



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

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### **Elsley Scheme Report**

**MP Smarter Travel**

109 The Print Rooms  
180 Union Street  
London SE1 0LH

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# Elsley School Street

## Background

In August 2020, a School Street scheme was introduced through an experimental traffic order on Berkhamsted Avenue and Tokyngton Avenue, as highlighted on the map below. The Elsley School Street was created to reduce air pollution and improve road safety outside Elsley 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.

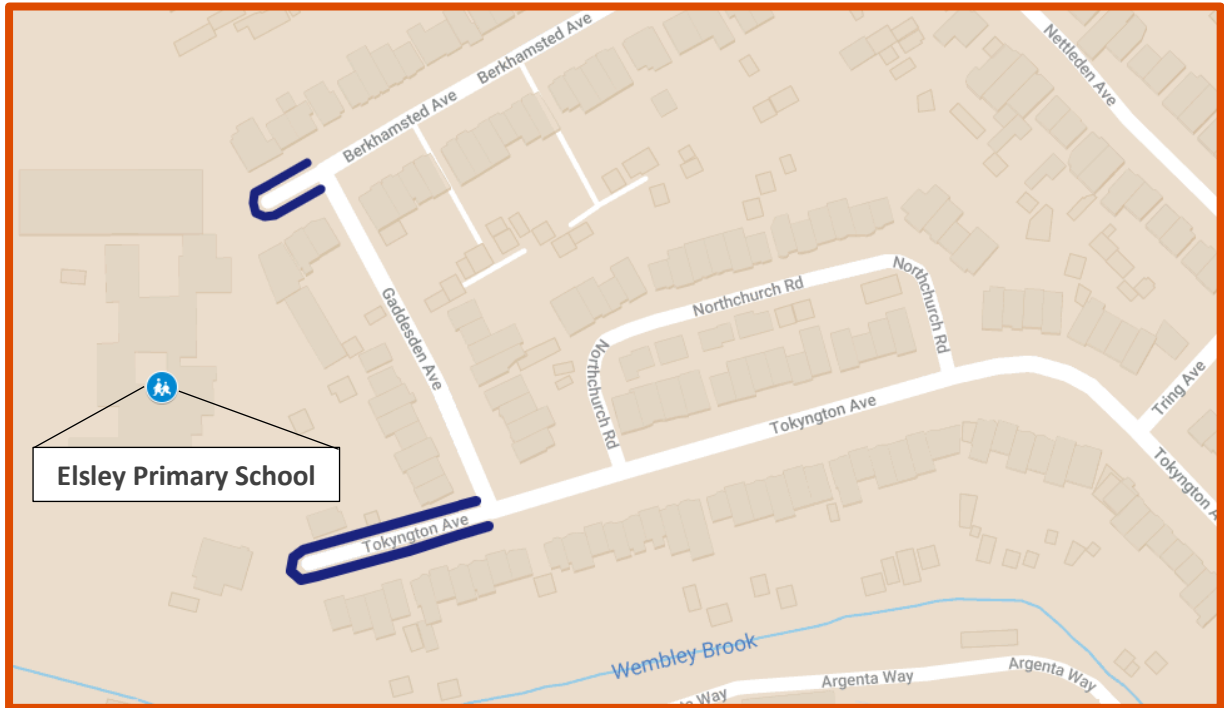


Figure 1 – Map showing location of the School Street and Elsley Primary School

## 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 September 2020 to July 2021, members of the public were invited to provide feedback on the experimental scheme. The Elsley School Street public consultation received three responses in total, all of whom live outside of the scheme. Two of these responses included a comment, both 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	2	0	2
Opposes School Street	1	0	1

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.

**Table 2 – Public comment themes**

Code Frame	Theme	Count
Parking	Concern about displaced parked cars at the top of Bovingdon Avenue	1
Traffic Levels	Concern about displaced traffic on Bovingdon Avenue	1
General	Thinks it is the best thing for roads since cycle lanes and pedestrian crossings	1

Given the very limited response from members of the public, no key themes can be drawn out.

## Parent & guardian Consultation

The parent & guardian consultation yielded 14 responses, two of whom were residents of the scheme. Table 3 shows the primary modes of transport used by the parents & guardians:

**Table 3 – Parent & guardian transport modes**

Transport Mode	Count	Percentage in Support of Scheme
Walk	7	86%
Drive	5	40%
Walk and cycle	1	0%
Cycle, drive and public transport	1	100%

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

**Table 4 – Parent & guardian consultation**

Question	Response	Count
Overall, are you happy that the school participated in this scheme?	Yes	11
	No	3
Would you like the scheme to be made permanent?	Yes	8
	Yes (with changes)	1
	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”. Yellow comments represent themes that are neither supportive nor oppositional.

