

By:	Kevin Shovelton, Director of Education Planning & Access
To:	Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education, Learning & Skills
Subject	Decision number: 12/02016 Proposal to expand Ethelbert Road Primary School (Community)
Classification:	Unrestricted

Summary:	This report sets out the results of the public consultation.
Recommendation	The Education Cabinet Member is asked to consider the responses to the consultation and agree to the issuing of a public notice to expand the school.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Swale section of the Kent Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2012-17 indicates a need for additional places in the Faversham area.

1.2 On 12 September 2012, Education Cabinet Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills that a consultation takes place on the proposal to expand Ethelbert Road Primary School.

1.3 This report sets out the results of the public consultation, which took place between 4 March 2013 and 19 April 2013. A public meeting was held on 21 March 2013.

2. Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to enlarge Ethelbert Road Primary School by 15 reception year places, taking their PAN to 30 (1FE) for the September 2014 intake. Successive Reception Year intake will offer 30 places each year and the school will eventually have a total capacity of 210 pupils.

3. Bold Steps and the Kent Commissioning Plan

3.1 This proposal will help to secure our ambition, "to ensure every child can go to a good school where they make good progress and can have fair access to school places" as set out in Bold steps for Kent.

3.2 The Swale section of the Commissioning Plan indicates a need to commission additional primary capacity in Faversham, Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

4. Outcomes of the Public Consultation

4.1 A total of 128 responses were received with only 5 objecting to the proposal.

4.2 A summary of the comments received during the consultation period are given in appendix 1.

4.3 A summary of the views and comments given at the public consultation meeting is attached as appendix 2.

5. Views

5.1 Local Member

Mr Tom Gates is the local member for Faversham and he attended the public meeting held on 21 March. He fully supported the proposal to expand the school but also expressed his understanding of the parking issues raised by local residents and will be looking to see if anything can be done to ease the situation.

5.2 Governing Body

The Governing Body of Ethelbert Road Primary School fully supports the proposal to permanently increase the admission number to 30. This will allow us to teach in single year groups and have a greater number of staff to facilitate the wide range of learning opportunities for all the children in our care. Being able to permanently increase our intake will enable more local families to be offered a place at a school of their choice. Allowing us to admit 30 children a year will provide more school places, which are desperately needed in our locality.

The Governing Body are absolutely passionate about being a one form entry primary school. We want to be able to build on what we as a school community have developed together. We want to be able to go on the learning journey with more children and to provide them with an outstanding education.

5.3 Pupils

A video of the children discussing the proposed expansion was shown at the public meeting. Their views were in support of the proposal and below are some of their comments:

- Increasing the numbers will let more children and families come to the school, particularly those who live close to the school.
- We can stay as a solid year group throughout our time at Ethelbert Road.
- More children will mean more friends to share ideas with and play with.
- There will be more staff and more opportunities for activities.

5.4 Area Education Officer

This is a popular and successful school that is regularly oversubscribed. Increasing pupil numbers in the Faversham area, including in the vicinity of Ethelbert Road, mean that expansion is necessary to ensure sufficient school places for local children. We will work closely with the school on the provision of additional accommodation and the planning for the works on site in order to ensure that this supports the smooth running of the school, is in keeping with the vision that the governing body has for Ethelbert Road Primary School and provides for a permanent solution for September 2014. The school at that time would also produce a new travel plan in liaison with Highways and taking into consideration the views of the local residents.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.3 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out at the start of this consultation and is available via the following link:

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/gf2.ti/f/321794/8101829.1/DOC-/EIA%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20Report%20August%202012.doc>

The conclusion following the public consultation is that the presumptions made in the initial assessment still remain and that it is not necessary to initiate a further Equality Impact Assessment.

7. Recommendations

7.1 The Education Cabinet Member is asked to consider the responses to the consultation and agree to the issuing of a public notice to expand the school.

8. Background Documents (and links to them)

COMMISSIONING PLAN FOR EDUCATION PROVISION 2012-17

<http://kent590w3:9070/documents/s34295/FINAL%20VERSION%20Kent%20Comm%20Plan%20Ed%20Prov%202012-17%20attached%20to%20WEB%20SITE%2020%20SEPT.pdf>

Education Cabinet Committee report – 12 September 2012 – Primary Commissioning – East Kent

<http://kent590w3:9070/documents/g4880/Public%20reports%20pack%2012th-Sep-2012%2010.00%20Education%20Cabinet%20Committee.pdf?T=10>

The public consultation document is available via the following link:

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/Ethelbert/consultationHome>

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The Proposed Expansion of Ethelbert Road Primary School from 105 pupil places to 210, increasing the PAN from 15 to 30.

