

Consultation Analysis

Proposed change of age range and extension of premises at Meadowcroft Infant School



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Consultation Analysis – Proposed change of age range and extension of premises at Meadowcroft Infant School

Introduction

This report is an analysis of responses gathered on the proposal to change the age range of Meadowcroft Infant School from a one-form entry infant school to a one-form entry primary school and expand their premises to accommodate the additional children.

Surrey County Council published an informal consultation from 22 June 2022 to 15 September 2022.

Statutory notices are due to be published later this year. Analysis of the responses during the statutory notices will be added to this paper and will be submitted to the Lead Cabinet Member for All Age Learning as part of the Lead Cabinet Member report, for consideration in the decision to determine the statutory notices in early 2023.

Consultation Summary

The informal consultation was open from 22 June 2022 to 15 September 2022. The associated documentation was published on the Surrey County Council 'Surrey Says' website and circulated to local stakeholders. Interested parties were invited to return responses to the consultation via an online form or alternatively email or post responses.

A public meeting was held at the school on 6 July 2022.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is in progress and has been informed by responses to the informal consultation period. The Equality Impact Assessment will continue throughout the statutory notice period and will be submitted with papers at the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning Meeting.

Key points from the consultation responses:

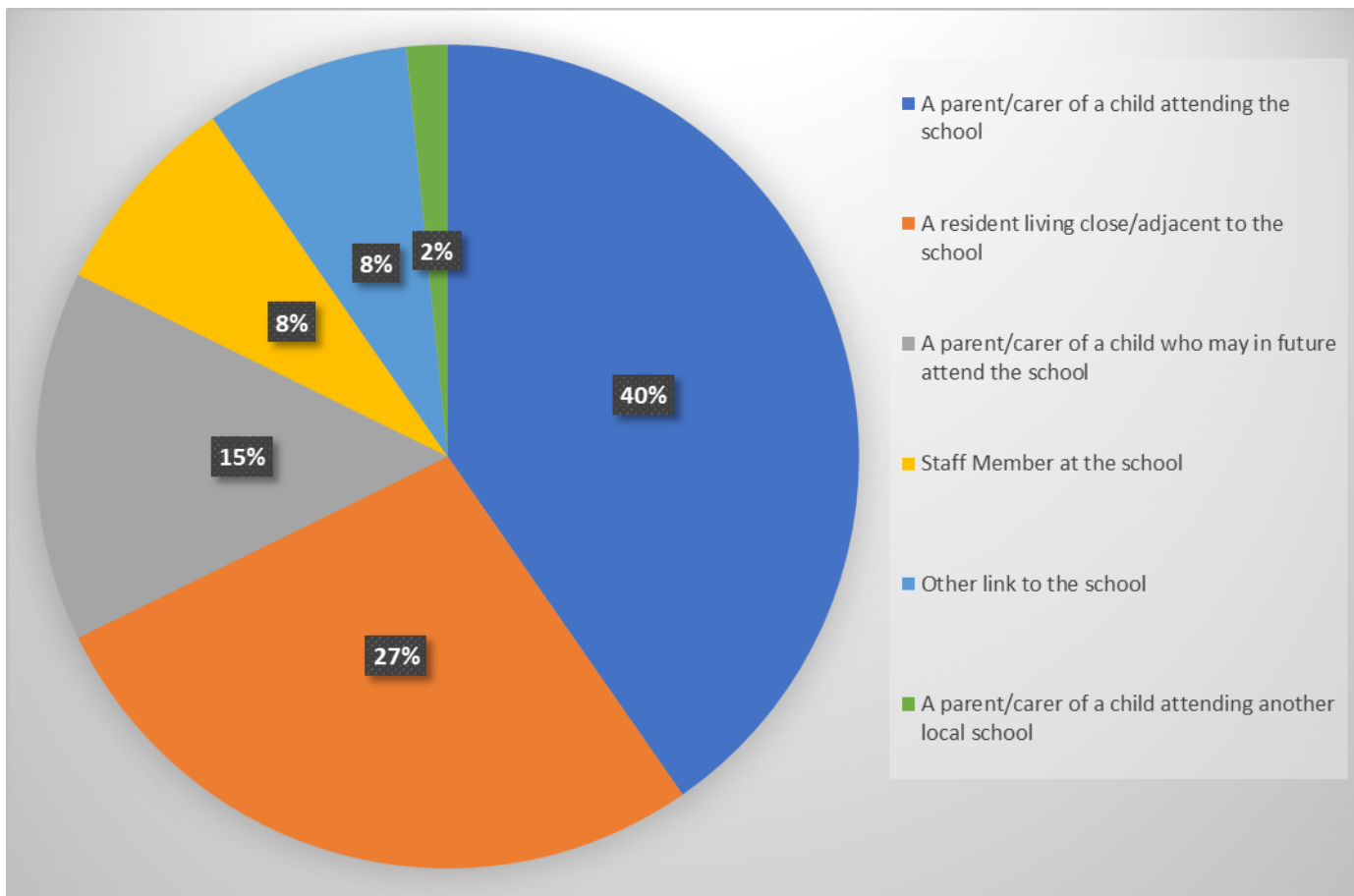
- There was a significant margin of agreement with the proposal: 71% agreed, 17.7% disagreed
- 40.3% of all responses were from parents/carers of pupils currently attending the school
- Members of staff at Meadowcroft Infant School all agreed with the proposal (8% of total respondents)
- Of those who disagreed with the proposal, approximately 90.9% were residents living in the vicinity of the school

