

PROPOSAL TO EXPAND ST NICHOLAS SPECIAL SCHOOL

REPRESENTATION (FORMAL CONSULTATION) OUTCOMES REPORT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning, and the School's Leadership Team with the outcomes from the formal consultation to expand St Nicholas Special School.
- 1.2 St Nicholas school is a special community school for boys and girls with moderate learning difficulties and autism. The school is located at Old Lodge Lane, Purley CR8 4DN.
- 1.3 The proposal is to permanently expand St Nicholas school to allow an additional 56 pupils, aged 4 - 11 to be offered a school place from September 2017. The current capacity of the school is 120 and the proposed capacity will be 176. The total number of pupils registered at the school is currently 126.
- 1.4 St Nicholas School is a popular and successful school with strong leadership and governance. The school has been judged by Ofsted as a good school that is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. The behaviour and safety of pupils has been judged as outstanding.
- 1.5 An initial viability study has indicated that the school site has the physical capacity to be expanded, although further investigation is to be carried out including a traffic assessment.
- 1.6 This report is based on responses received during the representation (formal consultation) period following the publication of statutory proposal where anyone with an interest could object or comment on the proposal to expand the St Nicholas Special School.

2. Background

- 2.1 The proposal to permanently expand St Nicholas Special School to create an additional 56 Special Educational Needs (SEN) places from September 2017. This is part of the Council's supply strategy to ensure sufficient SEN pupil places are available within the borough to meet increasing demand for SEN school places.
- 2.2 The Schools' Leadership Team, including the Governing Body have agreed in principle to the proposed expansion. A viability study has been undertaken which shows that the proposed expansion of the school site is both viable and affordable.

2.3 In line with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, Local Authorities have a duty to ensure that SEN provision is in place as specified in the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

3. Stakeholder Engagement

3.1 Engagement (informal consultation) on the proposed permanent expansion of St Nicholas School began on 23rd September to 19th October 2015, including a public meeting at the school on 01 October 2015.

3.2 Overall, the responses received during this engagement period indicate that an even split between those who support and object to the proposed expansion of St Nicholas Special School.

3.3 Of the 25 written responses (5 emails & 20 response sheet) received:

- 12 support the proposal
- 12 object to the proposal
- 1 not sure about the proposal

3.4 The main comments/concerns mentioned on the response sheet and at the public meeting fall under the following broad themes:

- Traffic and parking issues
- Safety of children and residents
- Disruption to current children during building works
- New school should be built

3.5 Please refer to the full outcomes report – “Stakeholder Engagement Outcomes Report” St Nicholas School Proposed Permanent Expansion – for the Council’s response to concerns.

4. Publication / Representation (formal consultation)

4.1 For a proposal to permanently expand a school, where it would increase the capacity of the school by more than 30 pupils and 25% of the school’s capacity (the number of places and pupils in a school), the Council is required to follow a statutory process, including publication of statutory proposal; and a four week representation (formal consultation) period where anyone can comment on or object to the proposed expansion

4.2 In accordance with statutory regulationsⁱ for making significant changes to schools, a statutory proposal was published, which started a 4 week representation period – 04 November to 02 December 2015 – which invited anyone with an interest to make representations – comment or object to the proposal.

4.3 The statutory proposal was published in the local Croydon Guardian newspaper; on the Council’s and school’s websites; displayed on the school gates; and in the local library. A copy of the statutory notice was sent to the Member of Parliament and Ward councillors.

4.4 Communication and Consultation activities

A consultation document, including a questionnaire was used as a basis of informing stakeholders, including parents/carers and local residents, about educational rationale and inviting feedback on the proposed permanent expansion of St Nicholas Special School.

4.5 A range of modes and methods of communication were used to inform and facilitate feedback from stakeholders on the proposed expansion of St Nicholas School. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to express their views in writing – via completion of questionnaire; email; and post – and verbally at the public meeting at the school.

