



Brent School Streets Review

St Robert Southwell Scheme Report

MP Smarter Travel

109 The Print Rooms
180 Union Street
London SE1 0LH

September 2021

CONTENTS

St Robert Southwell School Street	2
Background.....	2
Summary of Data Analysis.....	2
Public Consultation.....	3
Parent & Guardian Consultation	5
Key Concerns	5
Air Quality.....	6
School Interview	7
Travel Mode Analysis.....	8
Site Observations.....	8
Conclusion.....	9
Recommendation	9
Appendices.....	11
Appendix A – Air quality data	11

St Robert Southwell School Street

Background

In November 2020, a School Street scheme was introduced through an experimental traffic order on Slough Lane, as highlighted on the map below. The St Robert Southwell School Street was created to reduce air pollution and improve road safety outside St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School, which educates students from ages three to 11. This School Street is also intended to provide more space for social distancing, to help to ease the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

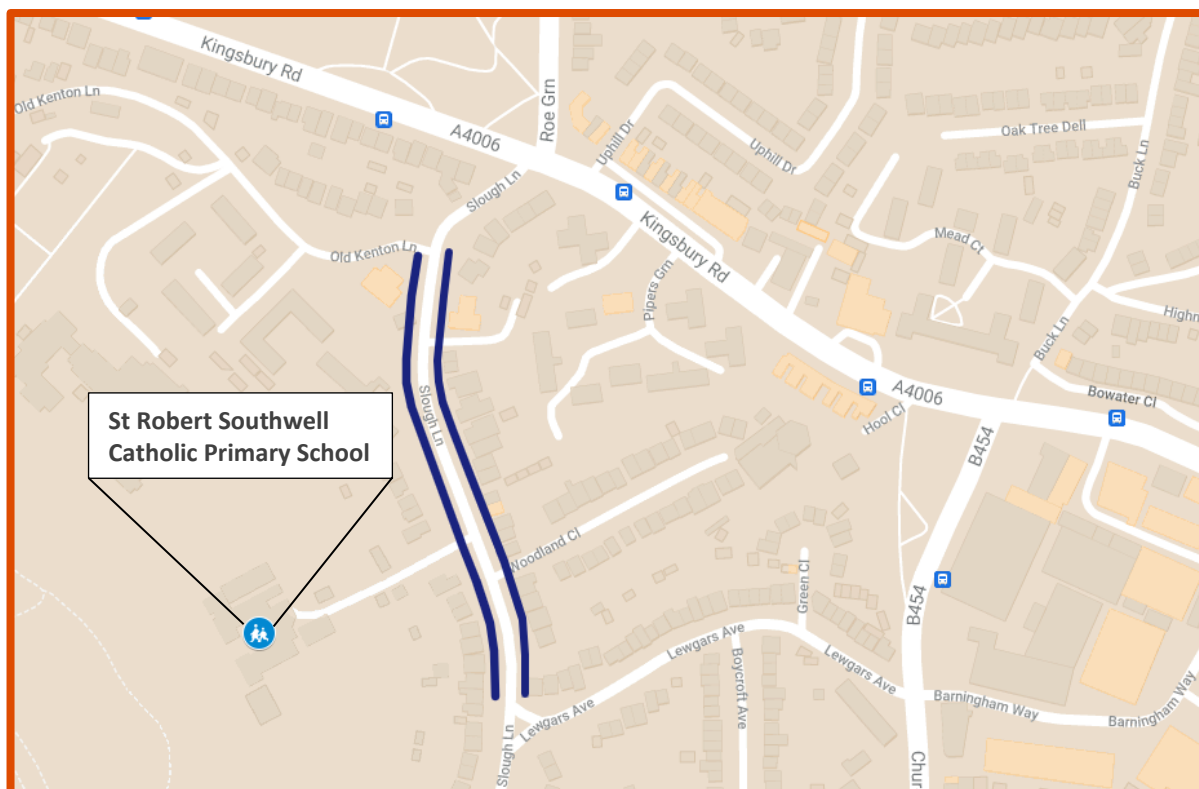


Figure 1 – Map showing the location of the School Street and St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School

Summary of Data Analysis

As part of Brent Council’s Emergency School Street consultation process, the council collected multiple datasets including:

- Public consultation
- Parent & guardian consultation
- Air quality data
- School interviews
- Travel mode data
- Site observations

Below we present our analysis of these datasets, along with a recommendation as to whether the scheme should be made permanent.

