

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF CHALLOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Summary of the Public Meeting held on 11 July 2011 at Challock PS

Approximately 70 people attended the public meeting including parents, governors and other interested parties.

Issue or Comment	Response
<p>Headteacher: The school fully supports this proposal. With our current mixed age groups some parents find it an issue if their child “stays down”. Before this proposal budgets were slashed and we were facing a redundancy situation. This proposal has helped. Larger schools are stronger, smaller schools are quite vulnerable.</p> <p>We take the parking issue very seriously. We are fortunate to be able to use the village hall car park and we often send reminder letters to parents. In the last 5 years we have developed two walking buses – one from across The Lees and one from the car park and as parents come into reception we encourage them to use the car park.</p>	
<p>Chair of Governors: The Governing Body endorses this proposal. The school has an excellent reputation. Our last Ofsted was good with outstanding features and we are striving to make it outstanding all round. The proposal is to enlarge the school a little. It’s not a massive enlargement. Birth rate is increasing. The current size means we are subjected to mixed year groups so constantly struggle with resources, always looking at staffing. We feel that what is gained by the children and the community outweighs any temporary disruption caused by setting that process up. I know that parking is an issue; it’s a perennial problem wherever you go.</p> <p>We try to address the problems – parking on zigzags, bad language etc and we will continue to do so.</p>	
<p>A point was raised by a member of the audience that there was a conflict of interests in allowing the Vice-Chair of Governors to speak as he was also Chair of the Parish Council.</p>	<p>The Chair of SOAB explained that there was no conflict of interest. The Vice-Chair of Governors had declared his position and there was no illegality.</p>
<p>Vice-Chair of Governors: As a parish councillor and a villager I see the educational benefits of the school expanding. The school is vulnerable at this size and the village cannot afford to put the school at risk and therefore I think we should take on the extra pupils. It will still be a village school with a village ethos.</p>	

Issue or Comment	Response
<p>The big issue is the parking and the main problem parkers are the parents who live in the village who seem to think that as they are only parking for 10 minutes they can park where they like.</p> <p>I know there has been abuse to people living in Kiln Close from parents – all we can do is educate those parents.</p> <p>Wholeheartedly endorse the proposal on behalf of the Parish Council, as a parent and as a villager.</p>	
<p>This so-called public meeting has been kept very quiet. I came across a leaflet by chance. It's not just the parking; it's the increased traffic – double the number of vehicles. I call it now the “Mad Mother's Run”. You are taking your life in your hands. It's not about 200 people in the school; it's about 800 people in the village. It affects the village.</p> <p>I totally agree with the structure of the school – how each year would be better off separate. It's a wonderful school and I would hate to see it go, but the rest of the village must be taken into account.</p>	<p>People who receive a copy of the Consultation Document are those linked to the school – parents/carers, staff and governors. There is little facility to leaflet drop to all residents in any area. This is advice received over many years – just parents/carers, staff and governors of the school.</p>
<p>I refute that the traffic problems are caused by residents, they come from Kennington. They cause a very serious problem prior to 9am and at 3pm. It's not just the area outside the school but all the way to the Lees. The headteacher has tried to address this but it has not worked.</p>	<p>School will have to put together a School Travel Plan. Governing Body will need to address the comments regarding extra vehicles and children walking. For example, a third walking bus.</p>
<p>The figures on the document (1715 places and forecast of 1781 children) show a shortfall of 66 places. If you provide 210 places here it does not tie in with the facts on the back of the consultation document.</p>	<p>The 1715 places are from all the local rural primary schools – the ones within 4 miles.</p>
<p>Why choose a radius of 4 miles, why not 10 miles or more? What was the rationale behind that?</p>	<p>A 4 mile radius was chosen so it does not completely encompass the whole of Ashford town centre. 4 miles takes you very close to the edge of Ashford but also brings in the local rural primary schools.</p>
<p>Great fan of this school but what will happen to the class sizes following the expansion? It's good to keep small class sizes as children get more attention.</p>	<p>Would agree with your comment on small classes to a point but it is the quality of teaching and learning that is important. If proposal goes ahead it will be an increase of 10 pupils per year for the next 7 years.</p> <p>The school currently has 5 classes all of which have 30 children in them and we try not to exceed 30.</p> <p>The school was very vulnerable before being asked to take extra children. From September 2011 Year R will be 30, then discrete year groups of 20.</p> <p>The school currently has 5 classes with 30 pupils in each class and these are mixed age-ranges, which is not ideal.</p>

