Brent School Streets Review

St Mary's CE Scheme Report

MP Smarter Travel

109 The Print Rooms
180 Union Street
London SE1 0LH

September 2021

CONTENTS

St Mary's CE School Street

Background

In September 2020, a School Street scheme was introduced through an experimental traffic order on Garnet Road, as highlighted on the map below. The St Mary's CE School Street was created to reduce air pollution and improve road safety outside St Mary's CE Primary School, which educates students from ages five to 11. This School Street is also intended to provide more space for social distancing, to help ease the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

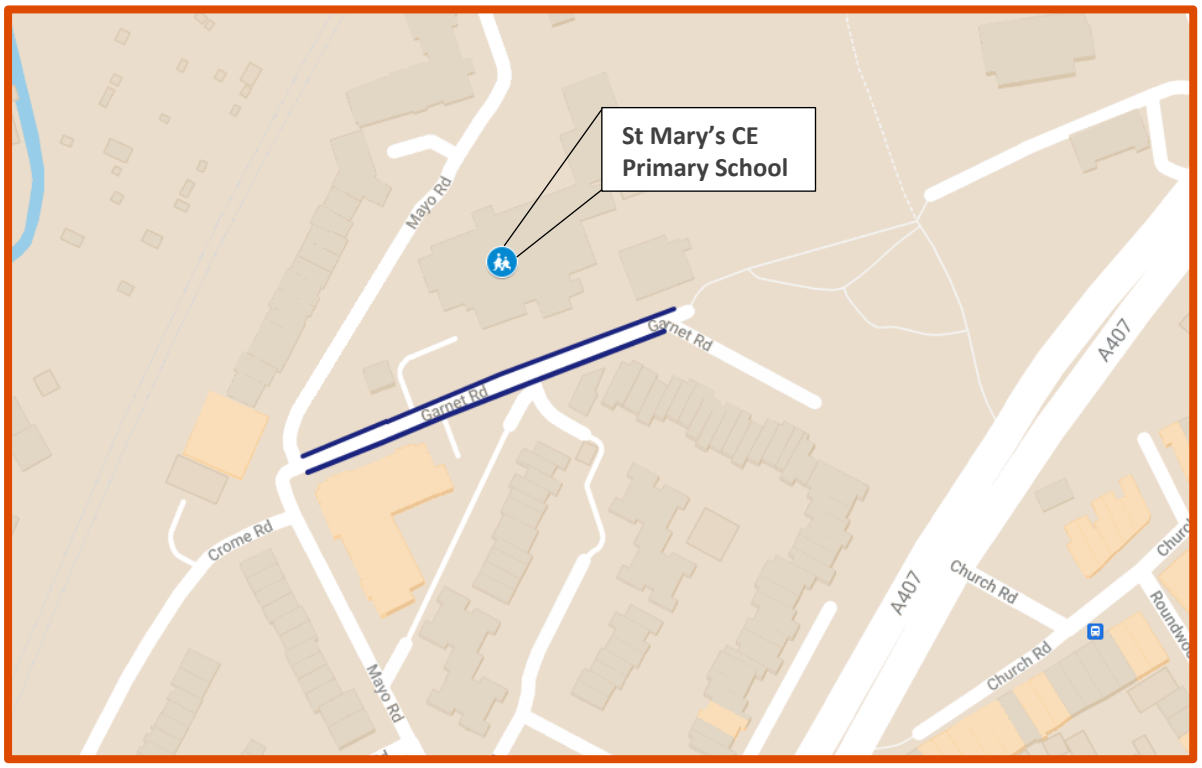

Figure 1 – Map showing location of the School Street, and St Mary's CE Primary School.

Summary of Data Analysis

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

- Public consultation
- 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 August 2020 to July 2021, members of the public were invited to provide feedback on the experimental scheme. The St Mary's CE scheme public consultation received six responses in total, three of whom live outside of the scheme. Four of these responses included a comment, all of which have been analysed thematically to highlight relevant comments.

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

Table 1 – Overall responses

Response	Count	Lives within scheme	Lives outside of scheme
Supports School Street	4	3	1
Opposes School Street	2	0	2

Table 2 displays the key issues pulled from the public's comments, first split into code frames then themes. The themes have been colour coded to indicate whether they are in support or opposition of the scheme.

Table 2 – Public comment themes

Code Frame	Theme	Count
Access	Feels residents access to homes has been improved by scheme	1
	Concern about residents' access to homes	1
	Concerns about access to vulnerable people/of vulnerable people to healthcare facilities	1
	Concerns about access of tradespeople and delivery to residents/workplaces	1
Parking	Concern about displaced parking across driveways	2
Traffic Levels	Support reduced traffic/congestion due to scheme	2
	Observed increase in active transport use	1
	Concern about increased traffic on other roads	2
Health	Support scheme for safety (particularly of children)	2
	Support reduced pollution due to the scheme	1
General	Supports further measures and/or stricter penalties for reducing car dominance (e.g., cameras)	1
	Request for scheme to be extended to other roads	1
	Feels car drivers should be given more consideration by the council	1

Due to the limited number of responses with comments, it is difficult to ascertain any strong trends in attitudes towards the Garnet Road School Street scheme. The ratio of positive to oppositional comments is nine to eight, suggesting public opinion is divided.

