



Brent School Streets Review

Preston Park Scheme Report

MP Smarter Travel

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Preston Park School Street

Background

In September 2020, a School Street scheme was introduced through an experimental traffic order on College Road, as highlighted on the map below. The Preston Park School Street was created to reduce air pollution and improve road safety outside Preston Park 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 to ease the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

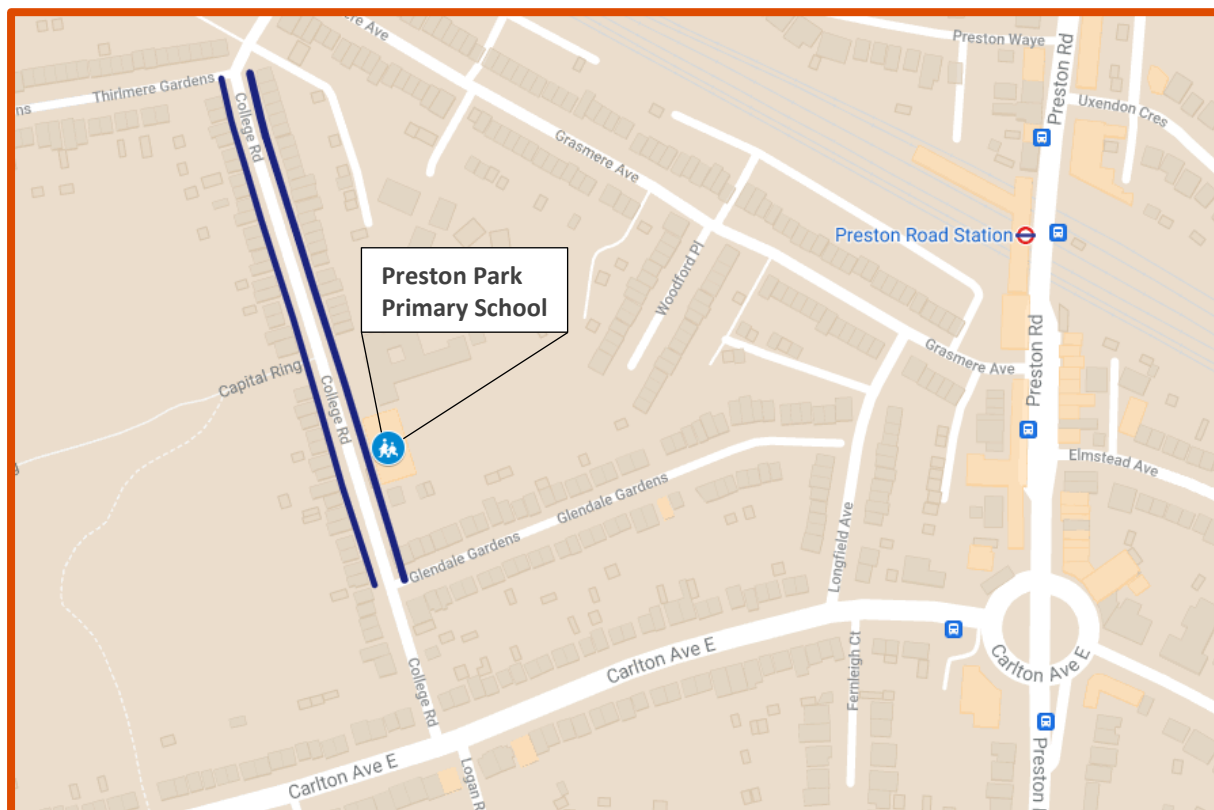


Figure 1 – Map showing location of the School Street and Preston Park Primary School.

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

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 Preston Park public consultation received 26 responses in total (not including those who also responded to the parent & guardian consultation), 17 of whom live outside of the scheme. 25 of these responses included a comment, all of which have been analysed thematically to highlight relevant points.

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 | 11 | 4 | 7 |
| Opposes School Street | 15 | 5 | 10 |

Table 2 displays the key issues pulled from the public 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. Yellow comments represent themes that are neither supportive nor oppositional.