Public Consultation

From November 2020 to July 2021, members of the public were invited to provide feedback on the experimental scheme. The St Robert Southwell public consultation received 48 responses in total, 35 of whom live outside of the scheme. 47 of these responses included a comment, all of which have been analysed thematically to highlight relevant comments.

The table below summarises the proportions of responses who were either for or against the School Street. Responses are then broken down into those that live in or outside of the scheme.

Table 1 – Overall responses

Response	Count	Lives within scheme	Lives outside of scheme
Supports School Street	17	47%	53%
Opposes School Street	31	13%	87%

The table below presents the results of a thematic analysis of public comments. The themes are colour-coded to indicate whether they are in support of or in opposition of the scheme. Yellow themes represent those that are neither for nor against.

Table 2 – Public comment themes

Code Frame	Theme	Count
Access	Made it easier for residents to exit their driveways	2
	Scheme has made going to school easier for children with mobility issues (easy access pavements, less inconsiderate parking)	1
	Feels scheme has improved access for emergency vehicles	1
	Concern about access of vulnerable people to hospital appointments/aid/ambulances	6
	Concerns about access of guests to residents	3
	Concerns about resident's access to homes/request for passes	3
	Request for access to be granted for friends/taxis picking somebody up to go to hospital (non-ambulance requiring emergencies)	1
	Concern about access of Uber/deliveries to residents	1
	Concern about access to homes of residents in between two schemes	1
	Concerns about teachers' access to place of work	1
	Concern that the scheme is unfair for people who cannot walk to work	1
	Consultation	Concern about perceived lack of information for residents
Parking	Support reducing idling and poor parking	1
	Concern about inconsiderate displaced parent parking (blocking driveways, on corners, refusing to move)	12
	Concern about parents still idling engines nearby	4
	Confusion about rules for parking within the scheme	1
	Concern about cars, refuse lorries and delivery vans struggling to get past poorly parked cars	1
	Concern about unused Ubers taking up most of the available parking on Slough Lane	1
	Concern about resident parking	1
Traffic Levels	Support reduced traffic/congestion due to scheme	6
	Observed increase in parents and children walking/cycling/scooting	1

	Concerns about displaced traffic on other roads (Church Lane, Kingsbury Road, Lewgars Avenue, Boycroft Avenue)	17
	Feel that Buck Lane should be reopened during the trial period to ease congestion	1
	Concern that an accident on the N. Circular during operational hours would gridlock the whole area	1
Health	Support low-traffic streets for safety (particularly of children)	8
	Supports scheme for environmental benefit	2
	Feel scheme has reduced stress/improved community spirit	2
	Support cycling/walking for health and wellbeing	1
	Support reduced air pollution due to scheme	3
	Concern about increased air pollution from displaced congestion	4
	Concerns about safety of children on other roads	3
	Concerns about dangerous manoeuvres at barriers	1
	Concerns about safety of scheme (request for health and safety assessment)	1
	Concerns about social distancing within scheme	1
Implementation	Feels scheme is well managed	2
	Request for better signage/suggests a sign be put at crossroads to warn drivers	2
	Scheme combined with Old Kenton Lane scheme causes traffic logistics problems	3
	Feels a community officer should man the barrier	1
	Concern about implementation and enforcement of scheme	1
	Feels cycling/scooting infrastructure should be put in place before the scheme	1
General	Highways change requests (see table 5)	6
	Feel measures unfairly and negatively affect local people	3
	Scheme seen as not making sense/no point	3
	Seen as pointless: People are not using the school street to walk in anyway	2
	Feel measures only benefit residents of scheme	2
	Feels restrictions should only apply to parents	2
	Scheme seems like an excuse to permanently close the road	2
	Negative feelings towards Brent council e.g., spending, priorities	2
	Request for more strict monitoring and fines for parents parking illegally outside the scheme	1
	Would prefer speed limits and cameras	1
	Feels paying road and council tax entitles them to use any route	1
	Barrier is being placed in front of houses not included in scheme	1
	Concern about property in surrounding area devaluing	1
Feel the scheme benefits only a small group of people	1	