4.6 Communication activities included the circulation of the consultation document, including questionnaire and leaflet via:

- **Schools E-Bulletin**
 - ✓ Schools' E-bulletin to all schools within the borough
- **Email:**
 - ✓ Ward Councillors / MP
 - ✓ schools within neighbouring/adjourning borough
- **Website:**
 - ✓ Consultation document including questionnaire published on the Croydon website
 - ✓ Consultation document, including questionnaire on school's website
 - ✓ Online questionnaire (survey monkey)
- **Printed documents**
 - ✓ Consultation document /questionnaire available at school and from Council
 - ✓ Consultation leaflets distributed to local residents informing them about the consultation and invitation to public meeting – 1,224 leaflets were distributed to residents living within the vicinity of the school
 - ✓ Document sent/given to parents/carers by school
 - ✓ Posters advertising consultation and public meeting date
 - ✓ Leaflet displayed in local library

4.7 Public meeting at St Nicholas Special School

A public consultation meeting was held at St Nicholas School on 24 November 2015 where the educational rationale and consultation process for the proposed expansion were explained. Attendees were able to express their views and ask questions, raise concerns and offer suggestions.

4.8 Equality and Diversity Monitoring

As part of the consultation process, respondents were asked to complete an equality and diversity questionnaire, looking at Gender, Age, Ethnicity and Disability. The information collected will help identify any special requirements; promote equality; and improve choice and diversity.

4.9 Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken for the proposed permanent school expansion programme, including St Nicholas Special School. The Equality analysis enables the Council to target its services, and budgets, more effectively and understand how they affect all our communities.

4.10 The conclusion of the EQIA is that increasing the number of school places through the proposed permanent school expansion programme will either have a positive or neutral impact on protected groups, including children, disability, ethnicity / race. The full EQIA is attached to the Education Estates Strategy report for the 18 January 2016 Cabinet meeting.

5. Summary of representations

5.1 Consultation questionnaire

A total of 9 completed questionnaires have been received. There is an even split between those who support and object to the proposed expansion of St Nicholas school. All 9 responses are from local residents, of which 2 in favour, and 2 strongly against the proposed expansion of the school.

5.2 Public consultation meeting

A total of 7 people attended the public meeting that was held at the school on 24 November 2015. The Council representatives: explained the expansion proposal for St Nicholas' School and the feedback from the engagement period and responded to questions.

5.3 Email responses

The Council also received an additional 6 representations via email; of which 1 was not in favour of the proposal and 1 was in favour of the proposed expansion of St Nicholas School; 2 responses were MP enquiries on behalf of local residents who were concerned about the impact of traffic if the proposal is implemented.

5.4 Overall, the responses received during the representation period show that an equal amount of respondents support and object the proposed expansion of St Nicholas School. Of the 9 respondents who completed the questionnaire during the representation period:

- 2 in favour of the proposed expansion
- 2 strongly against the proposed expansion
- 5 not sure about the proposed expansion

6 Key issues raised during the representation period

6.1 The main comments/concerns mentioned on the questionnaire, email and at the public meeting fall under the following broad themes:

- Traffic and parking issues
- Safety of children and residents
- Disruption to current children during building works
- New school should be built

6.2 A detailed analysis of responses, including equality and diversity monitoring is attached at Annex A below.

7 Response to concerns

7.1 Traffic/related

The Council will commission a Transport Assessment around the school to ascertain how the local area would cope with all modes of movements by people and vehicles, taking account of accessibility and safety issues. This assessment would take place at peak times, including when parents/carers 'drop off' and 'pick up' children; and would give an indication of any potential impact of traffic as a result of the additional pupils at school, and mitigating actions against any identified risks.

7.2 The Schools' Travel/Accessibility Plan will be amended to take account of the additional pupils at the school. Additionally consideration will be given to improving access for Council minibuses in development proposals for the site.

7.3 If Cabinet approve the implementation of the proposed school expansion project, planning applications will be required. Through the planning application process the impact of the additional pupils and their travel modes will be addressed.

