

Dundonald Primary School and Dundonald Park

Consultation on proposed permanent expansion of school from 1FE to 2FE (30 to 60 pupil places per year) and impact on Dundonald Park

Responses to be returned by Tue 28 June 2011

Consultation meeting Wed 8 June 7.30pm

***'Drop in' design session Mon 23 May 3.30 to 7.30pm or
Wed 8 June 5.00pm 7.30pm***

Summary of the consultation

The London Borough of Merton has a legal obligation to provide school places for all the children needing education. The demand for places in the borough is increasing substantially and wherever possible we wish to expand our best schools which parents wish to access.

Dundonald Primary School is currently a one-form entry (1FE) school, admitting up to 30 pupils in one class per year, 210 pupils across the school excluding the nursery. Following a request from the council the school is taking an extra class in reception year in September 2011 within the school's existing accommodation.

The council is considering options to permanently expand the school from September 2012 to be a two-form entry (2FE) school, admitting up to 60 pupils per year in two classes. This will mean it would eventually have up to 420 pupils on roll excluding the nursery, but expansion of the school places would be gradual until reaching all year groups in 2017/18.

To enable the expansion of the school it is necessary to re-configure the current boundaries of the school site and the adjacent Dundonald Park. The school already uses the park's games court during all play times.

The council is therefore consulting on two related matters:

- The principle of expanding Dundonald School to be 2-forms of entry
- Design options for expanding the school and how this could be an opportunity to improve the parks facilities for the future

Public consultation evening and 'drop in' design discussions

A consultation evening will be held at Dundonald Primary School, Dundonald Road, SW19 3QH **on Wednesday 8 June 2011 at 7.30pm**. Parents and other interested parties such as park users are invited to attend to discuss the educational merits of the school's expansion, options for expanding the school, and the potential benefits for the park and its users.

For parents and residents wishing to have a more informal, detailed discussion on the design with the architects, two 'drop in' sessions have been arranged for residents to attend to discuss the plans at **any time between 3.30pm and 7.30pm on Monday 23 May, or before the public meeting between 5.00pm and 7.30pm on Wednesday 8 June 2011**.

Wider background to expansion of Dundonald Primary School

There is a significant increase in demand for school places in Merton, with more children entering school age, fuelled by a birth rate that has risen by over 30% in the last six years. Our population forecasts indicate that much of this rise will be sustained.

The proposed expansion of Dundonald School is part of an overall programme of school expansion in Merton. From 2008 to 2010 nine schools provided additional reception classes. In the autumn Merton also consulted on nine further school expansions required in reception year for 2011/12 and 2012/13. The consultation and the decision document from the Council's Cabinet is available on the council's website

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/getinvolved/consultation/schoolsconsultations.htm>
or can be requested from the address stated on the response form.

Even this significant expansion has proved insufficient in the Wimbledon area for this September so, following a request from the council, the school governors agreed to take an extra class on the basis that there is no presumption that permanent expansion will follow.

Dundonald is a popular and successful school. In its most recent Ofsted inspection (2009), it was rated outstanding. The school has been heavily over subscribed for its 30 places such that children have in recent years needed to reside within approximately 200 to 300 metres from the school to obtain a place. With the general increase in demand for school places there are no longer alternative local schools without further expansion.

Design options for the school expansion and impact on the park

Dundonald School is on a small site and it is not possible to double its intake without making more space available. However, the council has undertaken detailed feasibility work on design options and by considering the school and park areas more flexibly it is possible for the scheme to meet the following aims:

- To provide Dundonald School with sufficient indoor and outdoor space for a 420 place (plus 26 full time equivalent place nursery) primary school, which will ensure that more of the local community have access to a local school.
- To demolish the current poor quality and ageing park pavilion building and replace with a high quality two storey building on a similar footprint that provides the necessary current pavilion facilities as well as those required for the expanded school.
- To ensure the park facilities can be protected, while acknowledging through consultation that there is an opportunity to review the future facilities that may be of most benefit to the local community.

3 options for expanding the school and for the park

Following feasibility work there are 3 viable options to put to consultation, all of which wrap-around the school's two-storey annex building which is adjacent to the park. There will be separate access for school and park users.

All options will ensure the children's public playground is at least as large as at present, no loss of football/cricket playing pitch, and a larger dual use hard court games/tennis court area.

Drawings of the 3 schemes are available on the council's website <http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/getinvolved/consultation/schoolsconsultations.htm> and on display on the park's noticeboards and on the pavilion. The 'drop in' sessions will allow the architects to go through the scheme with parents and residents.

It should be noted that these are early feasibility drawings, and subject to this consultation, one option would be developed in more detail. In summary the differences between the three schemes are as follows:

Option A - Provides a clear open children's public playground with two dividable areas, and 3 hall spaces in one building available to the public outside school hours, one of which is during school hours. However, it would mean loss of some mature trees, and due to the retention of the school's early years classrooms in their current position all school children need to walk through a narrow 'corridor' to access their main play area.

Option B - Provides a longer narrow building thus ensuring no loss of mature trees. Although it has a slightly smaller footprint than option A, due to its shape, it would provide a greater perception of protruding into the park. It also has 3 hall spaces in one building available to the public outside school hours, one of which is during school hours. However, the public playground has only a narrow connection 'corridor' between toddler's and older children's play, unless a decision was made to locate it in the current pavilion area.

Option C - Ensures no loss of mature trees but the building is less long and narrow than option B, thus ensuring a mainly clear open children's public playground with two dividable areas. It has the advantage of new purpose built early years classrooms for the school with direct access to play, which also ensures other school children have easier access to their play areas. One of the key differences is that the community hall for day-time use will be in the current school building with a separate access. This will be an advantage in making access easier for community activities when the park is closed but they will be split from the other 2 hall spaces in the new building available to the public outside school hours.

School admissions

Dundonald School currently admits children on LB Merton's standard admissions policy, which after giving first priority to children in public care, exceptional needs cases and siblings, gives priority on the basis of straight line distance from the school. The expansion of the school is intended to enable children to gain entry from a wider area, though still local. Dundonald School is approximately 400 metres from Wimbledon Chase school to the south west giving a choice of two local schools in this area, but there are areas to the east of Dundonald School where it is challenging to obtain any local school place.

When Wimbledon Chase School expanded, an Admissions Priority Area (APA) was developed which gives greater priority to residents in a defined area. An Admissions Priority Area may be suitable for Dundonald. However, this needs to be done in partnership with other schools in the area. Therefore we are not, at this stage, consulting on a specific APA, but may do so in the future. In any case, an APA would not extend more than 1000 metres from the school, ensuring the school remained a local school that children can walk to.

Next steps

The council is following the process defined by statute for the significant enlargement of a school. This is the statutory consultation, to close on 28 June 2011. Following this consultation the council will decide whether to submit a formal statutory proposal. This would be a further four-week period for anyone to comment or raise an objection. At this stage we will also undertake any legal processes relating to the park, the requirements for which the council has assessed before commencing this consultation.

If the council decides to follow the next stage of the school expansion it will also develop one of the design options in more detail before submitting a planning application. Both approval to the planning application and the education statutory proposal is required before any decision on additional places is made for September 2012. It is aimed that this will be resolved by December 2011 before parents submit their school admissions application for 2012.

