Notes from St Mary’s CE Primary School expansion – 22/09/2014 – Evening session 6.15pm

JD - Jennifer Duxbury (Head of Education Services)
FH - Francis Hargrove (Head Teacher)
JA - Jon Abbey (Assistant Director, Schools and Learning Services)
JH - Joanna Heard – (Project Manager, Haringey Capital Delivery)

Meeting started at 6.15pm with an introduction to all panel members

JA: Introduced the session and underlined that this is a genuine consultation.

Cllr AW set out that she wants to hear what all stakeholders really feel about the proposed expansion. She will take a decision about whether or not to proceed to a statutory consultation on expanding the school.

JA: Introduced the session by outlining the wider demographic trends in London show a population increase. Haringey is the most improved borough in terms of education, especially across GCSE results and we should be proud of our schools as they are becoming more popular. Haringey has a statutory duty to provide enough school places and we need to look at increasing provision to ensure that we can continue to meet this requirement. On the 9th October there will be a design meeting drop-in but this meeting is focusing on the principle of whether or not the school should be expanded. Notes of this meeting will be taken and published on the consultation webpage before the end of the consultation period. Recent changes in legislation means we don’t have the autonomy to open new schools and our role here is to consider the expansion of St Mary’s in order to provide additional local places which we project will be needed. A meeting on consultation has already been held this morning.

JD: As part of our School Place Planning we work with the Greater London Authority (GLA) and they help us project how many schools places we will need in the future. The data they provide to us is published in our annual School Place Planning Report. The Report outlines how many places we project will be needed at primary and secondary level for up to ten years ahead. The borough is divided into five ‘Planning Areas’ (PAs) and these PAs are used to plan for local places, taking account of local and projected birth rates and new housing developments. We establish data on deficit and surplus reception places and our data shows that in this planning area we will need an additional 2 forms of entry (60 reception places) in the coming years. We have agreed and published School Place Planning Principles and these principles underpin any proposed school expansion. In deciding whether or not to expand a school we take into account demand, standards, leadership, space and indicative cost. At St Mary’s in the current Year 2 and the current Reception we already have agreed ‘bulge’ (one off) additional classes.

We (Haringey) don’t have the opportunity to build a new school, all new schools are expected to be academies or free schools and proposers would apply to establish these new schools direct to the Department for Education (DfE). To date no such provision has been made locally, although there are free schools in the borough in Muswell Hill (Eden) and Tottenham (Harris). We are now seeking views on expanding St Mary’s from 2 to 3 forms of entry. Any expansion would be a gradual process, with the reception class providing 90 places (3 forms of entry) year on year, until 2021 when three
forms would be established across all year groups. JH has provided some feasibility work on how an expansion could occur and what it might look like and this will be available to view at the design drop in and is currently on show in the school hall.

You can get involved in the consultation by speaking to us today (or this evening when the meeting is repeated), responding on paper or replying to us online. At the end of the consultation, we will write a report for Cllr Waters, the Council Cabinet member for Children and Families to consider. The report will recommend whether or not we proceed to the next stage – publication of a statutory notice setting out our intention to expand this school. The report will be considered by Cllr Waters in the first half of December 2014. The report will consider the responses we have received to this consultation and will balance these against other material considerations including providing enough local school places. If a notice is published a further period of consultation (known as a representation period) will follow at the beginning of January 2014 and last for a fixed statutory period of four weeks. The Council Cabinet would then decide in March 2014 whether or not to permanently expand the school.

QUESTIONS

1. Could you clarify why there are discrepancies with regards to the proposed implementation date set out in the consultation document? It says implementation would be from September 2016?

   JD: That is a typo, my apologies for this. Lady (on the Governing body): My concern is keeping the trust of parents. Parent governor: From the governors point we were originally discussing expansion in 2016 but changes that were made to the school’s facilities (an extra classroom) had made the possibility of a 2015 expansion more plausible.

2. Can we have all of the consultation dates and the process that will be followed?

   JD: Goes through PowerPoint slides, the consultation was launched on 15th September and runs until 24th Oct (Note: the consultation has now been extended to 7 November 2014). A report will be written in December setting out the feedback gathered from the consultation period and this report, and an outline of all other material considerations, will go to the Lead Member, Cllr Waters. The report will make a recommendation about whether or not the local authority should publish a notice setting out its intention to expand the school and Cllr Waters will make the decision on any next step. If an expansion were to go ahead the first reception cohort would increase in size from September 2015.

3. Can you list what benefits there would be as a result of an expansion?

   FH: Part of the negotiations on whether or not to expand included securing ‘wins’ for the school such as more space, especially for nursery places. This was an item on my wishlist and was what I originally wanted for the school as a knock-on benefit from any expansion.

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1 Note: This issue was discussed again after the end of the consultation and it was agreed that the consultation documents would be reissued with the correct date of 2015 for proposed implementation. It has been acknowledged that some respondents to the consultation may need additional time to consider the proposal in light of this error. As a result the consultation period has been extended to 7 November 2014
4. **When would the changes to nursery be made?**
   JH: We currently have an indicative programme that looks to make use of school breaks, particularly the summer holidays. We will develop the programme in more detail and in discussion with the school to minimise any disruptions to pupils and learning.

