Proposal to expand St Mary’s CE Primary School

Consultation on proposed school expansion

Note of Public Consultation Meetings at 9.30 am and 6pm on 19 January 2015 held at St Mary’s CE Primary School (Church Lane site)

PRESENT (9.30 am and 6pm)
Cllr Ann Waters - Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Jennifer Duxbury - Head of Education Services
Zina Etheridge - Deputy Chief Executive, Haringey Council (present at 9.30am)
Anji Phillips - Interim Director (Schools and Learning) (present at 6pm)
John Hoggard - Vice Chair of Governors
Fran Hargrove - Head Teacher
Joanna Heard – Senior Project Manager
Nick Shasha - Place Planning Lead
Michele de Broglio - Clerk
Jess Smart – Chair of Governors (apologies for absence received)

9.30 am meeting: 12 members of the public, including parents, governors and residents.

6 pm meeting: 2 members of the public, several teachers and governors and a local Councillor, Cllr Adam Jogee.

Purpose of meetings

To explain the Council’s reasons for proposing to expand St Mary’s CE Primary School from two to three forms of entry from September 2016. To give further information about the proposed expansion of the School, and the process, and to seek the views of parents and members of the public on "the proposal" as part of the "statutory representation" consultation period required to take the proposal forward. Plans and drawings of the proposal were on display.

Welcome

The Head teacher welcomed everyone to the meeting, and reiterated the importance of responding to the consultation about expansion of the school.

Representatives of the Council and School introduced themselves.
The Deputy Chief Executive of Haringey Council welcomed everyone to the formal engagement process, with informal consultation having already taken place. There would be an opportunity to hear about the proposal, the process and how it works, and the timescales. There would be an opportunity for questions and answers and to see the plans, on display at the back of the hall.

**The process and the current consultation**

Jenny Duxbury briefly presented an overhead presentation and set out the background and process that the Council had followed in arriving at the current proposal to expand the School from two to three forms of entry from September 2016.

The population in Haringey (as in London) is rising and additional school places are required to meet future demand. Starting in 2013 the Council had been investigating and discussing the feasibility of expanding certain primary schools to meet this anticipated demand for additional places and had set out the need for additional places in the School Place Planning report. Cabinet agreed to undertake a feasibility study to determine whether or not this could be physically possible.

The study showed it could be possible and in July 2014 Cabinet was asked if the Council could consult on the possibility of expanding the school. The Cabinet agreed to undertake stake holder consultations with those schools identified as being capable of expanding, including St Mary’s.

In respect of St Mary’s, only 19 responses were received, with 37% of respondents supporting the proposal and 53% not supporting, and 11% neither supporting nor not supporting. Reasons given for not supporting the proposal were; The most commonly set out disadvantages were – concerns over disruption caused by the development (9) and loss of character of the school (7). Respondents favouring the proposal cited; The most commonly advantages of an expansion set out were - a reduction of school waiting lists (9) and more money for the school as a result of increased pupil numbers (3).

**Formal Consultation 9th January to 5th February 2015:** In the light of these results, Cllr Waters, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, had agreed that the proposal should be taken forward to the next stage - statutory consultation known as "statutory representation". The statutory consultation commenced on 9 January, when a notice was posted on the school gate, and would finish four weeks later on 5 February 2015, this being the maximum period allowed in law. The Notes of this meeting will be available online within 7 days and during the consultation period stakeholders (parents/carers/prospective parents/staff and local residents etc) can submit their views, supporting or objecting to the proposal with reasons by responding to the online questionnaire at: [www.haringey.gov.uk/schoolexpansions2014](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/schoolexpansions2014)
The Council must take a decision on whether to proceed with the proposal within 8 weeks of the end of the consultation period and accordingly the results of the consultation would be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 March 2015. Cabinet meetings are held in public and the officers’ report would be published online (i.e. available to the public) one week before the meeting takes place. It is possible for parents or other members of the public to ask for a deputation to address the meeting either in support or in opposition to the proposal.