It appears that the most impactful result of the scheme has been the disruptive displacement of traffic and inconsiderate parking. Displaced traffic has been identified on the following roads:

- Church Lane
- Kingsbury Road
- Lewgars Avenue
- Boycroft Avenue

Inconsiderate parking by parents of children at St Robert Southwell was most related to Baird Close, although several other responses did not specify the road. Parents are said to be parking across driveways, idling their engines and refusing to move.

Seven people stated that they appreciated the scheme makes the road safer, however in contrast, seven others also expressed concern for the road safety of children. Key concerns included drivers completing dangerous manoeuvres at the barrier, concern that the scheme is creating an unsafe environment and concern for the safety of children on nearby roads.

Another interesting point made was that the St Robert Southwell School Street scheme does not work well in conjunction with the Old Kenton Lane scheme (Kingsbury Green). The complaint is that it is currently not permitted to turn right from Slough Lane onto Kingsbury Road, which is an issue when people turn onto Slough Lane during the operational hours of the two schemes and find themselves at a dead end, needing to turn around. This also causes problems for the residents of that portion of Slough Lane.

Parent & Guardian Consultation

The parent & guardian consultation yielded one response, who was not a resident of the scheme. This person was not in favour of the scheme and felt that it creates traffic jams and increases crowding at pick-up and drop-off.

The table below shows the responses to the key questions of the parent & guardian consultation.

Table 3 – Parent & guardian consultation

Question	Response	Count
Overall, are you happy that the school participated in this scheme?	Yes	0
	No	1
Would you like the scheme to be made permanent?	Yes	0
	Yes (with changes)	0
	No	1

Key Concerns

Following analysis of the public and parent & guardian consultation responses, the following topic areas have been identified as key concerns.

Highways Changes

Within both the public and parent & guardian St Robert Southwell consultations, a number of requests and suggestions were made for specific highways changes, as can be seen in table 4 below. The most common request was to remove the scheme and replace it with double red or yellow lines on which parents would be fined for parking.

Table 4 – Highways changes

Highways Change	Count
Replace scheme with double red/yellow lines with no parking and fines	3
20mph speed limit to be introduced on Slough Lane	1
No-parking zone to be implemented in areas of problem parent parking e.g., Lewgars Avenue	1
Slough Lane to be fully pedestrianised	1

Blue Badge Holders

Of the 49 combined public and parent & guardian consultation responses, seven people identified themselves as having a disability. Four of these people opposed the scheme, and three were in support of it. Those that were opposed cited issues such as the scheme having caused greater levels of congestion and inconsiderate parking, and a lack of consideration for local residents and those who have to drive to work. Those that were in favour stated reasons such as child safety and good management by those who manage the barriers.

Air Quality

As part of the St Robert Southwell School Street scheme, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels were monitored outside the school from November 2020 to October 2021*. Figure 2 presents this data alongside the modelled annual average for 2016 ([Annual Pollution Maps](#)).

Figure 2 shows an initial rise in NO₂ concentration around the winter months, and then a downward trend into summer, which is in line with seasonal trends for NO₂. Ideally, data would be collected for at least a year before and after the implementation of the scheme. This would enable changes to be identified and more reliably attributed to the School Streets scheme. However, for this set of implementations, this was not possible.