Key Concerns

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

Highways Changes

Within the St Mary's CE public consultation, one highways change request was made, as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3 – Highways changes

Highways Change	Count
Extend school street to surrounding roads	1

Blue Badge Holders

None of the individuals who responded to the consultation identified themselves as having a disability.

Air Quality

As part of the St Mary's CE School Street scheme, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) levels were monitored at the school over a twelve-month period from October 2020 to October 2021.* Figure 2 presents this data along with the modelled annual average for 2016 (Annual Pollution Maps) for reference.

Several data points were missing, including November, December and April, so there is limited data to draw conclusions from. From the data we do have, it appears that the school's NO_2 levels all sit below the 2016 average and that they follow an expected annual trend, with a rise in Winter and decreasing into Summer. As results all sit below the 2016 average, we can presume that the air quality outside of the school has improved since then, but there is too little information to make inferences about the impact of the school street scheme on NO_2 levels.

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.

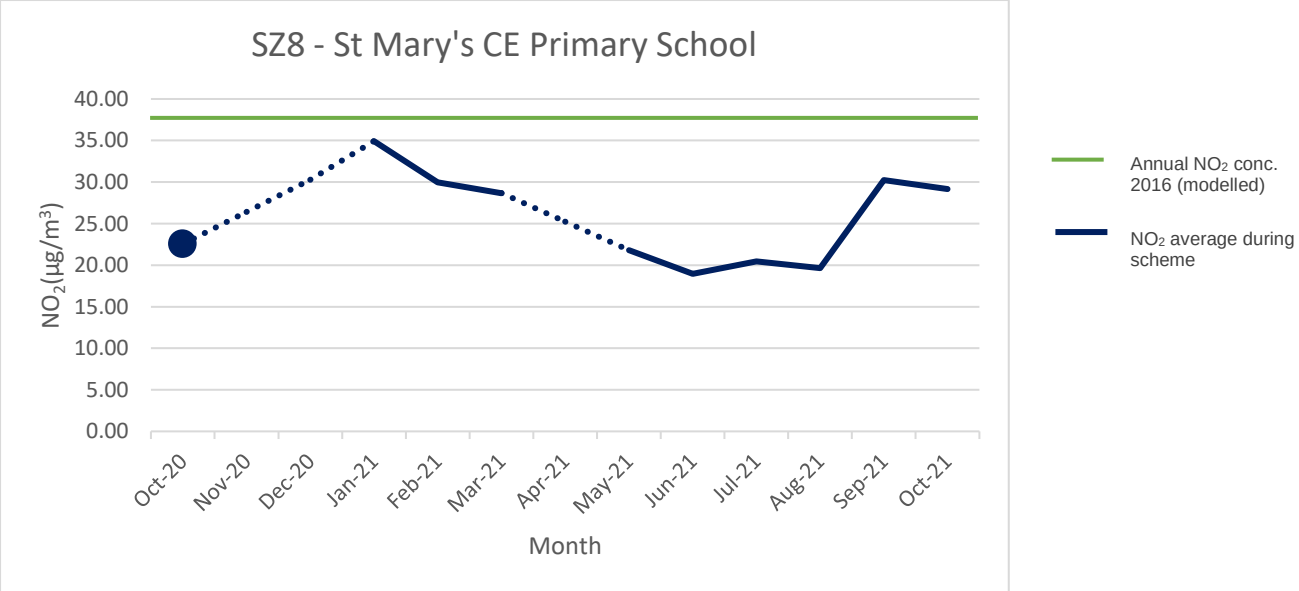

Figure 2 – NO_2 concentration at St Mary's CE Primary School

It is important to note that this data represents NO_2 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

The school interview with St Mary's CE Primary School took place in April 2021. It revealed an overall positive response, citing improvements like a large increase in numbers of children undertaking active transport, and improving road safety.

Table 4 – Interview summary (St Mary's CE Primary School)

Overall Opinion	• Positive
Benefits	• Social distancing was improved – scheme was key to safety during pandemic • Large increase in number of children and parents walking, cycling and scooting to school – cycle shelter is full every day • Road safety drastically improved thanks to reduced congestion • Residents generally happy to have driveways clear of cars
Concerns/drawbacks	• Implementation: sudden, caused friction and confrontation between residents and staff, signage was not very clear • Signage was not very clear • Takes up staff time to manage the barriers
Requests for continuation	• Cameras (with exemptions for school staff and visitors)

Travel Mode Analysis

Students at St Mary's CE Primary were surveyed before (May, 2019) and after (May, 2021) the implementation of the scheme, to identify any changes in travel modes. The number of students undertaking active travel increased by 14% between 2019 and 2021, and public transport use increased by 1%, while car use decreased by 14%. This is indicative of the St Mary's CE increasing participation in active travel and discouraging the use of private vehicles.