Having considered the results of the statutory consultation the Cabinet will make a decision and could:

- reject the proposal
- accept the proposal
- accept the proposal with modification
- accept the proposal with or without modification but subject to certain prescribed events

The proposal being consulted is to move from a 2 form entry to a 3 form entry on an incremental basis with an additional class being added each year until there are 90 pupils in total rather than 60.

At this stage it is important to be able to report a true representation of the consultation to the Cabinet. All comments and expressions of view in support or against the proposed expansion of the school were positively encouraged and those present were asked to talk to others and encourage them to respond.

**Proposed Refurbishment and Construction**

Joanna Heard explained that if the proposal was agreed, it would involve: a small element of rebuild and refurbishment at the Church Lane site, with modifications to the nursery area that will allow access to all two year olds. At the school extra rooms will be created between the two staircases, with three year 3 classrooms in close proximity and all in the same area. No residents will be able to overlook the classrooms which will all have natural light and ventilation.

A design drop-in session took place there will be design workshops involving pupils, parents, and governors towards the end of February, to enable the plan to proceed as soon as the proposal is approved.

The contractors will have experience of working with schools, and pupils and there will be opportunities for the children to get involved and to go on a day trip. Steps would be taken to keep disruption during the works to a minimum, being planned around holidays where possible, although work will extend beyond the holiday periods. Work at both sites will be completed in 2016.

**Governors’ View**
The Vice Chair of Governors, explained that Governors had discussed the proposals and had agreed unanimously that the proposals should go ahead. In considering the Council’s proposals, Governors had been guided by the strategic long view of the school and the aim to move the school from ‘good’ to ‘outstanding’.

The proposed expansion would lead to the school getting more funding which would mean more funding for education, and staff. Church Lane would have its entrance remodelled with a more secure office at the front of the building, and there would be new covered areas in the nursery playground. The school will still be a small school and no expansion will take place at Church Lane. At St Mary’s the site will be expanded, with new classrooms and all existing classrooms will be redecorated. A linked studio and kitchen will be created and the new design will incorporate small rooms for study.

Questions and Answers, Concerns and Responses at the 9.30 am meeting on 19 January 2015

Q.1 A local Resident asked if there would be more parking for teachers in the scheme.
R.1 Teachers already use the car park at the bowling green and have enough parking.

Q.2 There is already a problem with parking and double parking in the vicinity of the school and residents have difficulties accessing parking in their street.
R.2 It was accepted by the Headteacher that this was an issue. She mentioned that the School Travel Plan will continue to encourage walking to school and parents being issued with a ‘parking promise’. Already the staff at the school, including the Headteacher, help to manage parking outside the school and encourages parents to park further away or walk.

The Vice Chair of Governors asked if the Council could consider creating a new CPZ in the area around the school and the Headteacher explained that the CPZ near the school has pushed traffic and parking down to the St Mary’s area and the school is asking for more crossings to be installed.

The senior Project Officer stated that a planning application will be required for the proposed works and that a transport statement will be included. Officers are working to address residents concerns, but nothing can be guaranteed at this stage.

Q.3 A parent asked about the “parking promise” and what it is.
R.3 The Headteacher explained that if a parent is parked inconsiderately or dangerously they get issued, via their child, with a statement and then a ‘parking promise’ asking them to promise to park more considerately, thus encouraging safer parking behaviour.
Q.4 A parent said his child is disabled and unable to walk far and he asked what they were supposed to do.

R.4 The Headteacher stated that in such an instance parents should communicate with the school and the school would enable parking in the school car park. The Parent responded that he hadn’t been made aware of this before.

Q.5 Could the Council use vans with cameras to deal with parking offenders?

R.5 The Headteacher responded that these vans do appear sometimes, as do the police and parking attendants.