7.4 Safety of children and residents

The Health and Safety of the whole school community, including residents is of paramount importance. This will be an essential criterion for assessing site development proposals.

7.5 We recognise that traffic is a key concern for local residents. Mitigating measures will be considered as part of the Transport Statements.

7.6 Disruption to current children during building works

The Council is experienced in successfully managing school expansion projects. If approval is given for the proposal to be implemented, the project will have a dedicated Council officer who will manage the construction process so that the Head teacher and staff can continue to

focus on teaching and not having to deal with the any issue arising from the construction.

7.7 The Council, in partnership with the architect and contractor, will ensure that any disruption to the school is minimise or eradicated through careful planning and delivery of the project, for example, using off site construction methods, and school holidays to carry out heavy construction works.

7.8 Need to build a new primary school

A key part of the Council's strategy for providing additional pupil places is to firstly invest in expanding existing successful and popular schools in areas of demand. This strategy helps in meeting parental preference as well as ensuring value for money for Croydon taxpayers.

7.9 The plan is for this additional demand to be met through the expansion of St Nicholas School and other proposed school expansions in the within the Borough.

7.10 The option of building a brand new school on a new site to provide additional pupil places is a potential alternative. However, there are a number of reasons for considering the expansion of existing school site rather than building a new school.

7.11 These are:

- Changes in legislation - the Education Act 2011 changed the arrangements for establishing new schools and introduced section 6A (the free school presumption) to the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Where a LA thinks there is a need for a new school in its area it must seek proposals to establish an academy (free school).
- However, it is still possible to publish proposals for brand new maintained schools outside the competitive arrangements in certain circumstances, for example, where a competition does not identify a suitable academy/free school.
- As under the previous new school competition arrangements, the Local Authority is responsible for providing the site for the new school, and meeting all associated capital costs. Currently all funding from the latest financial settlement from central government have is committed to existing identified projects.
- Lack of Council owned sites
- High cost of other sites that could be used for educational use.
- Available sites not in area of demand for pupil places
- Building a new school takes a longer time to complete and might not be ready in time to meet the demand for pupil places.
- Expansion of existing school means that we have more certainty of high quality education.

8 General points

If the proposal is approved, the Council and the school would work with the local community and parents/carers to explore ways to minimise any negative impact resulting from the expansion.

8.1 The representations will be shared with the Council's Highways Improvement Team.

9 Next steps

9.1 Following the representation period, the Council's Cabinet Committee will decide whether the proposal to permanently expand St Nicholas School should be implemented. This will be based on responses received which will be balanced against the needs for pupil places.

9.2 Education standards

The Cabinet will also take into account the extent to which the proposed permanent expansion of St Nicholas School is consistent with the government's policy for there to be a presumption in favour of expanding popular and successful schools. St Nicholas School has been judged by Ofsted as a good school that is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. The behaviour and safety of pupils has been judged as outstanding.

9.3 In line with the Department for Education School Organisation guidance, **decisions must be made within a period of two months, by 02 February 2016**, of the end of the representation period or they must be referred to the Schools Adjudicator.

9.4 If approval is given by Cabinet to proceed to the implementation stage, stakeholders, including parents/carers and local residents will be consulted again at the planning application stage, when building designs and traffic considerations will be available.

¹ School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and Education Act 2011