*See Appendix A for full air quality datasets.

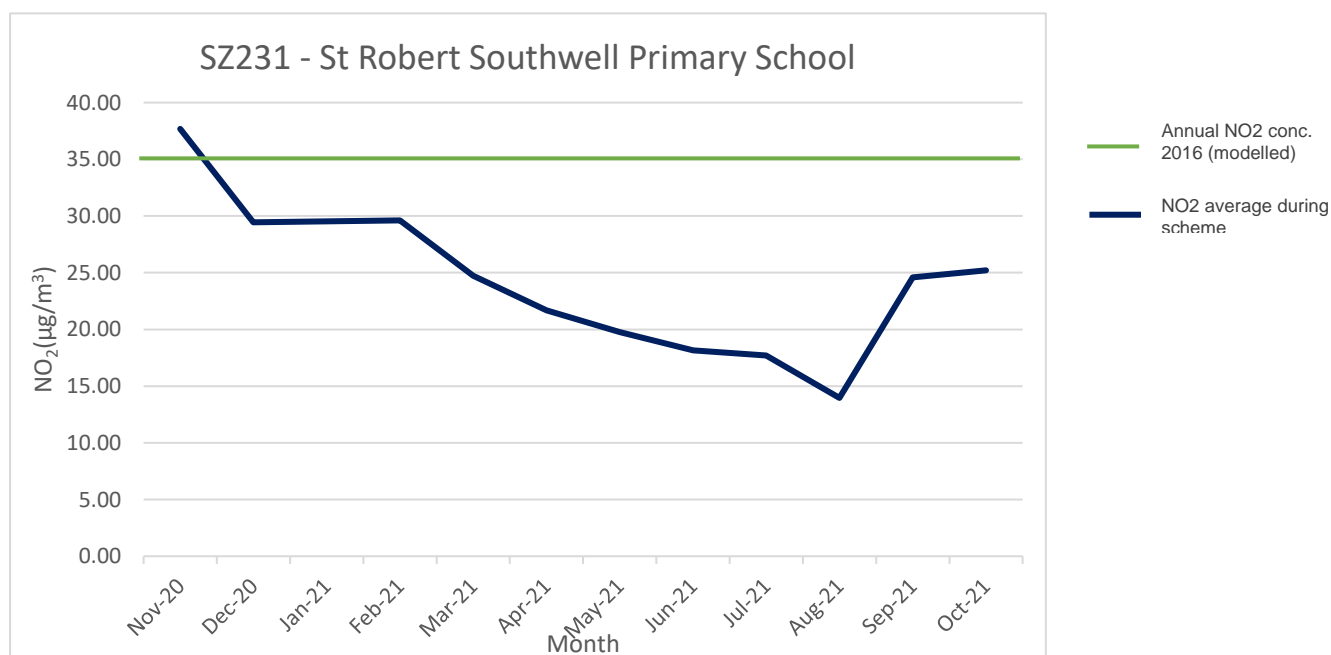


Figure 2 – NO₂ concentration at St Robert Southwell Primary School

It is important to note that this data represents NO₂ levels over the course of the scheme post-implementation, rather than being proof of scheme impact. There are multiple factors at play including meteorological conditions, school holidays and COVID-19 restrictions, which will have impacted the data.

School Interview

Through interview with the school, MP Smarter Travel found that St Robert Southwell Primary School has had a generally positive experience of the scheme, with more details of the interview shown in the table below. The school requested that a permanent barrier or traffic cameras be installed to support enforcement.