Part 1 – Informal Consultation

Quantitative Analysis

In total, there were 62 responses to the consultation. 71% of respondents agreed with the proposal, 17.7% of respondents disagreed with the proposal and 11.3% of respondents stated they didn't know.

All 62 respondents indicated their relationship with the school. The chart below shows the distribution of respondents to the consultation.



Percentage who agreed/disagreed/didn't know by individual groups

Responses from parent/carer of a pupil attending Meadowcroft Infant School – 40%

22 agreed with the proposal, 1 disagreed with the proposal and 2 didn't know

Responses from a resident living close/adjacent to the school – 27%

4 agreed with the proposal, 10 disagreed with the proposal and 3 didn't know

Responses from a parent/carer of a child who may in future attend the school – 15%

9 agreed with the proposal

Responses from a staff member at the school – 8%

5 agreed with the proposal

Responses from others with a link to the school – 8%

4 agreed with the proposal and 1 didn't know

Responses from a parent/carer of a child attending another local school – 2%

1 didn't know

Qualitative Analysis

Respondents had the opportunity to add comments at the end of the survey. Out of the 62 responses received, 40 comments were made on the proposal. These comments were broadly themed and then separated into 6 possible tags. Comments left in reply to free-text questions were tagged drawing on 6 possible tags. Each response could have more than one tag attached. The overall frequency of each of the tags provides an indicator of respondent's main concerns regarding the proposal.

Sub theme	Tag	Number of responses	Prevalence (% out of total responses)
Positive impacts	Continuation of Primary education	14	35%
	Less travel and environmental factors	6	15%
Negative Impacts	Size of building site	8	20%
	Disruption of building works and school noise	8	20%
	Parking and traffic	20	50%
Ideas and innovation	Ideas	3	7.5%

Key themes from the consultation

Positive impacts

50% of the responses stated their belief that the change of age range and extension would have a positive impact. Many comments mentioned the terms “opportunity”, “benefit” and “perfect” when expressing their positive thoughts on the proposal. Meadowcroft Infant School was described as “lovely” and “fabulous”. One comment declared that it “makes sense to expand” and others “wish it had happened sooner”.

“It will be perfect as the kids already know the school.”

“Shame it wasn't done sooner [...] Just makes sense to expand.”

“Lovely school and so wish we were able to stay on”

Continuation of Primary Education

35% of the comments agreed that the extension and increased age range will have a positive impact on the area. One comment noted there is an “acute shortage of primary phase school

places in the local area” and that the current need “to send Year 3 pupils to a school several miles away is harmful to the local community”. Another maintained that extending Meadowcroft Infant School is “crucial for families in the south Chertsey area who have no walking distance junior school places currently.”