Annex A

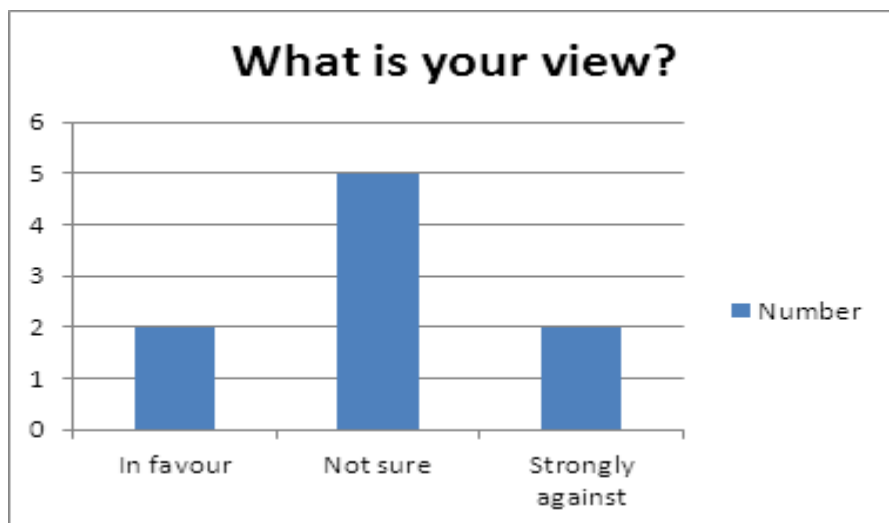
St Nicholas School - Detailed Analysis of Responses

1. Please tell us who you are?

Who are you?	Number	Percentage
Local residents	9	100%
Total	9	100%

2. What is your view of the proposal to expand St Nicholas School to create an additional 56 Special Educational Needs (SEN) places from September 2017.

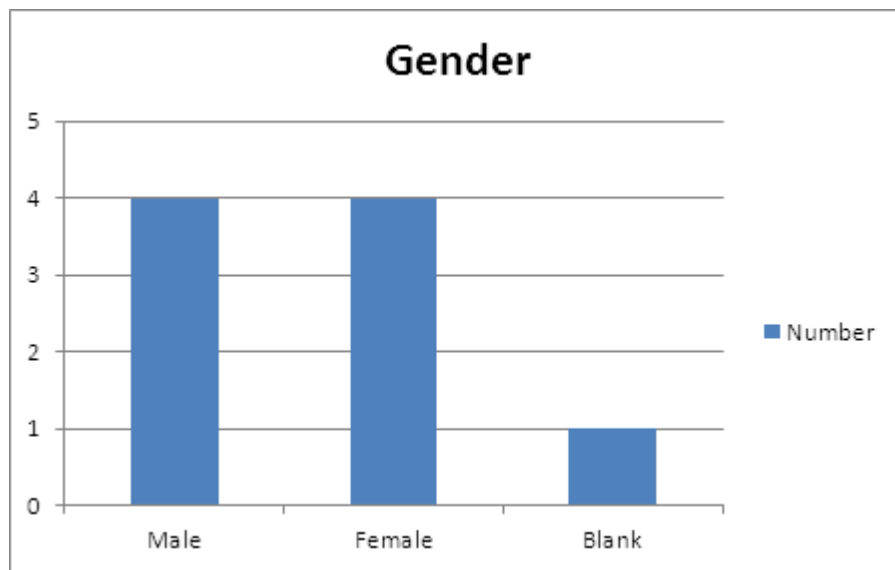
View	Number	Percentage
In favour	2	22%
Not sure	5	56%
Strongly against	2	22%
Total	9	100%



Diversity and Equality Monitoring

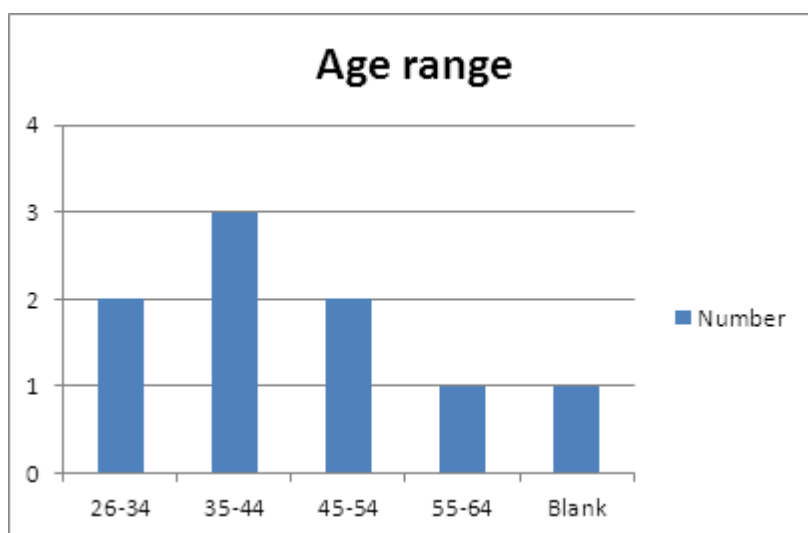
Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	4	44%
Female	4	44%
Blank	1	12%
Total	9	100%



