

Consultation Analysis

PROPOSAL TO EXPAND PYRCROFT GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Bourne
Education
Trust



Pyncroft
Grange
Primary School



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

Consultation analysis – Pycroft Grange Primary School

Introduction

Surrey County Council, in collaboration with Bourne Education Trust, published an informal consultation on the proposal to expand Pycroft Grange Primary School from a one form entry (1FE) to a two form entry (2FE) primary school from September 2022.

This paper is an analysis of the responses received during the consultation period. As Pycroft Grange is an academy, Surrey County Council is not the decision maker in this process. Bourne Education Trust, in conjunction with the school, will submit this paper alongside a full business case to the Regional Schools Commissioner, who will make the final decision on the proposal to expand the school.

Consultation summary

The informal consultation was open from 1 December 2020 to 12 January 2021. 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 by email or post.

A public meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 15 December at 7:30pm.

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) will be completed by Bourne Education Trust and Pycroft Grange Primary School.

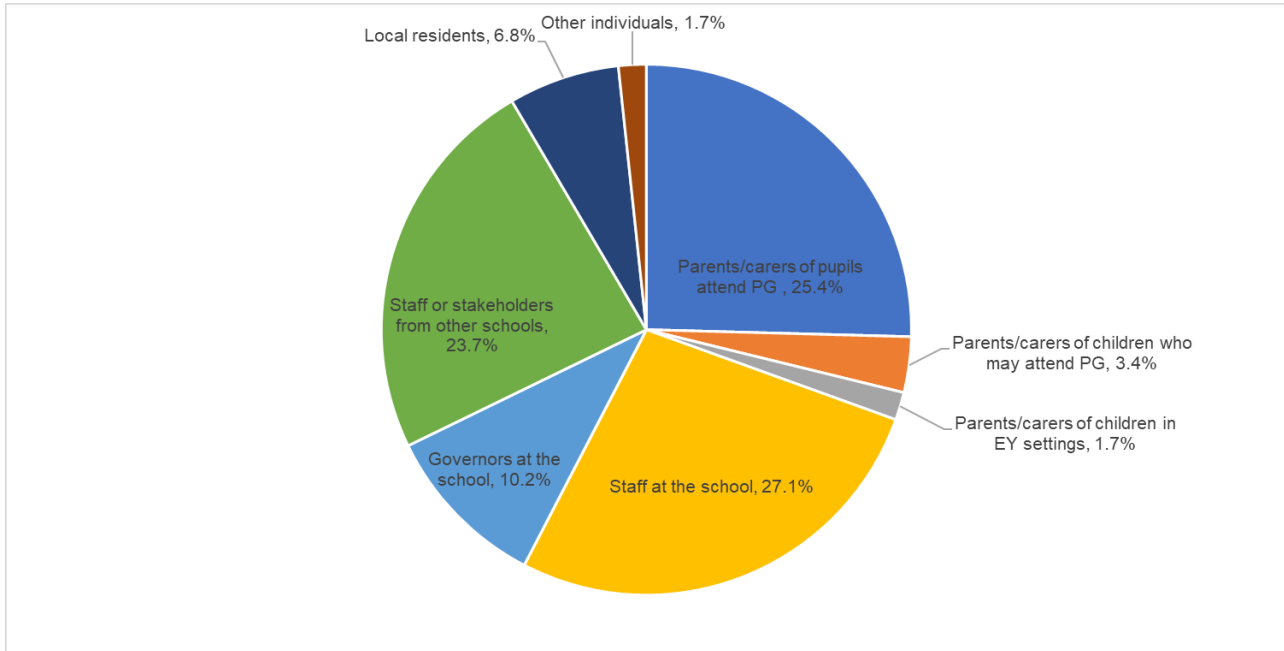
Key points from the consultation responses:

- There was a narrow margin of agreement with the proposal: 50.8% agreed, 47.6% disagreed
- A quarter of all responses were from parents/carers of pupils currently attending the school (25.4%)
- Members of staff at Pycroft Grange all agreed with proposal (27.1%)
- Of those who disagreed with the proposal, approximately 48% were members of staff or stakeholders from other schools

Quantitative analysis

In total, there were 61 responses to the consultation. 50.8% of respondents agreed with the proposal, 47.6% of respondents disagreed with the proposal and 1.6% of respondents stated they didn't know.

Of the 61 responses, 59 indicated their relationship with the school. The chart below shows the distribution of responses to the consultation:



Percentage of total responses by individual groups

Responses from parent/carers of pupils attending Pyrcroft Grange – 25.4%

6 agreed with the proposal, 8 disagreed with the proposal and 1 didn't know

Responses from parents of children that may attend school in future – 3.4%

2 agreed with the proposal

Responses from a parent/carers of a child in an Early Years setting – 1.7%

1 agreed with the proposal

Responses from members of staff at the school – 27.1%

16 agreed with the proposal

Responses from Governors at school – 10.2%

2 agreed with the proposal and 4 disagreed

Responses from members of staff or stakeholders from other schools – 23.7%

1 agreed with the proposal and 13 disagreed

Responses from local residents – 6.8%

3 agreed with the proposal and 1 disagreed

Responses from other individuals with an interest in the school – 1.7%

1 disagreed with the proposal

Qualitative analysis

Respondents had the opportunity to add comments at the end of the survey. Out of the 61 total responses received, 45 comments were made on the proposal. These comments were broadly themed and then separated into 12 possible tags. Each response could have more than one tag attached. The overall frequency of each of the tags provides an indicator of the respondents' main concerns regarding the proposal.