Table 2 – Public comment themes

| Code Frame | Theme | Count |
|-----------------|--|-------|
| Access | Feel there should be somebody allocated to move the barriers/Concern that residents have to move them | 2 |
| | Concern about access for deliveries, visitors, and tradespeople | 6 |
| | Concern about parents who have multiple children to drop off/ have to get to and from work while dropping off children | 3 |
| | Residents annoyed at being mistaken for parents and stopped by school staff | 1 |
| Consultation | Concern about lack of prior consultation with residents | 3 |
| Parking | Complaint about inconsiderate parking pre-scheme (damaging vehicles, parking across driveways etc.) | 2 |
| | Concern about inconsiderate displaced parent parking (blocking driveways, on corners, refusing to move) | 2 |
| | Request for double yellow lines to prevent displaced parent parking across driveways either end of scheme | 1 |
| Active Journeys | Supports increase in active journeys | 2 |
| | Observed increase in active journeys | 1 |
| Traffic Levels | Support reduced traffic/congestion due to scheme | 1 |
| | Concerns about displaced traffic on other roads (e.g., Carlton Avenue East, Windemere Avenue) | 8 |
| | Concern about displaced traffic causing fights between drivers | 1 |
| | Problem with cars coming up from Glendale to turn into College Road and cars from College Road wanting to turn into Glendale | 1 |
| | Concern about impact on efficiency of journeys (time, fuel, money) | 1 |
| Health | Supports scheme for increased child safety | 1 |
| | Feel scheme has put undue stress on local residents | 3 |
| | Concern about increased air pollution due to displaced traffic | 2 |
| | Feels scheme makes no improvement to safety | 1 |
| | Request to see pollution meter evidence of need/impact | 1 |
| General | Feels all schools should have a School Street | 1 |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | Feels scheme is pointless/ waste of resources | 5 |
| | Negative feelings towards Brent Council | 3 |
| | Request to replace scheme with fines for school parents who use the road | 1 |
| | Concerned scheme will have negative economic impacts on the community | 1 |
| | Complaint about cones from scheme being left on resident driveways | 1 |
| | Feels that people should use schools in their local neighbourhood rather than schools in other areas of the borough | 1 |
| | Feels restricted hours last too long | 1 |
| | Request for monetary compensation for residents | 1 |
| | Concern about impact on house prices | 1 |
| | Traffic is ignoring scheme anyway | 1 |
| | Feel scheme is a nuisance | 1 |

The most referenced themes were that respondents were:

1. Concerned about displaced traffic on other roads (particularly Carlton Avenue East and Windermere Avenue)
2. Concerned about access of deliveries, visitors, and tradespeople to residents
3. Feeling that the scheme is useless/a waste of resources

These are all negative themes, suggesting that the Preston Park School Street scheme has been disruptive for residents and local people in the surrounding area.

Parent & guardian Consultation

The parent & guardian consultation yielded 37 responses, one of whom was a resident of the scheme. The table below shows how the parents & guardians most commonly travel to school:

Table 3 – Parent & guardian transport modes

| Transport Mode | Count | Percentage in Support of Scheme |
|------------------|-------|---------------------------------|
| Walk | 22 | 95% |
| Drive | 5 | 20% |
| Walk & Drive | 4 | 100% |
| Walk & Cycle | 3 | 100% |
| Public transport | 3 | 100% |

The table below shows the responses to the key questions within the parent & guardian consultation. In contrast to the public consultation, parents & guardians overwhelmingly support the School Street.

