Engayne Primary School Expansion: Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction
Thank you to all staff, Parents/Carers and residents who have submitted comments and questions relating to the proposal to expand Engayne Primary School. Based on your comments and questions so far, we have collated a set of frequently asked questions that should provide additional clarification on key issues.

Background
The current pre-statutory consultation is relating to the proposal to expand the number of children attending Engayne Primary School (increasing the number of pupils on roll from 630 to 840 over 7 years).

Frequently Asked Question

1. Decision Process

• Can the council force Engayne Primary to expand?

   The local authority does have the power to direct its community school to expand, however we always seek to work collaboratively with schools regarding expansion proposals and this is what we are doing in this instance.

• How does the Council make their decision? If a significant number of stakeholders are opposed to the expansion, how the council take their views into account.

   The council takes into account all views and comments received during the consultation stage before a decision is taken whether or not to proceed with publishing a statutory notice.

• Will the outcome of this pre-statutory consultation be shared?

   Yes the outcome of the consultation will be published on the Council's website.

• As a local resident I was not consulted as part of this consultation on the proposal to expand the school. Why was I not consulted?

   Local residents will be consulted about the expansion proposal via the planning consultation concerning the proposed building works. Once planning approval has been granted for the building alterations, a statutory notice can be published regarding the expansion of the school.

2. Building Size and School Capacity

• School is already too large in comparison with others in the borough
• 4FE is not an ideal size for a primary school
• School is big enough already.
• If expanded, school will be of secondary school sized proportions, intimidating for KS1 pupils.

   Engayne is one of 18 3FE schools in Havering and as such is by no means the largest school in the borough. Many other Local Authorities have expanded schools
beyond 4FE, some up to 6FE or 7FE in order to meet the need for additional school places from the local community.

- The site will not be able to accommodate extra classes, car parking and ancillary facilities needed
- Playground space will be reduced
- Will play space be enlarged?

Any physical expansion of the school will take in to account DFE recommendations in respect of space allocations.

- The school should demonstrate how it will maintain cohesiveness across such a large pupil body.

The school will need to review all current practices and procedures to ensure cohesiveness

3. Expansion logistics and Building works

- Building works will disrupt learning
- Children’s health will be at risk and may cause severe medical conditions
- The ones already at Engayne will be there throughout the entire time of disruption and will not benefit from the expansion as they are due to leave, the year after the work is finished.
- Concern about impact on environment.
- What steps will be taken to ensure my children’s access to activities is not comprised during works?

Works will be arranged and implemented so that any impact on pupils is minimised. Health and safety are of paramount importance for any building works on a school site, however a degree of noise and dust nuisance will be unavoidable.

It is currently proposed to carry out the works in 3 phases. The first phase will be an extension to the Infants block and would be completed for the autumn term 2015. The second phase involves a single classroom extension to the two storey block adjacent to the Infants block. The final phase will be a 2 storey extension to the two storey block facing Severn Drive and therefore can be carried out without any physical impact on the school. Each phase is not expected to exceed a 9 month build programme with the second phase considerably shorter. The expansion works will provide enhanced shared facilities (such as extension to the hall, larger kitchen, etc.) that will benefit all pupils at the school.

Works will be arranged and implemented so that any impact on the environment is minimised

- School is located within a dense residential area
- Parking space will be disrupted during works.

The first phase proposal includes the provision of an additional 20 parking spaces within the school site. There may be some disruption resulting from the need for Contractors’ access but this will not result in less than the current provision as the full provision would not be required until 2020.
4. Impact of this expansion on other schools in the Local area

- This expansion will lead to surplus places in James Oglethorpe and Branfil.
- The need for places is not within the area where Engayne is located.
- Expansion will cater for children outside of the borough.

Engayne is located in the Cranham ward which is part of the Upminster and Cranham primary planning area. There is a need for additional school places in the Upminster and Cranham planning area which has led to this consultation on the proposed expansion of Engayne Primary School.

The presentation shows the high birth rate in both the Cranham and Upminister wards and also shows how the cut off distance for Engayne has shrunk to below a kilometre for the past two years, showing that the school does meet the need for places from the locality.

5. Admission Criteria

- The sibling priority criteria should be removed in order to cater for the extra places need.

There is no intention to amend the admissions criteria if the school is expanded.

6. Traffic and Parking

- Parking situation will worsen.
- Further reduction of on-site parking for staff.
- Increased hazard during pick up and drop off times will increase.
- Travel chaos for road users and pedestrians.
- Road not large enough to cope with the increased pupil numbers.

If expanded, the school's travel plan will be reviewed in order to take into account the growth in pupils. The number of on-site parking spaces for staff will increase if the school proceeds with expansion. A detailed traffic assessment has been carried out and a range of measures will be considered.