Sub theme	Tags	Number of responses	Prevalence (% of comments)
Positive impacts	Positive emotional response	4	6%
	Positive impact	14	20%
Positive for local community	Need for places in Chertsey	12	17.5%
	Will help to reduce the travel times for young children	4	6%
Negative impacts	Negative emotional response	1	1.5%
	Negative impact	5	7%
Negative impacts on other schools	Negative impacts on other schools	20	29%
Traffic and parking	Traffic flow during drop off and collection periods	4	6%
	Parking	3	4%
SEND and COIN centre	Negative impact	2	3%

Key themes from the consultation

Positive impacts

Just over a quarter of the total responses (26%) agreed that the proposed expansion would have a positive impact. Many comments mentioned the terms “community”, “opportunity” and “outstanding” when expressing their positive thoughts on the proposal. One comment cited that the expansion would allow more children to share the “exceptional teaching and learning opportunities” that the school offers. Some comments described the school as “great” and “lovely”.

“This is a great opportunity and a fantastic next step for the growth of the school”.

“I think this is an essential expansion to meet the needs of local children...”

“The school puts children at the heart of all decisions...”

A need for places in Chertsey

A number of respondents mentioned the need for school places in the Chertsey area (17.5%). One comment stated that the expansion is “essential” to “meet the needs of local children”. The term “local” was mentioned multiple times and some respondents referenced the school’s popularity and how it does not offer out particularly far in terms of distance. Some comments referred to the

increased housing planned for the local area and one comment mentioned that Chertsey is “expanding rapidly”.

“Due to high number of school applicants in Chertsey every year, it's really good to see the increase number of places in this school.”

“The expansion is necessary to enable local families to secure a school place at a Chertsey school.”

“...some children have to travel out of their locality to attend school.”

Will help to reduce the travel times for young children

A few comments cited that the expansion would allow children living in Chertsey to attend their local school and “eliminate a lot of stress” for parents having to travel to other schools outside of their local area. One comment mentioned that local parents would “prefer to walk” when taking their children to school and another stated that the thought of not gaining a place at a local school “worries” them.

“The expansion of Pyrcroft Grange will allow Chertsey residents to have more options for schools and many more school places on offer. This will mean we will not need to travel out of the area.”

Negative impacts

Almost a third of responses indicated that there would be a negative impact on other local schools in the Runnymede area (29%). The majority of concerns highlighted that in previous years the local authority’s forecasts have not always shown an accurate prediction of the number of places required for pupils in the local and surrounding areas. Comments expressed particular concern with the “detrimental impact” that the expansion would have on other schools as predicted pupil numbers have not been “materialising”. Many comments also referred to other school organisational decisions that have been made recently by the local authority in the local area. A couple of responses also cited that whilst they agree there is a need for places in the area, it could be better met at an alternative school.

“...there is some caution with regards to the forecast data as previous forecasted numbers have not come to fruition.”

“...caution should be used in trying to predict demand.”

“If Pyrcroft Grange Primary was to expand without the predicted number of children materialising, this would detrimentally impact many local schools.”

Traffic flow during drop off and collection periods and parking

Some respondents stated concern about the additional traffic during drop-off and collection times (6%) and a few were also concerned about parking for staff and parents during school hours (4%). One respondent was concerned about the “environmental impact” the proposed expansion would have and that the surrounding roads are “already full during the day”.

“Parking is extremely limited as it is, this would not be functional.”

“The parking is currently only just adequate, with the expansion, significant parking areas for drop offs and picks up would need to be increased.”

“...additional travel/traffic/journeys by parents which would harm our local environment.”

Impact on SEND and COIN centre

3% of respondents raised their concerns about the interests of children with special needs currently attending the school and COIN centre. These responses were mainly concerned about the disruption to school routine during any building works and the challenges children with SEND needs would face as a result of the expansion. One comment mentioned that increasing the size of the school would “adversely affect” pupils in the existing COIN centre.

“...special attention needs to be made so that the needs of these children are not lost sight of when thinking about school expansion.”

“We do not think the COIN unit will benefit from the expansion and in fact believe it will hinder these children even more.”

Ideas and innovation

Some comments were made on how to manage a possible increase in school places on a temporary basis over a period of time. There were mentions of bulge class provision being utilised rather than a permanent expansion. These comments also link with the concerns expressed around the accuracy of the local authority’s forecasts.

“Any expansion should be on a temporary basis until demand is better evidenced.”

“I would rather see a bulge class for a year in order to assess the accuracy of the predicted increase in pupil numbers in Runnymede.”

“I suggest that any expansion should be on a temporary basis until demand is full understood and such a project justified.”

Public meeting

A public meeting was held on Tuesday 15 December 2021 at 7.30pm. There was a short presentation followed by an opportunity for attendees to ask questions.

The meeting was attended by 13 people. Themes arising from the public meeting reflected the themes from the responses to the consultation.