“Meadowcroft is such a lovely school and we do need a primary school in this area.”

“I would very much welcome this as a local resident [...] having it as a primary school will be hugely beneficial as it will be less disruptive with the changing.”

“I would love for my daughter to go to Meadowcroft but would much prefer it if she could remain in the same school throughout her primary years”

Less travel and environmental factors

15% of total responses observed that the extension would have a positive impact on travel and environment in the local area, with one describing the current situation as “dreadful”. Another stated that it would enable residents “to walk and cycle to school.”

“Less travel for parents is good for the roads and the environment.”

“Good for more local people to attend and not have to travel for juniors”

Negative Impacts

Of the 40 comments made, 90% felt the proposal could have negative impacts. A majority of these concerns were regarding parking, disruption and the size of the existing school site. One respondent voiced their belief that, “We have enough schools” and any expansion would “ruin” the school, another felt that expanding the school by over 100% of current capacity would be “inadvisable”.

“I don’t see how this would be beneficial at all”

“Concern over the continuity of educational provision is not significant, particularly when weighed against the quality of education delivered by the well-established junior schools”

“I totally disagree to the expansion of the school”

Size of building site

20% of total respondents felt that the current size of the school site would not sustain a primary school. Specific concerns were raised regarding on-site parking and outside space with one response stating that the lack of space would have a negative impact on educational standards because, “those pupils inside at class will also have the distractions of the noise from pupils outside while trying to learn”.

“The Meadowcroft School site [...] is too small to be expanded into a primary school”

“I am not sure though that the site that the school is on is big enough for a primary”

“I don’t see how the school has the space for this as the field and play ground is already very small”

Disruption of building works and school noise

20% of total respondents felt that the necessary building work and increased school size would be disruptive to the local area. Some respondents raised concerns regarding existing noise when children are playing outside, “I can hear the conversations of the children and teachers from my living room”, and it was felt this would be exacerbated by the extension. Several respondents raised concerns regarding losing sunlight due to the construction of a two-storey building, one felt the building would be an “eyesore” and there was also worry that a tree on the grounds may be removed to accommodate the new building.

“[...] don't want to live near to busy school because of the noise and busy street already causes disruption”

“I am very aware of the level of sound 90 pupils make just playing normally, [...] should this expansion go ahead, I and other residents will have this for much longer each day”

“The residents of the surrounding properties would never get any peace”

Parking and traffic

50% of respondents stated concerns regarding parking and traffic in the school vicinity; these related to both the situation currently and an anticipated worsening should the extension go ahead. One described matters as “horrific” and commented that residents are “continuously complaining”, another stated the traffic and parking around school drop-off are “making it impossible for residents to get to work”. One respondent felt the extension could be dangerous, as it might restrict “access of emergency services”.

“There is little parking available for parents to drop off their children”

“It's already very congested at school drop off/pick ups”

“The increase in the number of students to over 200 will make Little Green Lane a potential no go area in the mornings and afternoons”

Ideas and innovation

Some comments offered ideas regarding the continuation of the children’s education. One suggestion was that further parking surveys should be conducted, and implementations made to better manage traffic flow. One respondent felt consideration for secondary school places should be made, with the denominational criterion of Salesian School and distance to Chertsey High School, they felt it might therefore be practical to establish a feeder link between Meadowcroft and Chertsey High School. One respondent felt that further traffic surveys should be undertaken, as the current one was conducted on a day where the weather was fine. It has therefore been suggested that further surveys would provide a clearer picture of the situation. Another respondent felt that road-widening measures might be taken, along with the implementation of traffic lights at the access to the A320.

“Making Meadowcroft a feeder for Chertsey High when expanding would further ensure Chertsey schools for Chertsey children”

“[Problems] may be alleviated if traffic lights were to be installed at the access to A320, when the new Road construction takes place later this year”

“there need to be further surveys at different times of the year taking the weather into account”

Public Meetings

A public consultation drop-in session took place at Meadowcroft Infant School on 6 July 2022. Themes arising from the public meeting reflected the themes from the responses to the consultation.

Questions and Answers

A “questions and answers” document has also been published alongside this analysis to answer questions which have arisen during the consultation process.