7. School and Class size

- The expansion will take away the community friendliness we currently have.
- SLTs do not know all the children and this detachment can only get greater thereby meaning less support for individual children to feel known and cared for in.
- Children feeling a bit overwhelmed and 'lost' within the sea of children and staff.
- As some subjects are currently run with three streams, will four classes per year group mean four streams?
- Will staff numbers increase if expansion proceeds? Class sizes should not increase.

If the expansion proceeds the school will increase staff and address the issues raised. We already do a lot of work as a 3 form entry school to ensure children are not overwhelmed and feel comfortable within their environment.
8. School Standard and Resources

- OFSTED results will suffer as the good teaching practices of the school will be diluted by becoming a 4 form entry
- The bigger the staff the more difficult it must be to provide continuity and to communicate effectively. Practice already differs from teacher to teacher, adding another teacher per year group surely will mean even more variation
- Playground space and other common areas will become too crowded and may result in a decline in high standards of behaviour.
- Concern about the change in OfSTED rating from outstanding to good- should be focusing on improving educational achievement at this time, not expansion.
- Will library space and books be increased?
- Will spaces at breakfast/afterschool club be increased?
- If reception and yr 1 have separate playgrounds, does this mean yr2 are separate? Won’t this make the yr2 to yr3 transition harder?

The school will plan for an expansion in detail which will include all stakeholders and children’s views. All of the points above will be addressed. If moving to a 4 form entry movement and safety of the children will be paramount.

- Learning resources and facilities for PE Swimming, ICT, Music etc currently offered will be squeezed and this would be detrimental to the learning opportunities currently offered

The expansion works will provide enhanced shared facilities (such as the extension to hall, kitchen, etc.) that will benefit all pupils at the school.

9. Choice of this school for expansion

- Why are other smaller schools in the local area not being considered
- Engayne is a 3 form entry. My understanding was that the expansion programme would be concentrating on those schools that had mixed age-group classes, such as James Oglethorpe. James Oglethorpe has been promised expansion and yet it has not happened
- Why is this being asked when other schools in the area have spaces/capacity?

The school can be expanded as there is scope to create additional accommodation on site. It is located accessibly to where there is increased pressure on places. It is sufficiently educationally secure and resilient to have the capacity to manage a significant increase in size without adverse impact on standards. There is a clear aspiration on the part of the school to manage the expansion. The expansion provides good value for money

When expansion of a school is proposed the proposers (in this case the LA) need to demonstrate how the proposal will increase educational standards and parental choice- true of Engayne as an oversubscribed, “good” school with high Key Stage results.
10. Noise Pollution

- Planning permission refused for a nursery across the road from Engayne based on the following conditions - by reason of noise and disturbance arising from the intensification of the use of the property and its curtilage, would result in unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance to the detriment of residential amenity, contrary to Policy DC61 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD. The proposal, by reason of the extent of parking to the front of the property, would adversely affect the character and appearance of the street scene, contrary to Policy DC61 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD. If you were really concerned about pupil numbers you would have granted this as well. Additionally, expanding Engayne would definitely increase noise and disturbances to the detriment of the residential amenity,

Please refer to Planning/ Highways

This is an issue that would be addressed through the planning process. The nursery proposal has now been granted planning permission.

11. Need for Places/Strategy

- To increase Engayne up to 840 is too big for a primary sized school and contradicts the council’s policy as highlighted in your Commissioning School Places strategy 2012-16 as posted on your website and I quote “However, by 2016/17 there is a projected need to commission up to a further eight Year R classes. This demand may be met by the introduction of new schools. However, if this has not happened there may be fewer schools who are likely to be able meet the criteria for expansion, e.g. it would normally be against Council policy to expand a Primary beyond three forms of entry, or an Infant or Junior school beyond four forms, because over expansion could affect the ethos and organisation of a school, and be against parental preference” How then can you justify expanding this school by another form? Why is the LA not building a new school instead?

The report you are referring to is now dated and has been superseded by so many other factors and recent data as presented earlier. The artificial barrier of a 3FE has been removed. Moreover the LA is no longer allowed to build new schools. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places available in the borough for all children who reside here and might require one. The proposal to expand Engayne is part of a wider strategy to address the need for places across Havering and ensure our statutory duty is met.

12. Other

- As a parent I will feel let down if the proposal proceeds- Head can and should say no.

- Feel as if school has no choice but to consider expansion due to the school budget Havering has given. Also feel if not expanded school will have to take bulge classes anyway.

The decision is a collective one involving the whole Governing Body of Engayne Primary School. The headteacher cannot make the decision alone.