Table 4 – Parent & guardian consultation

| Question | Response | Count |
|---|--------------------|-------|
| Overall, are you happy that the school participated in this scheme? | Yes | 32 |
| | No | 5 |
| Would you like the scheme to be made permanent? | Yes | 27 |
| | Yes (with changes) | 5 |
| | No | 5 |

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 5 – Parent comment themes

| Code Frame | Theme | Count |
|-----------------|--|-------|
| Active Journeys | Observed increase in active journeys | 2 |
| Parking | Supports reduction in inconsiderate parent parking | 1 |
| | Concern about displaced parent parking and idling (Carlton Avenue and Windermere) | 2 |
| Traffic | Observed reduced congestion | 11 |
| | Concern about displaced traffic on Carlton Avenue East and Windermere Avenue | 1 |
| Health/Safety | Support scheme for safety (particularly of children) | 9 |
| | Feel the scheme has made pick-up and drop-off calmer/less stressful/less argumentative | 6 |
| | Support reduced air pollution because of scheme | 6 |
| | Feel scheme has made life more pleasant for residents | 2 |
| | Support increased space/social distancing as a result of scheme | 1 |
| | Concern about displaced air pollution | 2 |
| | Concern about safety of children when people ignore scheme | 1 |
| Implementation | Request for stricter/camera monitoring to prevent those ignoring scheme | 3 |
| | Request for staff member to be always monitoring the barrier | 2 |
| | Feels all vehicles without exception should be prevented from driving within scheme | 1 |
| | Request for clearer signage | 1 |
| | Request for support for school staff receiving abuse from drivers | 1 |
| | Request for scheme to not be in place at weekends and school holidays | 1 |
| General | Scheme is worth the minor inconvenience | 1 |
| | Request for crossing or lollipop person on Carlton Avenue | 1 |
| | Feel scheme should be expanded to every school in the borough | 1 |
| | Feels children should not be made to get public transport during pandemic | 1 |

Parent & guardians' view of the scheme was largely positive. The most referenced themes were that they:

1. Have observed reduced congestion around the school
2. Support the scheme for the safety of the children
3. Feel the scheme has made pick-up and drop-off calmer/less stressful/less argumentative
4. Support reduced air pollution due to scheme

There were very few negative comments from parents & guardians; most were concerns about displaced traffic and its impacts, but these were not widely supported.

Air Quality

As part of the Preston Park School Street scheme, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) 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 NO₂ concentration recorded in 2019 as part of the Breathe Clean programme, just before the scheme was implemented for reference.

The low reading from November 2020 is very likely to be an anomalous result as it does not fit the trend seen across other months and November is usually when we would expect to see a spike in NO₂ concentration due to meteorological conditions. The remainder of the graph indicates falling NO₂ concentration levels, staying below both baselines from February onwards. This downward trend into summer 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.

