



## ***Brent School Streets Review***

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**Christchurch Scheme Report**

**MP Smarter Travel**

109 The Print Rooms  
180 Union Street  
London SE1 0LH

September 2021

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# Christchurch School Street

## Background

In September 2020, a School Street scheme was introduced through an experimental traffic order on Clarence Road, as highlighted on the map below. The Christchurch School Street scheme was created to reduce air pollution and improve road safety outside Christchurch C of E Primary School, which educates students from ages five to eleven. The School Street also aims to ease the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, by providing extra space for social distancing.

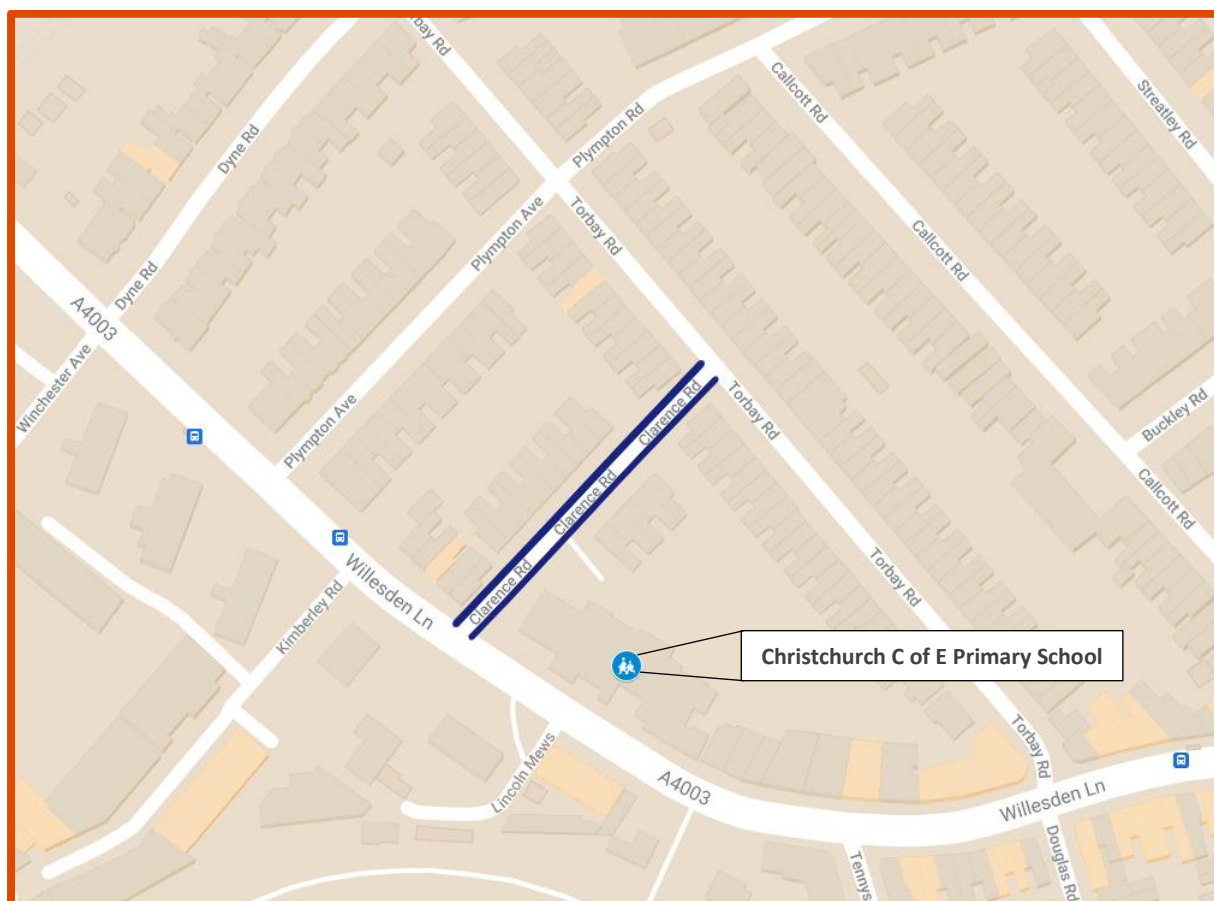


Figure 1 – Map showing location of the School Street, and Christchurch C of E Primary School

## 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 analysis
- 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 Christchurch public consultation received 20 responses in total, 11 of whom live outside of the scheme. 19 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	16	7	9
Opposes School Street	3	1	2

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 opposition to the scheme.