Table 6 – Interview summary

Overall Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street is safer • Calm at pick-up and drop-off • Slight increase in pupils walking to school
Concerns/drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and engagement from the council was unsatisfactory, and implementation did not consider the impact of the scheme across the local road network • Unsustainable cost to the school to manage the scheme long term • Staff have been abused, threatened, and intimidated; two police reports have been filed • Signage is not obvious or impactful enough, frustrating people when they reach the barrier • Created a divide in the community because some are in favour of the scheme, and some are against it
Requests for continuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more barrier monitoring (very important to school) • Cameras to be implemented • Resident permits • Improved signage

Travel Mode Analysis

Students at St Robert Southwell Primary School were surveyed before (July 2019) and after (June 2021) the implementation of the scheme, to identify any changes in travel modes.

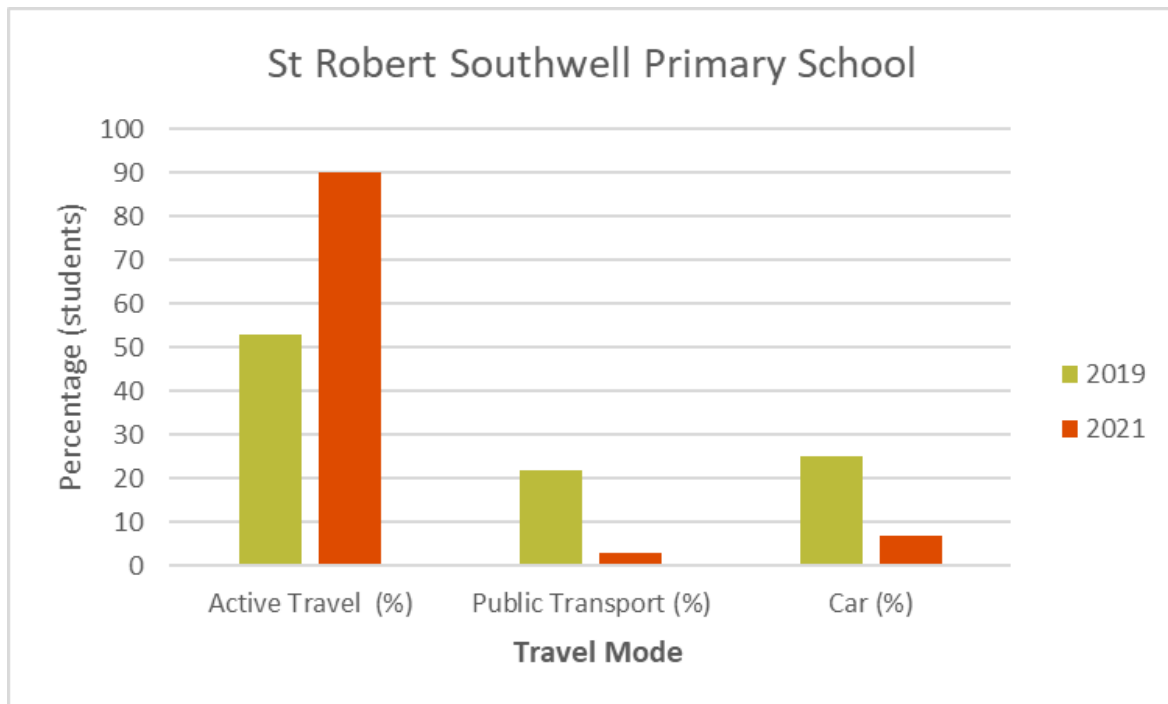


Figure 4 – Graph of travel modes of students at St Robert Southwell School in 2019 compared to 2021.

It is clear from figure four that there has been a large uptake in active travel (walking, cycling, scooting) since the scheme’s implementation, with 90% of students surveyed in 2021 travelling to school this way. Car use has decreased dramatically, as has use of public transport. Some of the reduction in public transport use could be attributed to the pandemic, as people were discouraged from using public transport at the time. Overall, the results of these surveys show a clear increase in active travel.

