

Belleville School - Reasons for Proposals

1. When did the Council identify the need for additional primary school places? Why has the Council chosen Belleville School for expansion? Have alternative schools been considered? Why is a new school not being built?

The Council has been monitoring demand for primary places over a number of years with particular regard to the increase in the birth rate, which has risen significantly since 2006. The rising trend in births is expected to continue. In the light of demand for Reception places, the Council approved proposals to add primary school places at some schools for September 2009, including Belleville.

A study has indicated that it would be feasible to extend the main Belleville school building onto the car park area and into the area occupied by the school keeper's house, without loss of playground. The investment in the school would be in the region of £6million and would offer considerable benefits to school facilities.

Consultation is also taking place on proposals to add additional places at Beatrix Potter School in Earlsfield, Hotham School in Putney and St Michaels CE School in Southfields. Further proposals are being discussed with other schools across the Borough.

There is demand in the area to justify the addition of 1 form of entry at a local school.

2. Will the expansion just create more demand at Belleville and not actually reduce waiting lists? Will the expansion go all the way through the school to Year 6?

There is already significant demand for places at Belleville and applications for Reception places far exceed the capacity of the school. These are new places so they will enable more pupils to find a place at their preferred school.

The proposals would mean that the school would admit an additional 30 pupils in each year group and expand from its current capacity of 630 to 840 pupils over a period of seven years. The additional pupils will only be admitted at Reception age.

3. How will the expansion benefit Belleville?

The school could benefit from the addition of substantial new and remodelled facilities including:

- nine new classrooms
- a brand new integrated nursery class, and associated facilities;
- significantly more toilets, which will be modern and well equipped and available on each floor;
- additional support spaces;
- a double height multi purpose hall;
- improved external facilities;
- lifts will provide access both in the Victorian and new building.

There will be additional funding that will go directly to the school in the light of the increase in pupil numbers. This will provide the school with additional resources for teaching, learning, ICT and general support. The school will have more money to recruit good teachers. There will be good quality facilities to enable the school to cater for all needs.

The Consultation Process

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4. Can the consultation and approval process for the expansion be outlined? Why has more detail not been given at this stage? More information is needed, for example, the feasibility study

It is necessary to go through a statutory consultation process for any school expansion. The Council is keen to hear views on its proposals from anyone with an interest in Belleville School.

The Council decided to consult on the proposals for Belleville School at the end of September 2009. The consultation period was due to end on 27th October, but this has now been extended to 16th November to take account of parents' views and enable the proposals to be considered at the Council's Executive on 23rd November. The Executive will decide whether to:

- a. publish a notice for the proposed expansion at Belleville School;
- b. undertake further consultation;
- c. or not to proceed.

Should the decision be taken to publish a statutory notice setting out the Council's detailed proposals, there will then be a four week period after publication for comments and objections to be made to the Director of Children's Services. The Council's Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review the comments. A final decision will be made by the Council's Executive on whether to approve the proposals.

The feasibility study demonstrates that the proposed expansion at Belleville is feasible and workable but detailed plans will need to be developed during the next stage, once the principle of expanding the school has been agreed.

The Building Works

5. What exactly are the proposals?

The Council proposes to permanently enlarge the physical capacity of the school to accommodate extra pupils. Thirty pupils would be added to the reception year group each year. The current admission number for the school is 90, and the proposed admission number will be 120.

The proposal includes the following new accommodation:

1. a new double height multi-purpose hall of 120m², with an adjacent dining hall of 62m². The two halls can be used together to form a dining hall of 180m² or separately. This will be in addition to the three existing halls;
2. nine new classrooms;
3. a new nursery class;
4. new modern toilets
5. support rooms;
6. three lifts two in the new building and one in the existing building;
7. a multi use games area and other external improvements
8. a new kitchen.

There would be minimal closure of facilities. The approved contractor would have an area outside the proposed building for a construction compound. Additional playground space will become available with the demolition of the existing nursery building.

6. What temporary accommodation will there be and how long will it be needed for?

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Initially, additional suitable temporary classrooms will be provided to accommodate the extra pupils, until new permanent accommodation is ready in 2012. The extent of the temporary accommodation will depend on the exact final scheme but at present it is expected that 4 temporary classrooms will be needed.

7. How will the scheme be Project Managed?

A Project Manager in the Council's Children's Services Department will work with the appointed Design Team, the contractor and the school to manage the building work at every stage. Whilst we will ensure that there will be full support from the Council, it is recognised that building works can impact on a Headteacher's time. The school already has an organisational structure to ensure that the school's focus remains on teaching and learning. This will continue to be the main priority for the Headteacher.

8. How long will the building works last?

The draft programme has construction starting in June 2011 with two building phases. The first will be complete in September 2012, and the second phase in 2013.

Health & Safety

9. What assurances can the Council give about the Health and Safety of the children during the building works?

The building works will be carried out in accordance with the statutory regulations. The construction area will be kept separate at all times. The school will review and consult on procedures for managing the start and end of day. An additional entrance will be opened from November 2009 to help improve picking up and dropping off arrangements.

As part of the planning application the school will need to work with the Council to prepare a travel assessment and a 'green travel plan'. Parents will be encouraged to take a full part in this process.

The Headteacher and the Council will take ultimate responsibility for Health and Safety at all times.

Impact on Existing Resources

10. How will the school manage the additional pupils? For example lunchtimes, playtimes, timing of the school day.

The proposal will provide an additional dining hall of 182 m². The school will ensure that lunch times and playtimes are phased. Additional staff will be employed to help manage pupils.

11. How will the expansion affect the culture of the school?

Belleville School has grown and improved over the years. It thrives as a large, vibrant and ambitious school. There is a strong emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning. Children, parents and staff enjoy life at Belleville School.

12. How will the excellent educational standards at the school be maintained?

Belleville School is an outstanding school and has been praised for outstanding leadership and vision by HMI in October 2009. Standards at the school are significantly above the national average in all areas. Previous growth at the school has had a beneficial effect on teaching and learning. The school will be able to broaden the curriculum offer using the resources that will come with the additional pupils. This will include resources for pastoral care and support of all children to meet their needs.

13. What about secondary school places?

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The Council's Building Schools for the Future plans will provide sufficient secondary school places for the next decade.

Outdoor Space

14. How will the works affect the school's outdoor space?

The impact on existing outdoor space will not be significant. The existing nursery building will be demolished, adding to playground space. Although new buildings will take up some space, overall area will not change. It is expected that the school will have to phase playtimes to manage the additional children.

There will be increased opportunities for indoor and outdoor recreation with the new games and multi purpose hall.

Funding

15. How will the expansion be funded?

The main source of funding for these expansion schemes is expected to come from Government grant funding.