**Table 2 – Public comment themes**

Code Frame	Theme	Count
Access	Support hierarchy of modes	2
	Concern about older people having to move barrier	1
Parking	Support reducing idling and poor parking	2
	Concern about parents still idling engines nearby and parking inconsiderately	3
Traffic Levels	Support reduced traffic/congestion due to scheme	1
	Observed increase in parents and children walking/cycling/scooting/ Decrease in driving	2
Health	Support reduced air pollution because of scheme	8
	Support scheme for safety (particularly of children)	5
	Support increased space for social distancing	1
	Support reduced traffic noise	1
General	Support scheme for environmental/climate benefits	1
	Would like Brent to make all side roads to one-way, single lane, bicycle friendly, 10mph zones.	1
	Request to extend it to all day / make it permanent	1
	Feels residents are being penalised for problems caused by parents	1
	Feel school shouldn't be in charge of it - underfunded and understaffed	1
	Would replace scheme with warden-enforced parking bans	1
	Request for school carpark to be part of the playground again	1
	Strongly negative feelings towards Brent council e.g., spending, priorities	1

The most referenced themes were that respondents:

1. Support a reduction in air pollution
2. Support an increase in child safety
3. Have concern about parents continuing to idle their engines nearby and park inconsiderately

The public consensus is positive, with the majority supporting the Christchurch School Street for key themes one and two, regarding a reduction in air pollution and an increase in child safety.

## Parent & Guardian Consultation

The parent & guardian consultation yielded seven responses, none of whom were residents of the scheme. Five of these people use public transport to travel to the school, and the remaining two drive. All parent & guardians were happy for the scheme to be made permanent (either with or without changes).

Table 3 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?	Happy with school's participation	7
	Not happy with school's participation	0
Would you like the scheme to be made permanent?	Should be permanent	3
	Should be made permanent (with changes)	4
	Should not be made permanent	0

The table below presents the results of a thematic analysis of responses to the question: "Do you have any comments about the scheme? E.g., what has worked well or not so well."

**Table 4 – Parent comment themes**

Code Frame	Theme	Count
Health	Concern about parents not social distancing outside school gate	1
Implementation	Only wants school street to be operational at pick-up and drop-off	1
	Request for penalties if scheme is breached	1
	Request to make signage clearer	1

Based on the seven responses received, parents & guardians have a positive view of the Christchurch School Street scheme, with 100% of them being in favour of continuing the scheme in some form. Parent & guardian's negative comments on the scheme focused on enforcing social distancing and the details of how the scheme is implemented.

## Key Concerns

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

### Highways Changes

Across all of the responses received, there was only one request for a highways change.

**Table 5 – Highways changes**

Highways Change	Count
Would like Brent to make all side roads to one-way, single lane, bicycle friendly, 10mph zones.	1

This respondent is hoping for an expansion of the school street to a network of low traffic neighbourhoods across the borough.