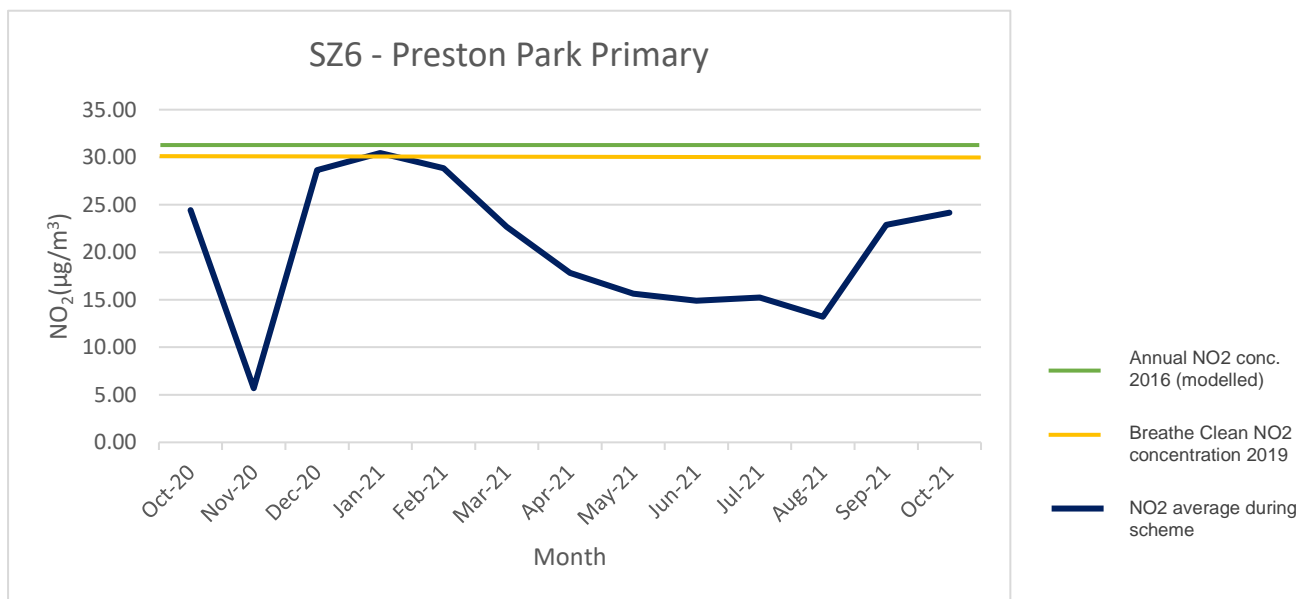


Figure 2 – NO₂ concentration at Preston Park Primary School

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, MP Smarter Travel found that Preston Park 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 cameras and traffic wardens be provided by the council to monitor and enforce the scheme, as they are currently facing issues with not having the staff resources to

prevent parents from ignoring the scheme. This is an issue that was also mentioned in the parent & guardian consultation responses.

Table 7 – Interview summary

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Overall Opinion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive |
| Benefits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More pupils scooting and walking • Calm and healthy environment outside the school • Much more space for social distancing |
| Concerns/drawbacks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposition from residents and a local councillor has put pressure on the school • Issues with parents ignoring restrictions, using up staff time to monitor the barriers |
| Requests for continuation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camera monitoring • Traffic warden reinforcement |

Travel Mode Analysis

Students at Preston Park Primary School were surveyed before (March, 2019) and after (March, 2021) the implementation of the scheme, to identify any changes in travel modes. This data is presented in figure 4, below.

There was an 11% increase in active travel between 2019 and 2021, accounted for by an 11% decrease in car usage over that period, while public transport usage remained the same. This suggests that the Preston Park School Street scheme has encouraged active travel.