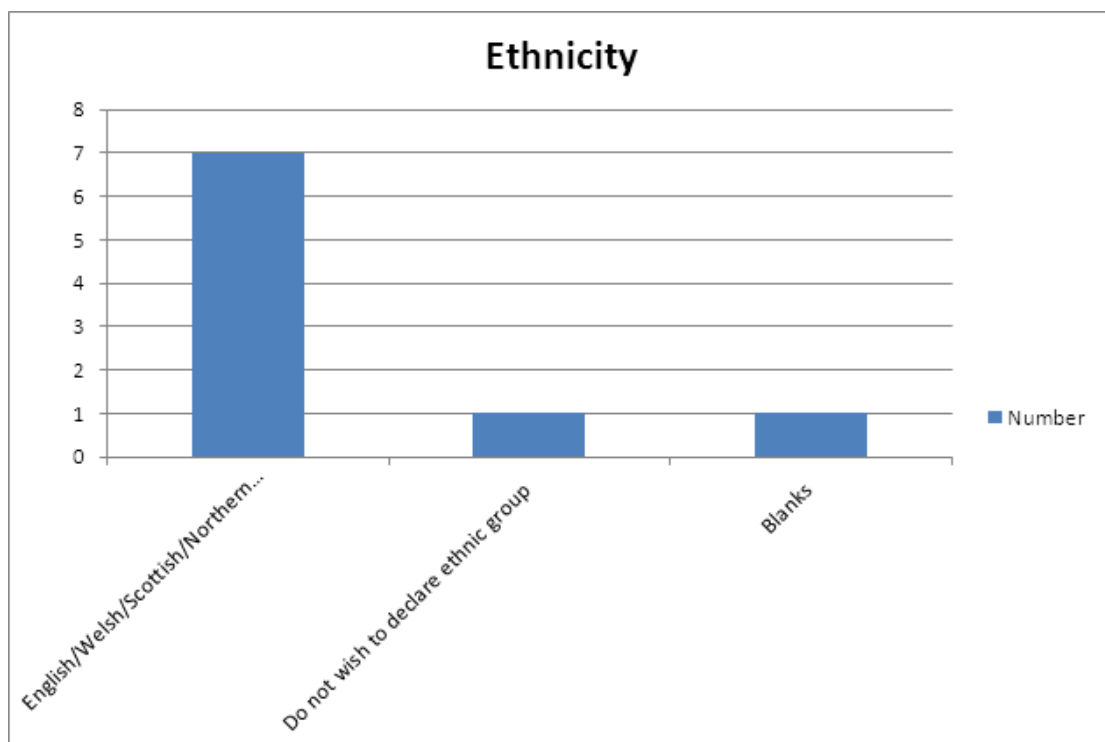
Age Range

Age range	Number	Percentage
26-34	2	22%
35-44	3	34%
45-54	2	22%
55-64	1	11%
Blank	1	11%
Total	9	100%