### Blue Badge Holders

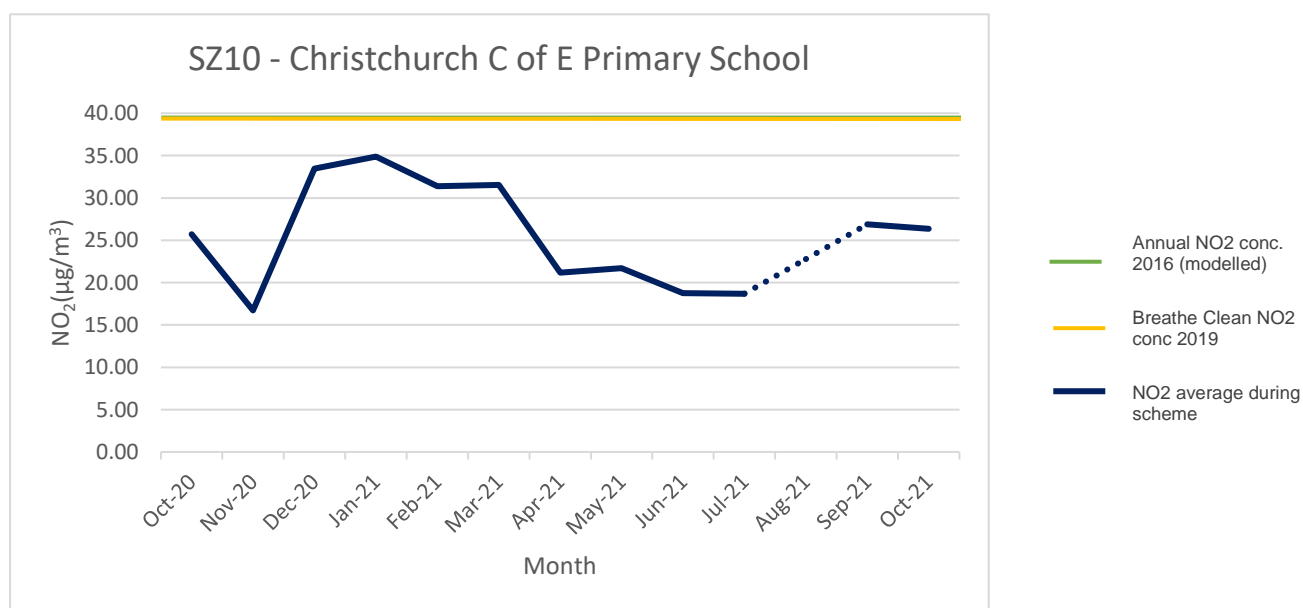
Of the 27 combined public and parent & guardian responses, one person identified themselves as having a disability. This person was in favour of the scheme, saying that it reduces exposure of the community to harmful air pollution, however, they also request that drivers should be prohibited from idling on the street.

### Air Quality

As part of the Christchurch School Street scheme, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) 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](#)) and the NO<sub>2</sub> concentration recorded in 2019 as part of the Breathe Clean programme, just before the scheme was implemented for reference.

Figure two shows an initial rise in NO<sub>2</sub> concentration around the winter months, and then a downward trend into summer, which is in line with seasonal trends for NO<sub>2</sub>, with all readings remaining below the baseline averages from previous years. 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<sub>2</sub> concentration at Christchurch C of E Primary School**

It is important to note that this data represents NO<sub>2</sub> 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

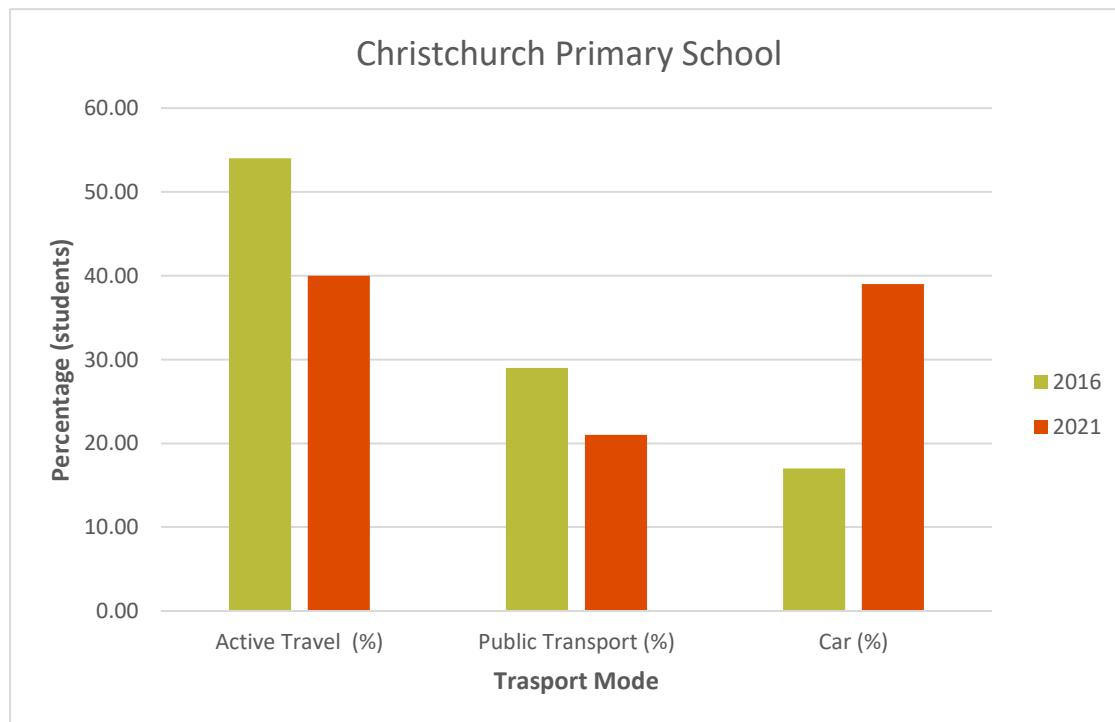
Through interview, MP Smarter Travel found that Christ Church C of E Primary School has had a generally positive experience of the scheme, with more details of the interview shown in the table below. The school would like a permanent barrier to be installed to avoid instances of people driving down the road by accident, endangering children.

