

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF ALDINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Summary of the Public Meeting held on 27 June 2011 at Aldington PS

Approximately 40 people attended the public meeting including parents, governors and other interested parties.

Issue or Comment	Response
<p>No concerns around the school growing but I have concerns re traffic problems and the Village Hall car park usage. The afternoon groups in the Village Hall (mainly senior citizens) cannot park in the Village Hall car park. Something needs to be provided in the village.</p>	<p>Parking concerns are acknowledged. The Village Hall and the school can work together to find a solution. Obtaining planning consent is a statutory process and the traffic and local road networks will be considered by planners. The School Travel Plan will need to be revisited and we need to find a way of minimising traffic and encouraging parents to be respectful to residents in the village.</p>
<p>My children cycle or walk to school but the national speed limit applies from just outside the village, even past the new houses. Could Highways look at reducing the speed limit to 30mph?</p>	<p>Parish Council should look at this first. Local residents can lobby Highways and their County Councillor. Residents could monitor the situation – eg speed-watching.</p>
<p>It's important for all children in the village area to come to the village school. The school is making great efforts to get children walking or cycling to school. It's a good school. High quality of buildings and site. If it is developed then the expansion must be to a similar standard.</p>	
<p>The proposed expansion comes at a critical time for my 8 year old child. How would the plan be implemented and how would it be phased? Would we have mobiles? If so, that's a retrograde step. What would happen after 1 September 2012?</p>	<p>The school are taking 25 children in September 2011 which will involve re-jigging classes around. If 30 pupils are admitted in 2012 the school will need an additional classroom and would move to a 6 class structure. Then, as cohorts go through, the juniors would split into 4 classrooms. It will take about 3 years or so. We have additional funding from developer contributions towards the cost of a permanent building, but if we were to use mobiles they are very unlike the "old" mobiles. They are now high-quality with a 60 year life-span; they would be of a high standard.</p>
<p>If you use modular classrooms would you provide covered walkways to the school?</p>	<p>Won't know at this stage. We are looking to provide a permanent extension to the school.</p>
<p>Regarding moving the speed limits – it would be helpful if KCC will help.</p>	<p>We will report back to Highways and Transport. In the meantime you can talk to Andrew Wickham, your local councillor. [Andrew Wickham agreed to help.]</p>
<p>Will you build one classroom, then further</p>	<p>Hope not to do so. Hope to build both together.</p>

Issue or Comment	Response
down the line build another one?	
Where would the extension be in relation to the school? And if they were mobiles where would they go?	Permanent classrooms likely to be on the left hand side of the school [looking from the road]. We would need to consider where mobiles would go (if we use them).
Will you extend the hall to accommodate the extra pupils?	No. We would need to add ancillary features – toilets, hard play area etc.
What about lunches in the hall, with 70 more children?	That will be a school management issue – two sittings, packed lunches in another room etc.
The school recently undertook a consultation with parents about how children are allocated into classes. Will they use the same system or age-based classes?	Ultimately age-based. During the first few years the school will continue with the mixed-age structure. The headteacher explained that if the proposal goes ahead, in 2012 the school will have YR, Y1 and Y2 in separate classrooms and mixed in the juniors. They will use the same procedures as currently for finding the right class for the right child and look at this yearly.
If the school expands to 7 classrooms would children share resources until you can afford new resources?	The school will receive re-organisation funding of (currently) £7,000 per new classroom. They will also receive additional revenue funding as children come through, ie, in September 2011 the extra 5 children would provide additional revenue funding.
How many children will come out from Ashford? Some come now from areas like Park Farm – that's 6 or 7 miles away. Is it for local children or just Ashford overspill?	Our forecasting methods use Health Authority birth data and historical figures / trends. We take parental preference into account as well. I cannot say that the 70 places will fill only with local children. I have had discussions with the governing body about how to ensure that Aldington has a primary school in the future. There are more and more pressures on schools' budgets now. We know that 1 form entry schools are more secure than slightly smaller schools. It's a trade-off – a few people coming to the school from outside the village means we are more likely to retain the school. It's a balance.
We moved here one year ago. The intake of 20 made up my mind to move here so that my child could be taught in a smaller group.	The headteacher explained that the school has 5 classrooms; pupils are in classes of 30 now. They are taught in mixed age-group classes.