Site Observations

The Brent Officer site observation of the St Robert Southwell scheme was carried out on the 23rd of June 2021. The following observations were made:

- Many vehicles come from the Kingsbury Road and must turn around at the junction of Old Kenton Lane, making it dangerous for pedestrians.
- A lot more vehicles being parked on Lewgars Avenue.
- The staff manning the closures have had a lot of abuse and there was a police incident.

The recommendation made by the officer was for better signage to be installed on Kingsbury Road, and to allow vehicles to turn right out of Slough Lane onto Kingsbury Road.

The latter recommendation relates to an issue that was brought up several times in the public consultation and is discussed further in the public consultation section of this report.

Conclusion

The summaries below assess how effectively the aims of the scheme have been met.

Providing Space for Social Distancing

Improvement in space for social distancing was not mentioned in the public consultation or parent & guardian consultation. In their interview, the school said that the scheme has provided space for social distancing but did not choose to highlight it as one of the most beneficial aspects of the scheme. Further observations may be required to draw a clear conclusion for this aim.

Improves Air Quality

Air quality monitoring completed outside of the school shows a general decline in NO₂ concentration throughout the spring and summer of 2021, in line with seasonal trends for NO₂. A conclusion about the impact of the scheme on air pollution could be drawn if more pre-implementation data was available.

Encouraging Active Journeys to School

In interview, the school said that they had witnessed a small increase in the number of students undertaking active journeys to school, but that the majority of students are still driven most of the way and dropped off outside the barriers. However, the data collected through Hands Up Surveys suggests that this increase has been major, with a 38% increase in active travel between 2019 and 2021.

Reducing Private Vehicle Use/Resident Views

Of the 12 residents who responded to the public consultation, eight were in favour of the scheme, with four opposing it. Those in opposition cited issues like:

- Concern about the scheme decreasing property values
- Confusion about how the scheme works
- Problems with visitors accessing resident homes

The residents in favour of the scheme said so because of:

- Street being more accessible for children with mobility issues
- Congestion being eased around the school
- Greater ease when leaving their properties
- Increased sense of community spirit

Mode split data also shows that private vehicle use for the school run has decreased.

Recommendation

Based on the data analysed and the comments received, it appears that the majority of the scheme's residents do support the scheme. Many of the comments opposing the scheme can be resolved through highways changes or additional education of parents around idling and parking. As a result, we are recommending that the scheme remain in place, but also that the following changes be made:

- Allow vehicles to turn right out of Slough Lane onto Kingsbury Road. This recommendation is supported by the Brent Officer, as well as the three public responses which listed this as a particular issue.
- Penalties and monitoring for parents parking across driveways and on corners OR a no-parking zone implemented in areas where this is an issue, such as Lewgars Avenue. This would resolve many of the issues cited in table 4, and address the concerns of the 12 public responses that mentioned displaced parent parking as a key issue.
- The scheme should be a priority for ANPR camera installation. The school has filed two police reports due to drivers abusing the staff managing the barriers.
- Clearer signage should be used to guide drivers through or away from the scheme. This change will reduce the number of drivers getting 'stuck' within the scheme, reducing the number of dangerous manoeuvres drivers need to make and generally reducing confusion and frustration with the scheme.

We also recommend further data collection and analysis of the following:

- Observation of footfall and crowding outside the school at pick-up and drop-off (social distancing).

For highways changes (see table 4) we recommend a consultation with a highways engineer to discuss the feasibility and practicality of the requests for parking restrictions, reduced speed limits and a right turn from slough Lane onto Kingsbury Road.

Appendices

Appendix A – Air quality data

Table A1 – Air quality data for St Robert Southwell Primary School

Baseline LAEI 2016 Annual mean NO ₂ (µg/m ³)	NO ₂ reading from Diffusion Tube - RAW DATA (µg/m ³)											
	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.
35.46	37.68	29.45	29.54	29.61	24.72	21.68	19.77	18.16	17.69	17.81	29.08	26.83