5. **Will our outdoor space be affected?**
   FH: None of our outdoor space will be lost.

6. **You have a spare room that you could expand into without needing more building.**
   FH: I think we are talking at cross-purposes, the original aim was not to expand the nursery, however this is something we can benefit from by expanding the school.

7. **What changes to admissions will there be with regard to Faith based pupils?**
   JD: We are proposing to move to a 50:50 split between those offered places based on faith and those based on where they live. If faith places aren’t filled the remaining places are offered to children on a local basis.

8. **Won’t we still have to supply an additional 37 places next year?** (The person asking the question had looked at the PowerPoint presentation setting out school places analysis).
   JD: Yes you are correct, we may need to add an additional bulge class locally to meet this projected demand.

9. **What happens if no local schools want to expand?**
   JD: We have a statutory duty to provide enough school places ad so we would have to provide a bulge class further away from this school site. This might end up in a scenario which is the worst of both - school places in a location where there is not sufficient take up alongside no local provision for areas that are most in demand for school places.

10. **Why can’t Haringey council build new schools and is this likely to change in the future?**
    JD./FH: Only a change of government is likely to bring about a change whereby the expectation is that all new schools will be free schools or academies. There is nothing to suggest that this policy emphasis towards free school provision will change imminently.

11. **When is formal consultation required on providing additional places?**
    JD: We can provide up to two additional forms of entry through one-off ‘bulge’ classes, and any further provision counts as a permanent expansion which then requires a formal consultation, followed by a statutory process.

12. **Question directed at FH) How do you feel about more change?**
    FH: As far as I’m concerned the biggest changes have already happened over the last 3 years and growing to 90 (or 3 forms of entry) is less of a challenge if we ensure it is properly planned for rather than continuing to accommodate bulge classes. The significant change for our school has already happened with regards to curriculum changes.

13. **We chose St Mary’s because it had a village feel which it has now lost.**
    FH: This is why we have phased the key stages across the two sites.
    JA: Funding comes through really only through bulge classes or permanent expansions so there are opportunities here.
This is not yet an outstanding school and there were a number of criticisms in the last Ofsted report (2014). What are you doing to improve the school?
FH: I have expanded and developed the leadership team but I take on board that we need to feedback to parents more about how we have improved. We are also planning to equip an ICT room.
Governor: The IT suite had become a dumping ground for old PCs that no longer worked. Its use has improved greatly in recent months.

I’m a resident of Rectory Gardens. I’m worried about road rage caused by more parents driving to the school to drop off their children.
FH: I’ve asked parents to challenge each other if any parents are making unnecessary journeys by car or are involved in dangerous parking locally.
JH: We’ll be working with the Highways team in Haringey on any possible measures to be taken if the expansion goes ahead and we will do a transport statement for any (town) planning application that we submit as part of the building programme to support any expansion. We have already started looking at this issue as part of the feasibility work that we have done with the school.

It is ridiculous that we have any parents that are driving when we are such a local school with a tiny catchment area.
FH: Our catchment is now smaller than ever before even though we have had an intake of 90 children into reception this year as a result of the ‘bulge’ class.
FH: A staggered start time (including at 8.30am) has improved punctuality at the school.

I came to a previous consultation about the bulge class and you (FH) said we wouldn’t expand to 3 forms of entry in the future?
FH: I didn’t say that and I was very clear at the time that an expansion wasn’t a given just because we had taken a bulge.

Will we come back here in the future and you will be proposing that we double in size? Also, If there will be more children on site will there be more land provided for the larger school?”
FH: I can’t give a specific answer at the moment.JH: This is a lovely spacious school and we aren’t looking to take that away. The preferred design sees expansion upwards and not outwards and so no playground space will be lost. The school as it exists currently already has more space than is recommended under DfE space standards required for a 3 form entry school.

This wasn’t the school that we chose originally for our children.
JA: I can’t dispute that but the local population has grown. We have a responsibility to provide school places and want to offer local places wherever possible.

What are the advantages of expansion?
FH: They include enhanced facilities, investment in the building, more teachers - we can get more specialists into the school with an expansion, for example a language or sports teacher. We can invest in specialisms and our pupils and school can benefit from economies of scale.
20. **Could you increase the Breakfast Club facilities?**

FH: We are already running Breakfast Club at capacity but we want to develop it further. We are meeting on Wednesday to discuss how this can be achieved.

21. **How can you manage the expansion of the school and perform your role as Head Teacher?**

FH: I have a great team (teachers, staff, governors) behind me.

22. (Governor) I am a governor and also have children who were former pupils at this school and I would like to pay tribute to the great work that has been done in improving the school. I think we need to comment more on this improvement.

23. **(Governor): If the school becomes 3 form entry and the numbers fall what are the consequences?**

JD: One of the reasons we look at the popular schools for expansion is because that even if pupil places fall, demand will still be high from the broader geographical area. We plan our places to ensure sufficiency but not to oversupply.

JA: I’m going to draw the meeting to an end. Thank you very much for attending.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.