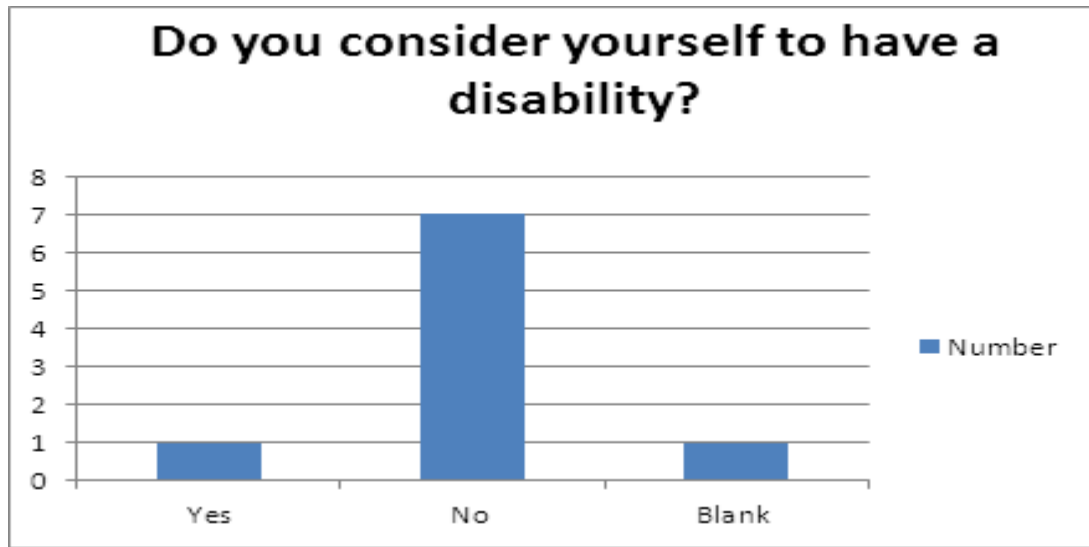
Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number	%
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	7	78%
Do not wish to declare ethnic group	1	11%
Blanks	1	11%
Total	9	100%

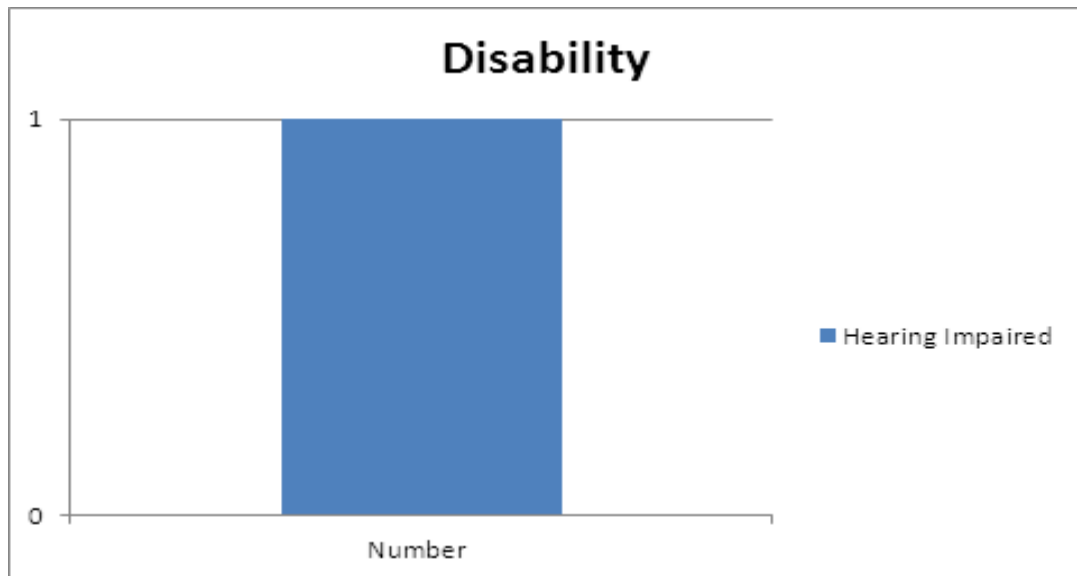


Disability

Yes or no?	Number	Percentage
Yes	1	11%
No	7	78%
Blank	1	11%
Total	9	100%



Disability	Number	Percentage
Hearing Impaired	1	100 %
Total	1	100%



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