

Notes for Admissions Discussion - 19th April 2016

Document discussed – Demand for new primary school places in Ascot (Appendix A and B)

Present: Mr R Pelly, Mr I Meadows (dialled in), Revd D Uffindell, Mrs P O'Brien, Mrs S Sleigh

Apologies: Mrs S Hynard

Mrs O'Brien explained that representatives from the borough had been into school to conduct a feasibility study regarding possible school expansion. They had produced initial plans/drawings, which showed a two-storey build on the playground and car parking for staff at the edge of the bottom end of the school field. It is not possible to build into the roof of the current school building due to the structure of the roof. It was noted that there had been no consultation with governors during this feasibility study.

Governors expressed concern over the children losing too much of their outdoor space as the feasibility drawings showed building on their playground. However they did show the construction of two astro pitch areas on the current school field that could then be used as both playground and field. Mrs O'Brien pointed out that the field is not used much of the year due to weather conditions so we would be able to use it more if converted to astro turf.

Mrs O'Brien also informed us that the Borough report on Ascot primary schools had been sent to the cabinet yesterday. Our comment in the report was amended to show that we would be happy to *explore the possibility* of expanding. The current situation is that the borough are looking to secure funding so that they can consider possible options to provide new primary school places in the area – this may entail extending existing schools, opening a new school or a combination of both.

Over the last couple of years two local schools have had to take 'bulge' classes as the demand for school places had 'temporarily increased' and had not been anticipated and planned for. The Admissions committee agreed that it was really positive that the borough were forward planning and thinking about the impact of the projected housing development in the Ascot and neighbourhood plan on our local schools. As many as 1580 new dwellings may be permitted in the Ascot and neighbourhood plan area.

Governors agreed that there was no point at this stage focusing on the details of the feasibility plans but instead agreed on a list of the main issues which would need to be resolved if the expansion were to be explored further:

- 1) School Hall. The plans drawn up within the feasibility remit take into account the hall space. The current hall would need to be extended (losing a class room).

- 2) Parking/Traffic. Our school is located in a residential area and is situated on a main road, which is already congested at school drop off and pick up times. Increased staff parking would also need to be considered.
- 3) Planning permission. Our school is on a conservation area. Would they get planning for a two-storey building?

Governors also discussed the disruption to pupils, which would be a major concern.

It is difficult to see the justification for development at the moment as the current demand for school places in this area is not there. We have offered 30 places in Reception for this September but some of the children on the provisional list are out of area rather than in catchment. To some extent it will depend which of the strategic sites identified in Ascot for development go ahead as to where the demand for school places will be.

Mr Pelly concluded that while we should be positive about *exploring* the possibility of expansion, nothing would happen until this was discussed further without addressing our main issues. If the borough wanted to look seriously at extending Holy Trinity, a public consultation would take place where parents and local residents would all be involved. Mrs O'Brien will let the borough know our key issues and will ask Paul Ansell for an electronic copy of the plans for distribution to governors.