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	<p>Teachers can teach mixed age-ranges but a single form of entry is ideal for teachers and pupils. If the expansion goes ahead with the two new classrooms there will still be 30 in each class but they will all be the same age-range.</p>
<p>We don't have that number of children in the village. Most of them come from Kennington. Why can't parents moving into this village get their children into this school? People from Kennington cause the problems.</p>	<p>All parents have the opportunity of putting four preferences for schools they might wish their child to attend. Challock received 70 applications for places in September 2011, 28 as first preferences. If more applications are received than places are available then oversubscription criteria is applied. (Looked After Children, sibling links, distance etc.)</p> <p>When children move into the village during the year there can be problems. KS1 pupils – there cannot be more than 30 in a class. KS2 – not the case and can expand junior classes if headteacher and governors agree.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances we can over-ride KS1 legislation, eg a LAC. Second most common way to exceed the Published Admission Number is when the parent goes to an independent Appeal Panel who can direct the child into that year group.</p>
<p>This village is an accident waiting to happen. I am assured that the traffic will be taken care of. It's not been taken care of to date. How can you guarantee this with an additional 60 vehicles? Emergency vehicles would have real problems getting through when the cars are parked all along the road. The most dangerous time is the afternoon. Children rush out to the cars, some mums want to chat, and some mums want to get home – quickly. One day a child is going to be killed and it will be a child. Probably a village child walking to school. The abuse is very bad. My wife and I have been on the receiving end of this several times.</p>	<p>This is why the School Travel Plan has to be written. Agree there will be an increase in traffic and accept your point. Doubt whether more than 30-35 cars can use the entrance to the school but realise this may not answer your query. Emergency vehicles: the fire brigade would, if needed, push those vehicles out of the way. The points raised about traffic are consistent with all schools across Kent. There is no magic solution to traffic control at drop-off and pick up times. We will have a School Travel Plan, we will try to educate the parents about parking and appropriate behaviour. If we (governors, us, all of you) feel this is a bigger issue then the local PCSO could be asked to patrol on a regular basis at certain times to try to control parents and the behaviour of parents. No one can really control the way people talk to each other. I've been abused when I've been visiting schools.</p>
<p>I am a police officer but do not go out in uniform trying to sort out the traffic problems. I've received abuse. I agree entirely with previous comments. The infrastructure of the village does not present itself for emergency services.</p>	

Issue or Comment	Response
I consider that increasing the school by 50% is a major increase. It will reduce the play area. Twice as many children in half the amount of space.	When the school was built it was built to accommodate a 1fe primary school. Playing field regulations say we will have enough space for 210 children. The mobile will be placed where the “mound” currently is. We will be making use of dead space.
The school is not an overspill for Ashford and that’s what it’s becoming.	We cannot control where parents send their children. They have the right to express a preference. Some parents come from Charing which is odd as that is further away than Kennington.
What percentage of children have come from the village and surrounding villages? And what percentage has come from Kennington in the past? If the school is increased in size what percentage will come from Kennington? Schools should be built at Goat Lees, Trinity Road etc. We should not be attracting those people to come here and cause problems.	
I’ve been here since the 1960s. It’s always been a good school. The school has always had good results. It is not at risk in my opinion.	Any school below 210 pupils are the first schools at risk if numbers drop. A few less pupils in a smaller than 1fe school can lead to redundancies. We will secure the future of the school for years to come by making it 1fe. The increase is slightly under 50%. In the time it will take the school to grow to 1fe the LA will put pressure on the school and the Governing Body re the parking issue.
There are schools planned at Repton Park and Goat Lees, which is 6 miles away. Do the figures include these schools?	The schools at Repton Park and Goat Lees are to meet the significant demand from new development in those areas. We want to ensure that children can go to their nearest local school.
Where will the children be eating? Currently they use classrooms and the hall. Will the hall be made bigger? When the school has functions the hall is barely adequate for children and parents now – what will happen in the future? The Harvest Festival was held at the local church and there was standing room only. Will you need to submit more plans for more space?	The school will trial different methods at lunchtime and use the village hall for performances etc. We could, for example, do a harvest festival for infants and one for juniors.
I know you will build on the “mound” but there will be more children in the space. My son has special needs. The school was worried about him being knocked over. The SENCo is part-time at the moment, will her hours be increased?	The school will consider the need for additional hours for the SENCo as children come into the school.
When there are 30 pupils in a class will there be more support? More TAs? What will be the ratio of teacher or support staff to pupils?	Classes are 30 now, so there will be no change. As the school grows the school will look at additional support. The school will consider the needs of all children, not just SEN children.

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My child is in Y2 and currently split with a Y1 class. In the juniors there are classes of 20. Will those classes stay at 20 while my child is there or can you add 10 additional children?	The expansion will be a rolling through process (unless there is a casual admission). Plan is that current classes will roll through the school and the PAN of 30 will roll up through the school. Additional staff will be provided as needed.
I am in support of the proposal but why is the decision about the expansion not made until December when the mobile will be in place from October?	There were 28 applications for reception this year and the LA asked the school to take 30. The LA agreed to provide additional accommodation. The mobile will be temporary until the formal consultation ends and formal decision is made. If the public consultation stops at any stage in the process then the accommodation will be needed for the 30 children arriving in 2011. It would be removed after seven years.
By KCC spending probably £250k on a mobile classroom will that in any way influence the decision on this proposal?	No. The need to expand is for the 28 applicants who wanted places in the school. We have to respond to that. Future government legislation is likely to say expansion of the school will come first. The cost of the mobile classroom is around £120k. It's a significant sum but we have to do it because local parents want their children to come here.
I am a parent and a midwife and I can assure you that there will be no difficulty in filling the extra spaces needed at this school. I fully support the proposal. The parking is going to be a big issue, but that's the only issue and I support the proposal.	
If the mobile does not arrive until October what happens in September and up until the mobile arrives?	The school will move things around. The SENCo room will be used to accommodate 20 children temporarily.
I think this is an excellent idea for the school. Casual admissions will be accommodated. It's better for children to be with the same age group. Hothfield school closed two years ago. The headteacher has already talked about redundancies at this school. Just because a school is good won't protect it going forward.	