

School Specific Responses

School: Belmont School

Planning Area: Central

Consultation Proposal: Bulge class from September 2012 and permanent expansion with effect from September 2013.

School Response Governing Body

The response from the school was opposed to the proposal to expand Belmont School. This was based on the reasons that:

- parents chose Belmont School because it is smaller school at two forms of entry school and children are treated as individuals.
- The school has not been full in 13 years and any additional pupils from the projected increase in birth rate could be accommodated in local schools which are not full.
- The bulge class in September 2009 has experienced high levels of mobility – only 58% of the year group have been in the school since September 2009.
- Hibbert Road will have further congestion.
- Just over half the pupils in reception will be able to attend the nursery class. Those pupils that do not attend the Belmont Nursery class have lower levels of attainment on entry.

The school request that this proposal is reconsidered so that the school can remain two forms of entry.

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	No Reply	Total
33	340	38	0	411

A very high number of responses were received from the Belmont School community and local residents. Pupils, parents, staff, and governors shared many of the concerns.

Comments were made that fit within the majority of the themes, especially about the impact on existing facilities and activities at the school. A particular concern expressed by them all along with local residents was about traffic congestion and the disruption and hazards this causes currently that would be exacerbated by expansion.

A concern of school staff is that the school has not been full in recent times with associated pupil mobility and impact on teaching and learning.

Feasibility study outcomes

Initial feasibility work has been undertaken to identify potential options for expansion and indicative costings for the building work required. If Cabinet decides to move these schools to the statutory process for permanent expansion, further work would be undertaken on options for expansion.

Officer Comments

The proposal to expand Belmont School has generated the largest number of responses (411 in total) which includes 163 responses from pupils. (There were 168 pupil responses overall).

There is obviously considerable concern in the school community about the proposal to expand the school.

Within the Primary School Expansion Programme proposals there are no plans to increase the nursery provision available. Therefore all three form entry schools are in the similar position with a smaller number of their reception pupils attending their own nursery class. The work by the local authority to support the Foundation Stage and Early Years provision aims to contribute to the development of all children regardless of what pre-school setting they might attend.

Belmont School was larger in the past as two three form entry first and middle schools. Through the amalgamation the size of the school was reduced to two forms of entry in September 2009 and further reduced by the change in the age of transfer. It has physical capacity that could be re-commissioned for classroom spaces. The local authority has to ensure that its strategic solution maximises the potential of re-commissioning accommodation deployed differently currently. It is considered that Belmont School has this potential.

Within Harrow there are schools that are one, two and three form entry combined schools which are successful and popular. There is no evidence to suggest that the size of the school affects the ability of the teachers and staff to provide a high quality education to all pupils. The school's senior leadership team would be structured to manage the larger pupil numbers.

Given the response of the school, their request for the proposal to be reconsidered and that the governors are recruiting a new headteacher for September 2012, it is proposed that the permanent expansion of the school will not be progressed at this stage. Belmont School will be retained as a potential school for a temporary bulge class to meet increasing demand. If an additional class is opened the situation will be reviewed and there will be further consideration of permanent expansion.

Officer Recommendation

1. At this time permanent expansion is not progressed.
2. Belmont School will be considered for a temporary bulge class and/or permanent expansion as required in future.

Note about the Central Primary Planning Area

The range of increased demand above current available permanent places in the Central Primary Planning Area is between an additional 61 and 85 pupils per year. The proposal for this planning area is to increase the permanent provision by 90 places, supplemented by temporary additional reception classes.

Marlborough Primary School and the Pinner Park schools are recommended for statutory processes for expansion in this primary planning area subject to affordability. Though Belmont School is not recommended for permanent expansion at this time, with only six community school sites in the Central Planning Area it would be difficult for the schools to meet demand, if it is sustained at the predicted high level, through temporary additional Reception classes. Norbury School has already taken two bulge Reception classes in 2010 and 2011.

The pressure is acute particularly in reception classes and in the Central Planning Area at the time of writing this report there were 13 reception places available to meet in year demand, across 6 schools, which included 2 temporary bulge classes.