

## School Specific Responses

**School:** Whitchurch First School and Whitchurch Junior School

**Primary Planning Area:** North East

The projections for this planning area indicate increased demand above the 360 permanent Reception places available in September 2013 requiring additional Reception places of between 50 (in September 2014) and 101 (in September 2019) pupils per year.

Demand for primary school places in the North East Primary Planning Area is already filling available places. There is significant new housing development in this planning area. The phases of the development at the site of the former government offices off Honeypot Lane have now been completed and additional applications for school places have been received, particularly at the Whitchurch schools nearest to the development. Development of up to 347 housing units is also planned at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital site.

In the context of the current projections it is expected that at least a further two primary schools in this planning area will need to be permanently expanded and possibly a third school. Accordingly, two schools are proposed for permanent expansion in Phase 2 of the Primary School Expansion Programme to meet future demand for places.

The proposals are:

Year	Permanent expansion	Temporary Reception Classes
September 2014	Aylward Primary School	Whitchurch First School
September 2015	Whitchurch First School *	One class if required

\* Note: As the Whitchurch schools are separate schools, Whitchurch Junior School would be expanded from September 2017 when the pupils from the 2014 additional Reception intake progress on to the junior school.

### **Proposal for Whitchurch First School and Whitchurch Junior School**

Permanent expansion with effect from September 2015.

(A bulge Reception class to open in September 2013)

### **Whitchurch Junior School Response**

The Governing Body of Whitchurch Junior School agrees with the approach to creating additional school places in Harrow. The governors are well aware of the shortfall of school places, and agree that it is the responsibility of the school to support the creation of more school places to educate the young people of Harrow.

The Governing Body of Whitchurch Junior School agrees on the permanent expansion of Whitchurch Junior School, when the school is satisfied that the plans presented have been agreed by the Headteacher and Governing Body of Whitchurch Junior School.

During the feasibility meetings held at Whitchurch parents raised the question of traffic and parking. The school also has concerns that need to be addressed about new builds and expansion.

### **Whitchurch First School and Nursery Response**

The views and points expressed by the Governing Body of Whitchurch First School are summarised as follows. The Governing Body considers that the generic issue of school expansion is not an ideal solution; they would prefer to see new builds that increase the numbers of schools. This it is generally believed would be a much better long-term solution. The Governing Body are aware that this solution would seem to be the only one on the table and that, since the government are prepared to fund this, in all likelihood it will go ahead.

The Governing Body of Whitchurch First School and Nursery propose exploring an expansion to 5 or 6 forms of entry and the development of high school provision subject to Whitchurch Playing Fields forming part of the solution and the agreement of Stanburn Junior School. To sum up the governing body of Whitchurch First School and Nursery are prepared to go ahead with the proposal for primary expansions bearing in mind the caveats listed in its response.

The Governing Body makes other general points and issues specific to the Whitchurch schools, including:

- Maximising the budget spent on the actual building and the additional resources for the school.
- Some detailed design points arising from the site feasibility study work and current issues at the school.
- Potential 'hidden' and non-communicated costs to the school that need to be borne in mind in planning the programme.
- Guaranteed start date and end date for the building works.
- The current standard of accommodation at the school to continue and be upheld and improved upon.

### **General Consultation Responses (including individuals, organisations and on-line)**

A summary of the number of responses is presented in the table:

Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
41	17	8	66
62.1%	25.8%	12.1%	

A number of comments not in support of the proposal included reference to the need to maintain the existing school size and the already overstretched facilities including the playspace. Comment was made about the lack of planning by the Council to secure additional school places while agreeing the development of housing and the current traffic levels. A respondent in support of the proposals felt that as an outstanding school they should be expanded and another felt that this was positive planning ahead. Others were in support as long as the appropriate spaces were created and the standards remain high with an increase in school size. A few comments were made about the traffic congestion in the area.

### **Officer Comments**

The permanent expansion of Whitchurch First School and Whitchurch Junior School would contribute to the need for places in the North East Planning Area. These schools were the subject of a successful Targeted Basic Need Programme bid to deliver new places by September 2015 as part of the Council's school place planning strategy to which all schools contribute to the solution. The site feasibility study has identified the additional accommodation that would be required and seeks to address issues for the schools arising from the current configuration. Discussions will continue with the schools about their concerns about new builds and expansion.

To mitigate the traffic impact the Council will complete a transport assessment and work with the schools to develop the School Travel Plan to reduce the use of car journeys and raise road safety awareness. The transport assessment will be used to inform parking and other restrictions that may assist with the specific congestion areas.

A coordinated cross-council approach is being adopted by officers to address the traffic and school travel planning issues. This is intended to ensure that all that can possibly be done to address traffic problems and to influence travel behaviour is done. This corporate approach is described in more detail in the Cabinet report.

The proposals raised by Whitchurch First School and Nursery for the development of more school places on the school and playing fields site are noted and would need to be considered in relation to plans for the playing fields. There are already plans agreed by Cabinet for the development of Whitchurch Playing Fields.

**Officer Recommendation**

Statutory proposals are published to increase Whitchurch First School and Whitchurch Junior School by one form of entry (30 places) to be four form of entry (120 places) schools in Reception intake with effect from September 2015. Whitchurch First School to take a bulge class in September 2014.