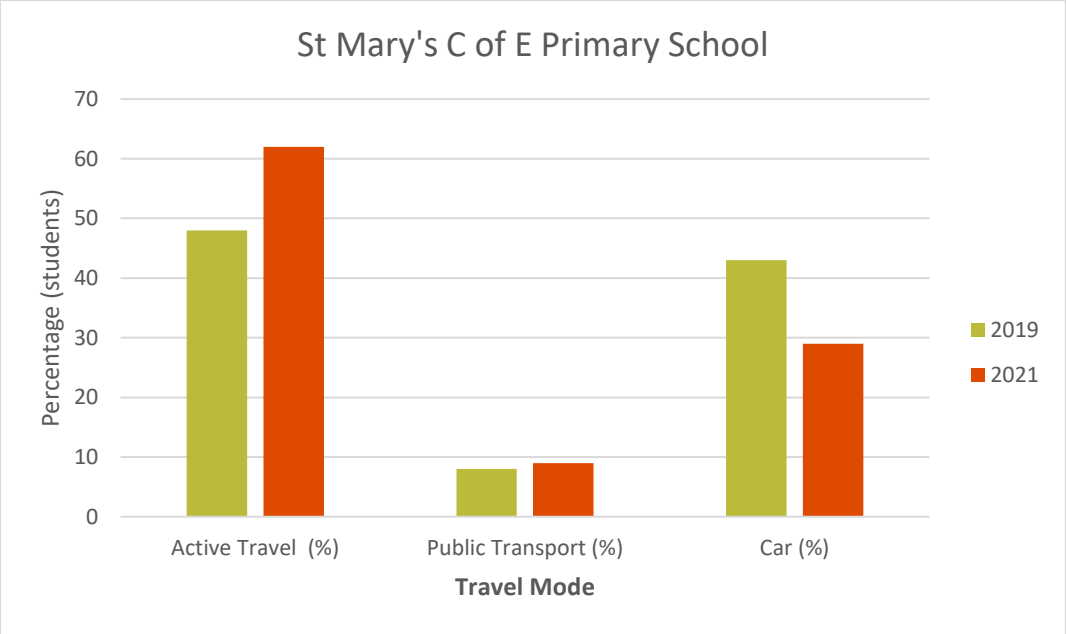

Figure 4 – St Mary's CE Primary School mode split data

Site Observations

The Brent Officer site observation of the St Mary's CE scheme was carried out on the 23rd of June 2021. The following observations were made:

- Some parents arrived early and parked opposite the closure
- Others used Mayo Rd to drive and turn around then drop off their children
- Reduced number of cars until 8:50 am when some latecomers caused a small amount of congestion

There was no recommendation made by the officer, and the head teacher requested to know when cameras would be installed as they had been struggling to enforce the scheme. The school required police assistance over a number of weeks.

Conclusion

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

Providing Space for Social Distancing

None of the public consultation responses directly mentioned any changes in space for social distancing, but the representative of the school did mention in the interview that they had seen an increase in social distancing, and that this had been key to them getting through the pandemic. Based on the school's opinion, we can presume that this aim has been met.

Improves Air Quality

With limited air quality data it is difficult to make a clear decision as to whether the scheme has impacted air pollution either positively or negatively.

Encouraging Active Journeys to School

The school feels that active journeys have increased, and the school's mode split data suggests that there has been a significant decrease in active travel, with a 14% increase accompanied by a 14% decrease in car use.

Public consultation responses are mixed, with some respondents suggesting that active travel has increased, and pollution has decreased while others say that local traffic has increased. It is hard to draw clear conclusions about this aim.

Reducing Private Vehicle Use/Resident Views

Without sufficient public and parent & guardian data, the success of this aim and the level of support from local people for reducing private vehicle use is difficult to gauge. As previously discussed, the school's mode split data shows a slight increase in car use, although this may be as a result of government recommendations for residents to avoid public transport. Four of the six consultation respondents were in favour of the scheme, so this could be an indicator of success in reducing private vehicle use and gaining support for the prioritisation of other modes of transport. Overall, the data and opinions collected around private vehicle use are limited and conflicting, making it hard to draw a clear conclusion around the scheme's impact on car use.

All three of the residents who responded within the public consultation were in favour of the scheme, citing reduced congestion on their road and requesting that a wider area be included in the scheme to prevent parents from parking across local peoples' driveways. In conclusion, residents are in favour of the scheme.

Recommendation

Based on the data gathered, the scheme appears to have public approval and the approval of the school. However, the number of public responses was low and air quality data was sparse. Therefore, we recommend that the St Mary's CE School Street scheme remains in place for another

year, during which time further data can be collected. If this data does not show an increase in active travel and a decrease in car use, we recommend that the Council considers extending the scheme to include the North end of Mayo Road. This would make the scheme more impactful and further reduce space for car parking and idling, influencing more families' journeys to school.

Appendices

Appendix A – Air quality data

Table A1 – Air quality data for St Mary's CE Primary School

Baseline LAEI 2016 Annual mean NO^2 ($\mu g/m^3$)	NO_2 reading from Diffusion Tube - RAW DATA ($\mu g/m^3$)												
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.
37.86	22.54	X	X	34.93	29.96	28.68	X	21.81	18.96	20.44	19.66	30.24	29.18