Summary of written responses

Consultation documents (hard copies) distributed: 350
 Responses received: 127

	Support	Against	Undecided	Total
Parents/Carers	89	1	0	90
Governors	2	0	0	2
Members of Staff	15	0	0	15
Interested Parties	16	4	1	21
Total	122	5	1	128

In support of the proposal

Parents

- As a community school, children living within that community should not be excluded. Increasing the admission number supports inclusion and increases the potential for new strengths and resources within families to contribute towards the school.
- Increasing the admission number at Ethelbert Road responds to the challenge faced by Local Authorities in providing school places for all children and meeting parents' preferred choice of school. Ethelbert Road is an oversubscribed school, clearly showing its popularity within its community and its status as the preferred choice for parents.
- Ethelbert Road is a town primary school offering a fantastic education that few town children can currently get places at. This proposal will make this standard of education open to more children in our town.
- I really do feel that a greater number of children will positively influence the lives of the existing children.
- I think it only fair that others in the locality be able to attend this wonderful school.
- Faversham is drawing in young families by its reputation as a great place to lead a family life and to educate one's children. Therefore, we must allow our local schools to grow and develop in these positive ways to maintain the town and community expansion and to sustain its future hopes and aspirations.

Staff

- At the moment we have to turn more children away each year but with an admission number of 30 we will not have to do so and therefore more children can be provided with the amazing learning opportunities our school provides.
- As a larger school we will have a larger staff and be able to offer our pupils a wider range of opportunities and experiences.
- Our school is unique and I feel that more children should be able to benefit from attending our happy school.
- This will be an amazing opportunity for the school and our local community.

Governors

- Increasing the size of the school is reasonable as the new building will permit the extra classes.
- We need the extra places in Faversham and with an excellent headteacher and staff the pupils will get an excellent start to their education.

Other interested parties

- We are in favour of the proposal but the only proviso is that the school management must impress upon all parents bringing their children to the school by car, the need to exert the utmost discipline in their driving, in approaching and parking in an area that is already quite congested at some times in the day.
- If the class sizes are permanently expanded to 30 it does give us hope that our son may be able to go there.
- We are residents who support the proposal but would like to see a dedicated crossing point near to the school to make crossing safer. We would also like a two hour parking restriction in the road to restrict commuter parking and free up spaces for parents visiting the school.

Faversham Town Council responded in writing and made the following comments:

The town council unanimously support the proposal to expand Ethelbert Road Primary School. It is encouraging to see a good school expanding in this way. There was some debate about the impact of increased traffic in and around Ethelbert Road, but it was recognised that the school has good public access unlike other primary schools in Faversham.

Against the proposal

Parent

- I feel the Council should be funding new schools, not squeezing more children in over capacity classes and jeopardising the schooling of our children.

Other interested parties

- The intake has already increased and this has created a situation that is untenable in terms of highly increased traffic flows in Egbert Road and surrounding roads. The problem is further exacerbated by inconsiderate parents who create significant problems with parking.
- I propose that the school should be relocated to bigger premises, purpose built in the Central Car Park, Faversham. The school would then benefit from being located close to the Arden Theatre.

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from 105 pupil places to 210, increasing the PAN from 15 to 30**

Summary of the public meeting held on Thursday 21 March at Ethelbert Road Primary School

The meeting was chaired by Mr Gary Cooke and was attended by approximately 90 people, including parents, governors and other interested parties. The meeting was also attended by Mr Tom Gates, local KCC member and members of Faversham Town Council.

Views and comments are listed below:

- The school is outstanding and plays a full and active role in the community, engaging with the facilities in the town and wider cultural activities. Overall the children's learning is enhanced with these opportunities and expanding the school will allow more children to take advantage of these opportunities.
- Every child in Faversham should be allowed the privilege of coming to this school.
- This is a vibrant school bringing life to the neighbourhood.
- I live close to the school and want to say that my daughter is having an amazing time here and it would be wonderful for more families to bring their children to Ethelbert Road.
- I am a local resident and do have some concerns about the parking although I agree this is a wonderful school and can see how many people support this proposal. It is frustrating when my driveway gets blocked by parents parking and my next door neighbour who is an emergency responder has also had problems. Nevertheless, I wish the school good luck in the future.
- Parents need to take responsibility and support the headteacher in her endeavours to encourage parents to park respectfully in the local community.
- Parents should be encouraged to walk their children to school for health reasons as well as helping them to become more independent.
- Ethelbert Road is an excellent school and if the expansion doesn't take place, it would be a lost opportunity for parents and the Council.