Q.6 There were 19 respondents in the previous round of consultation and many parents feel this is a ‘done deal’ and a ‘fait accompli’ and that there is no point in attending the consultation meetings.

R.6 The Head of Education services stated that it is not a done deal and that evidence is needed that the proposal is supported before the scheme can proceed, and it is important to know what the concerns are so that officers may address them. She asked those present to let others know this. The Headteacher confirmed that it is not a done deal. The Vice Chair of Governors added that there are three schools where expansion has halted.

Q.7 Why had this school been chosen rather than another school that could take children from a wider area?

R.7 The Head of Education services stated that if this scheme goes ahead 50% of places will be available to local residents and 50% will be based on church attendance, and this was the preferred option based on all the criteria considered.

The Vice Chair of Governors stated that governors had looked at all the details and the church will get more places for people within the parish as part of the consultation on admission arrangements being conducted separately to address the increasing school popularity.

Q.8 A question was asked about church representation.

R.8 The Headteacher explained that St Mary’s is a Church school and not a Faith school and as a community school it sets priorities for admissions that take account of the need to cater for the wider community as well as churchgoers.

Q.9 What consultation has taken place at other schools with potential to meet local need for expansion?

R.9 129 people responded at the other school identified, and they overwhelmingly rejected the proposal. People wanted to talk about other options before proceeding, and broader consultation is now taking place in that area.

Q10 “Most parents feel it’s a fait accompli and I nearly didn’t come because if governors are supporting the scheme and parents think it is going ahead,
what difference can parents make. Also the consultation questionnaire is quite off putting because of the length of the form and responses required. I didn't realise there were four different options in terms of the decision to be made by Cabinet. If parents were presented with these options and then a simple yes/no answer and two lines to complete with comments, there would be a greater response.

R.10 The Head of Education Services stated that although there is a need to be concise, various legal requirements also have to be met. However there isn't anything setting out how responses have to be made and they could be submitted by email. She stated that she appreciated this being raised and would have a look at this suggestion.
The Headteacher stated that she has produced some information outlining the benefits to the school and asking parents to respond and this will be sent out to parents if this is OK with the Council. The Head of Education Services said that it was and that she was delighted to hear of other means of consulting with parents, and she and the Headteacher will ensure something is produced for distribution to parents.

Q.11 The Vice Chair of Governors asked if Stage 3 could be explained in more detail.

R.11 The Head of Education Services explained the options available to the Cabinet in reaching a decision:
   I. Rejection – this is clear.
   II. Approval without modification – this is also clear.
   III. Approval with modifications – the proposal could be modified for instance the start date could be changed.
   IV. Approve the proposal (with or without modification) subject to certain prescribed events being met – for example, where a large redevelopment required the purchase of additional land, a proposal might be approved but only if the land could be acquired or subject to extra funding being required – neither of which apply to this expansion proposal at St Mary’s.
A parent stated that this section would be clearer to parents if an example was provided.

Q.12 A parent asked about the number of pupils expected if the new scheme goes ahead and the impact on projected attainment of pupils.

R.12 The Headteacher explained that the school is in a better state than last year and that it is improving year on year and will continue to do so, and standards are getting better. Pupils get a better deal every day because children are the most important thing at this school and will remain the absolute focus. She believes the school can provide the same quality and indeed improved quality with more children.

Contribution from Parent Governor:
The Governing Body has had numerous discussions including at every committee meeting and has held the Local authority to account. It had been tough at times and the proposals had not been rubber stamped.

Q.13 A parent asked about the impact on the school budget.
R.13 The Headteacher explained that the more children the school has on roll, the more funding is allocated, because a certain amount is allocated per child. She stated that she would not be supporting the proposal if it could adversely affect the education of the children. The Vice Chair of Governors responded that the relocation of the music centre had been pushed for by governors to enable expansion for pupils of breakfast and after school clubs, with a new kitchen, food technology area and small study rooms for pupils. Without the expansion many of the planned improvements would have taken many years to materialise, whereas with the expansion and additional pupils, these improvements can be justified and paid for by the Council rather than out of the existing school budget.