**Table 6 – Interview summary**

Overall Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive</li> </ul>
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street is much safer for children now</li> <li>• Allows parents and children to stay socially distanced</li> <li>• More pupils seem to be walking and scooting to school</li> </ul>
Concerns/drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placing the barriers takes up staff time</li> </ul>
Requests for continuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent barrier</li> <li>• Timings be shortened to 8:40-9:15am and 2:40-3:15pm to keep residents happy</li> </ul>

## Travel Mode Analysis

Students at Christchurch C of E Primary were surveyed before (2016) and after (2021) the implementation of the School Street scheme, to highlight any changes in travel mode. It appears that active travel has decreased by 14% since 2016, while car use has increased by 22%. This could be due to the pandemic discouraging people from mixing on pavements and public transport, but also may indicate the scheme has not yet been successful.



**Figure 4 – Graph of travel modes of students at Christchurch Primary School in 2016 compared to 2021.**

## Site Observations

The Brent Officer site observation of the Christchurch School Street scheme was carried out on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2021. The following observations were made:

- Site manager operates barrier at junction of Clarence Road and Torbay Road
- Office manager operates barrier at junction of Clarence Road and Willesden Road
- Head teacher supports the scheme but wants to know when cameras will be installed

There was no recommendation made by the officer.

## Conclusion

### Providing Space for Social Distancing

There is conflicting anecdotal evidence of how well this aim has been met. The school reported that the social distancing of parents and children had been made easier by the scheme, with one of the public consultation responses backing this up. However, one of the parent responses asserted that parents were still clustering together outside of school gates and allowing children to not maintain social distancing too. It is difficult to assess this aim without impartial observation of crowding at pick-up and drop-off.

### Improves Air Quality

Air quality monitoring completed outside of the school shows a general decline in NO<sub>2</sub> concentration throughout the spring and summer of 2021, in line with seasonal trends for NO<sub>2</sub>. 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

According to the school and two of the public consultation responses, they have witnessed an increase in parents and children walking, cycling and scooting to school. This suggests that this aim has been a success, and more children at Christchurch C of E Primary School are engaging in active journeys to school. However, the mode split data shows a decrease in active travel, and a significant increase in car use, contrasting with these perceived increases in active travel. Therefore, it is not possible to draw a conclusion about this aim at this time.

### Reducing Private Vehicle Use/Resident Views

Of all the public and parent & guardian consultation responses, eight were listed as being residents of the scheme. Of these eight, seven were in favour of the scheme and one was opposed. The one in opposition said they support the concept of the scheme but that it does not work on their street due to the displaced traffic and parking, which is causing issues. The seven residents in support of the scheme said so for reasons such as reducing air pollution and idling and improving safety for children.

## Recommendation

Based on the data analysed, we are recommending that the Christchurch School Street scheme be made permanent, as the majority of stakeholders support its implementation. The possibility of a more secure barrier or stringent enforcement should be investigated by the council, to prevent any



drivers from ignoring the School Street and trying to drive through during operational hours. It is also important to note that the school's Head Teacher has requested for cameras to be installed, removing the need for staff to enforce the scheme's barriers.

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

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

For the highways change requested (see table 5), this would require extensive consultation with the borough's highways engineers.

# Appendices

## Appendix A – Air quality data

**Table A1 – Air quality data for Christchurch C of E Primary School**

Baseline LAEI 2016 Annual mean NO <sub>2</sub> (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Breathe Clean data (4-8 week snapshot) (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	NO <sub>2</sub> reading from Diffusion Tube - RAW DATA (µg/m <sup>3</sup> )												
		Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.
39.03	39.7	25.7	16.72	33.48	34.88	31.39	31.53	21.19	21.7	18.76	18.69	X	26.88	26.36