



EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES

Consultation Meeting Concerning the Proposed Expansion of Churchfields Primary School

Venue:	Churchfields Primary School, Churchfields Road, Beckenham, BR3 4QY		
Time:	7.00pm-8.00pm		
Date:	Thursday, 12 July 2012		
Audience:	12 (10 Parents, 2 Governors (1 Parent, 1 Community))		
Status of Meeting:	Consultation meeting as part of the formal consultation process		
Panel:	Mike Barnes (Chair)	-	Bromley Council (Deputy Assistant Director (Education))
	Rob Bollen	-	Bromley Council (Education Strategic Property Manager)
	Tom Hyndley	-	Head Teacher, Churchfields Primary School
	Recorder : Kevin Gerred	-	Bromley Council (Partnerships and Planning Officer)

Note from the Recorder of the Meeting – These notes are not intended to be a verbatim record of everything said at the meeting but they are a summary of the main points raised by the audience and the responses given by the Panel. These notes have been published on Bromley Council's Website.

1. Introduction

Mike Barnes welcomed the audience to the meeting.

2. Background

2.1 The Proposal

- (i) Bromley Council's Proposal is to permanently expand Churchfields Primary School from 30 to 60 pupils at Year Reception (i.e. at the age children start school) from September 2013.
- (ii) A Consultation letter has been distributed as a basis for consulting parents/carers, staff, School, Governors and other interested stakeholders on the Proposal. It summarises the reasons for the Proposal, identifies the issues for consideration and explains the arrangements for Consultation.
- (iii) The Consultation commenced on 11 June 2012 and ends on 20 July 2012.
- (iv) The outcomes from Consultation will be reported to the Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 11 September 2012. The Report will be published a week before the meeting and will be available to view on Bromley Council's Website.

- (v) Bromley Council believes that the Proposal is the best practical way to provide additional school places of high quality for children within the area of the school.

2.2 The Context

- (i) The school has been a two forms of entry (a form of entry equates to 30 children) in the past. Because the school could not fill its 60 places it created problems with the school budget (school funding is pupil driven) which resulted in difficult decisions having to be taken e.g. mixed age classes. Given that the school was unable to attract 60 pupils at Reception, the Local Authority (LA) agreed to reduce the school to one form of entry (30 pupils at Reception).
- (ii) The birth rate has since increased with the consequent need for additional primary school places. The LA is seeking to expand provision across a range of schools, Churchfields being one of them.
- (iii) In 2010 Churchfields agreed to accept a 'bulge year' (an increase of one form of entry at Reception), but decided not to make the increase permanent, preferring to review the situation with the LA in spring 2012. The school has been subsequently full at two forms of entry for the past two years, with pupils drawn from close proximity to the school.
- (iv) The LA's 2012 review of Bromley primary school places identified the need to increase the number of Reception places available to children at a number of schools across the Borough. It is the LA's view that increased pupil numbers at Churchfields will be sustained for a minimum of ten years. The LA is committed to financing developments at the school to help make it a successful two form of entry school.

3. Comments Made at Meeting

Question: What will happen to the Children and Family Centre building?

Response: The LA runs the Centre and has decided to close it. Government money was used to open the Centre and there is 'claw-back' of money if the building is not used as 0-5 provision. It is intended to use the building for this age group in the future. Currently, the school has agreed with the LA that it will continue to run a Breakfast Club in the Centre including provision for 0-5, and will use it for small-scale 'interactive' teaching. The building is not big enough to allow the use of conventional classrooms. The Family Worker's office will be located in the building. Possible use as provision for two year olds in the future.

Q: How will the changes affect the school site?

R: The school will not lose any existing space. There will be a new second Reception class, two new Year 1 classes, a new Sensory Room and new Hygiene Room for the unit and new toilets. The current Nursery will become a Music and Intervention Centre and a brand new Nursery will be built to occupy a new stand-alone position apart from the school. In addition, general refurbishment work will take place e.g. ~~full~~ improved toilet provision. The result of the LA's investment in the school will be better provision all round for the children.

- Q:** Timescale for building works?
- R:** Work on new Reception class to commence Summer 2012. Work on new Year 1 classrooms to commence Summer 2013. Remaining works, including Nursery, to commence Summer 2014, although this is subject to further negotiation with the school. There is likely to be some Spring 2014 work leading up to the final phase of work in Summer 2014. The work is not being done all in one go, it is being undertaken in phases which is will be less intrusive for the children.
- Q:** Disruption to pupils?
- R:** There will inevitably be some disruption because of the building works, but this will be kept to a minimum. The Panel assured parents that there would not be the need to use Portacabins or decant children from the site. Building staff will not have direct contact with children. Health and Safety and Child Protection will be of paramount importance and will be handled as such between the LA and the school.
- Q:** Is the Nursery a luxury provision?
- R:** The LA has to provide Nursery provision by statute. In Bromley it does this through a mix of Council maintained and private/voluntary provision. Churchfields Nursery would remain a Council maintained provision. It doesn't cost the school any money to run the Nursery, but it does not make a profit either. The Nursery acts as a good recruiting feature. Parents like it.
- Q:** Within four years there will be another 120 children in the school. How will they be catered for?
- R:** The school will consider this very carefully e.g. introduction of staggered lunchtimes.
- Q:** Is the Hall big enough to accommodate all of the children?
- R:** Yes, it will be possible to accommodate all of the children in the Hall, although it is rare for this to happen. Accommodating all parents/carers will be a challenge and will need to be carefully thought through.
- Q:** Is the After School Club affected?
- R:** It might need to be re-located temporarily on site.
- Q:** Is the Head Teacher happy that the LA will provide sufficient resources for the school to meet the requirements of a two form of entry school?
- R:** The HT advised that he was happy that this would be the case. Money is devolved by a formula based on the number of children on roll at the school. Other items will be recharged to the LA e.g. additional furniture and equipment. The Panel Chair confirmed that the LA will fund the children attending the school, capital costs and furniture and equipment needs.
- Q:** How will the addition of new children work?
- R:** Every September a new Reception class will be introduced. At the end of the process, the school population will have doubled. One form of entry schools are difficult to resource and maintain. It is easier to resource and maintain a full two forms of entry school, as you achieve economies of scale.

Q: Prefer focus to be on standards rather than expansion – get back to being an Outstanding School. The expansion could prove a distraction for the HT and Governors in that they will need to invest a lot of time into making the expansion work.

R: The HT and School Governors want the school to become outstanding again and they are working very hard towards this goal. They feel that the expansion will help eg the impact of Unit pupils' test results deflates the overall school results – the bigger mainstream pupil population will dissipate this. The Parent Governor attending the meeting assured parents that standards were the Governing Body's top priority. She added that a two forms of entry school will offer teaching staff greater opportunities for development and progression. The Chair stated that the LA will support the school to make the process as smooth and as less onerous as possible. The HT and School Governor assured parents that expansion will not detract from the quality of teaching in the school.

The meeting was ended by the Chair, Mike Barnes. He thanked the audience for attending the meeting.

Meeting ended at 8.00pm.

Kevin Gerred
Partnerships and Planning Officer
Education and Care Services Department