The Headteacher reiterated that it would take 15 years otherwise to achieve these improvements instead of the proposed 18 months. The changes, with more staff, will also enable teachers to focus more on the children rather than other issues.

Q.14 What if the additional pupil numbers don’t materialise?
R.14 The Head of Education Services stated that all the evidence continually shows that there is increased demand for places and St Mary’s was chosen because of the demand element – it is a popular school and reception has a waiting list now that would fill the school, however there are ongoing conversations about changing demand. The future cannot be absolutely predicted, but the latest information is used and this shows demand consistently increasing.

Q.15 Shortfalls in demand do happen, for instance at North Harringay demand decreased.
R.15 Sometimes bulge classes are created where there are small increases in demand, whereas in this area demand is such that an extra class is needed for each year group over time. If the numbers don’t materialise at a later date conversations will be held with the Governing Body about reducing classes over time. For the time being the budget has been agreed for the expansion and the works will all be completed in one tranche.

Joanna Heard – Senior Project Officer: Once the scheme is approved the costs will be scrutinised. The budget is ring fenced to a specific account and will be monitored monthly. There is a very efficient design team using imaginative solutions.
Q.16 Statement in support: A parent stated that if standards were to fall the Headteacher and others could lose their jobs because they are monitored by Ofsted, therefore the Headteacher has to be pretty sure of the advantages to recommend proceeding with this. A Governor concurred that they would notice if standards were deteriorating as they monitor this continuously.

The Headteacher added that the architects have been fantastic and have visited the school each time a change has been requested to the plans.

Q.17 Statement in support: A parent commented that the school will have more staff and with an extra class in each year group there are more resources for planning and monitoring and tasks such as organising school trips can be shared with other teachers in the same year group. There would also be more senior staff and lead specialists.

R.17 The Headteacher added that as numbers on roll have increased so have the resources and each class now has a T.A.

Q.18 Will the number of places be there in local secondary schools to take the increased number of primary pupils?
R.18 This is a key area also being looked at and plans are being drawn up to address this.

Round Up
The Head of Education Services confirmed that she and the Headteacher will produce a consultation handout to go to parents and she thanked everyone for attending

The meeting ended at 10.50am.
Questions, Answers, Comments and Responses at the 6 pm meeting on 12 January 2012

The Assistant Director commented that the Governing Body had had a very good debate and the proposal will provide improvements for children and their education.

Q.1 A staff member raised the issue of parking and whether there would be any provision made for the extra cars that would be expected.
A.1 The Senior Project Manager stated that parking spaces for staff members won’t increase. There would have to be a transport statement for planning purposes and one of the things being considered is putting in new zebra crossings that would result in instant fines for parents who park there. This might be made a condition if planning consent is granted.
The CPZ near Hornsey has shifted traffic and parking to the area surrounding the St Mary’s, and the School’s travel plan is working to address travel issues. The school has said that if a child is disabled, arrangements for drop off can be made in advance between parents and the school.

The Ward councillor, Adam Jones, added that he is hoping to see some movement on the parking issue in the coming months. In the meantime he welcomed the proposal and the school working with the Local Authority to achieve improvements.

Q.2 How will admission arrangements be affected?
A.2 The school is reviewing the admissions policy and the preferred model is for 50% of admissions based on church attendance and 50% based on local residence, with priority being given to those closest to the school.
The Vice Chair of Governors confirmed that the admissions policy is being reviewed because the school is more popular and there is currently a greater demand for places – priority will now be given to those living closest to the school.

The Headteacher informed the meeting that there are now two forms of questionnaire available for responses to the consultation – a long form and a shorter version. These were distributed to those present.

There being no further questions or comments, everyone was thanked for attending, particularly the parents.

The formal meeting ended at 7.40pm and attendees were invited to stay for an informal discussion.