. The output of this session is collated and presented to the Council’s Primary & Pre School Capital Commissioning Board, where we would seek approval to progress to the next stage.</p> <p>Each Stage report will also be presented to the School Expansion Group. This forum meets on a monthly basis and includes the Project Manager, Project Architect, Head Teacher, Deputy Head, Chair of the Governors, 5 Parent Governors and a Parent Architect. Each stage requires endorsement by the Chair of Governors on behalf of the Expansion Group.</p> <p>As at the design feasibility stage, we will continue to organise drop-in sessions at the end of each stage for staff, parents, pupils and the community and display information in the school reception and on the website.</p> <p>We will also be carrying out a Design Quality indicator workshop on completion of Stage D and post completion. The first workshop took place at the beginning of the project and was represented by pupils, staff and Governors. The first session focused on what the group considered to be the key areas for improvement in terms of design (what works well, what doesn’t work so well). On completion of Stage D, the workshop will meet again to measure the output of this against the design. Parent and Community representation but was unfortunately not able. We will continue to encourage representation for future sessions.</p>
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<p>With some extra funding couldn't Bounds Green be made an even more popular and successful school</p>	<p>The planning area known as PA1, which includes Rhodes Avenue Primary School, has almost no surplus capacity, and demand for reception places is not being met. Some children aren't being given any of their preferences.</p> <p>This unmet demand is very much focused in the area close to Rhodes Avenue, and this is one of the primary reasons why we have decided to expand Rhodes Avenue, and not another local school.</p> <p>Latest birth rate data shows that births are continuing to rise locally and across the borough, and this continued increase means that we may need to consider further local school expansions in the future.</p>
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