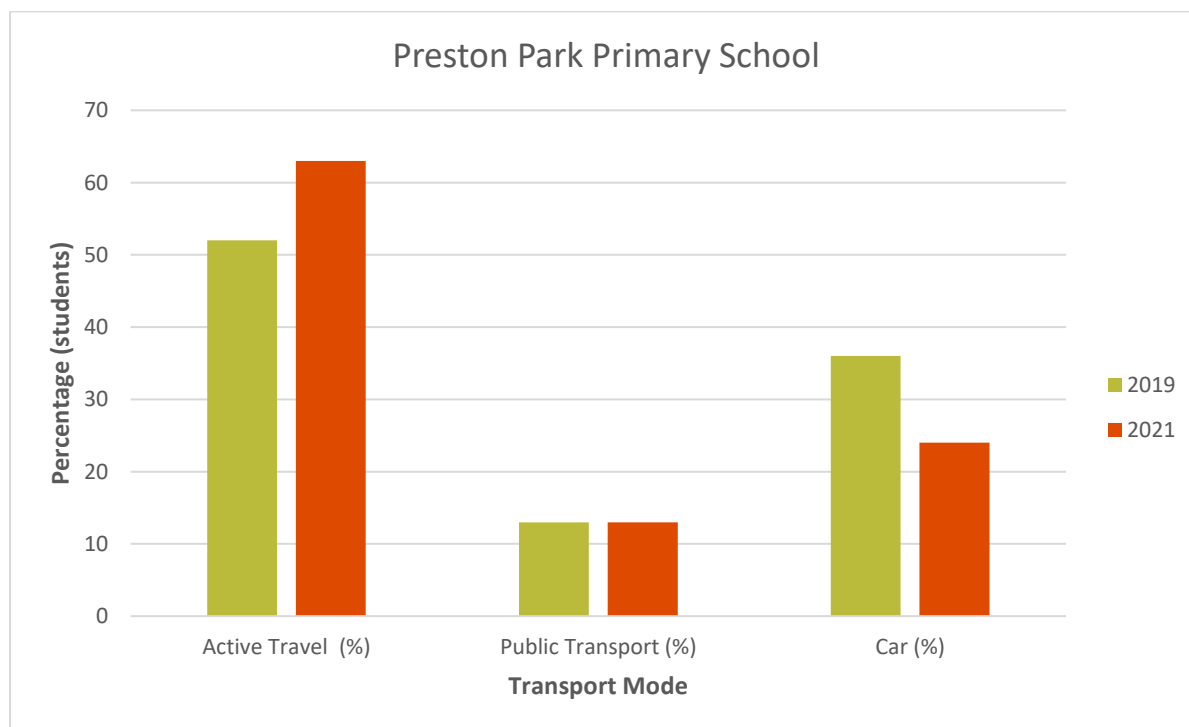


Figure 4 – Travel mode data for Preston Park Primary School in 2019 compared to 2021.

Conclusion

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

Providing Space for Social Distancing

The school stated that the Preston Park School Street scheme has provided “much more space” for the purpose of social distancing. This was only referenced once within the public and parent & guardian consultations, with an individual saying the scheme had “really helped with social distancing”. From the evidence available, this aim appears to have been met.

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. Within the public and parent & guardian consultations, six people stated that one of their reasons for supporting the scheme was reduced air pollution, while four others stated their concern for air pollution from displaced traffic.

We would suggest that borough officers investigate concerns that the scheme has displaced large amounts of traffic.

Encouraging Active Journeys to School

From the school interview, it seems that active journeys to school have been encouraged by the scheme as they report seeing more pupils scooting and walking. This is supported by two people in the parent & guardian consultation who reported an observed increase in active journeys to school. Further, many of those who cited the roads being safer for children specifically mentioned that it was now much safer for their children to walk, scoot and cycle to school. Based on this information, we can conclude that this aim has been met.

Reducing Private Vehicle Use/Resident Views

Overall, 10 residents shared their views in this consultation. Five of these residents are supportive of the scheme for reasons like reduced congestion, a calmer atmosphere and an increase in children walking to school. The other five residents are unsupportive of the scheme for reasons such as difficulty receiving deliveries and visitors, the inconvenience of having to move the cones out of their way, and the lack of prior consultation. We feel that the installation of cameras and an exemption system would help resolve resident’s main concerns.

Recommendation

Based on the data analysed, we are recommending that the scheme is made permanent. This is based on the strongly positive feedback from parents & guardians and the school, as well as the data that suggests the scheme has encouraged children to take active journeys to school. We believe that all of these factors outweigh the 15 public consultation responses that opposed the scheme. We feel that these respondent’s concerns can be resolved through the installation of cameras to enforce the scheme and more time for local drivers to get used to the scheme or adapt their mode of travel.

We also recommend that the option of installing parking restrictions on Carlton Avenue East and Windermere Avenue should be investigated. These roads are the focus of many negative public

comments. Two respondents particularly mentioned issues with buses trying to squeeze past parked parent cars.

We recommend that either a camera or a more permanent barrier should be put in place to prevent drivers from ignoring the restrictions and take the pressure of enforcement off Preston Park Primary School staff.

Appendices

Appendix A – Air quality data

Table A1 – Air quality data for Preston Park Primary School

| Baseline LAEI 2016 Annual mean NO ₂ (µg/m ³) | Breathe Clean data (4-8 week snapshot) (µg/m ³) | NO ₂ reading from Diffusion Tube - RAW DATA (µg/m ³) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Jan. | Feb. | Mar. | Apr. | May | Jun. | Jul. | Aug. | Sep. | Oct. |
| 32.71 | 30.6 | 24.44 | 5.69 | 28.63 | 30.44 | 28.84 | 22.66 | 17.82 | 15.66 | 14.88 | 15.23 | 13.20 | 22.89 | 24.15 |