**Table 5 – Parent comment themes**

Code Frame	Theme	Count
Active Travel	Appreciated being able to walk to school	1
Access	Concern about access for those who are unable to walk to school	1
Parking	Scheme is sometimes not enough to deter parking	1
Health/Safety	Feel the scheme will help children physically, emotionally, and socially	1
	Support reduced air pollution due to scheme	1
	Support scheme for safety (particularly of children)	1
Implementation	Request for clearer signage at junction of Gaddeston and Tokyngton Avenue	1
	Request for cameras to prevent drivers ignoring scheme	1
	Request for somebody to stand at the cones at all times to prevent drivers ignoring scheme	1
	Feels scheme is a waste of money/pointless	1

Parent & guardians’ view of the scheme was mostly positive, with 79% of parents & guardians happy about the school’s initial participation and 64% supportive of making the Elsley School Street scheme permanent.

## Key Concerns

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

### Blue Badge Holders

Two of the respondents to the consultation identified themselves as having a disability. Both individuals were supportive of the scheme and its continuation, with one saying it was the best thing to happen to roads since cycle lanes, and the other providing no comment.

## Air Quality

As part of the Elsley 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.

\*See Appendix A for full air quality datasets.

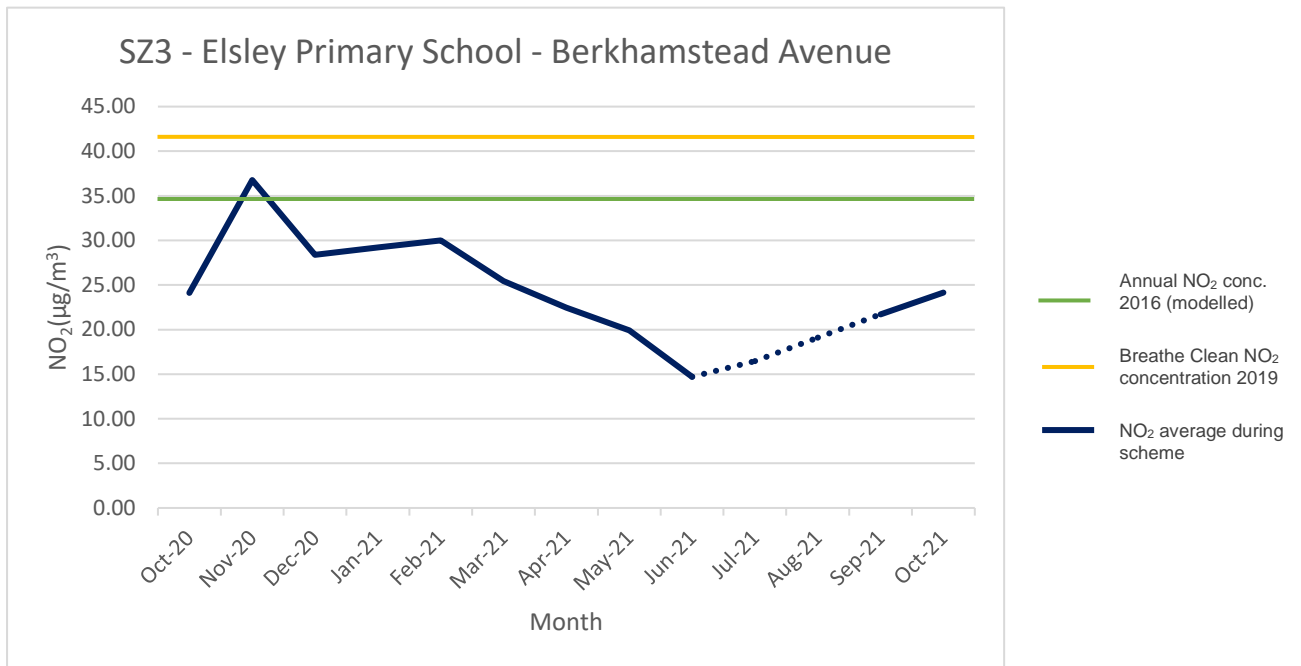


Figure 2 – NO<sub>2</sub> concentration at Elsley Primary School, Berkhamstead Avenue

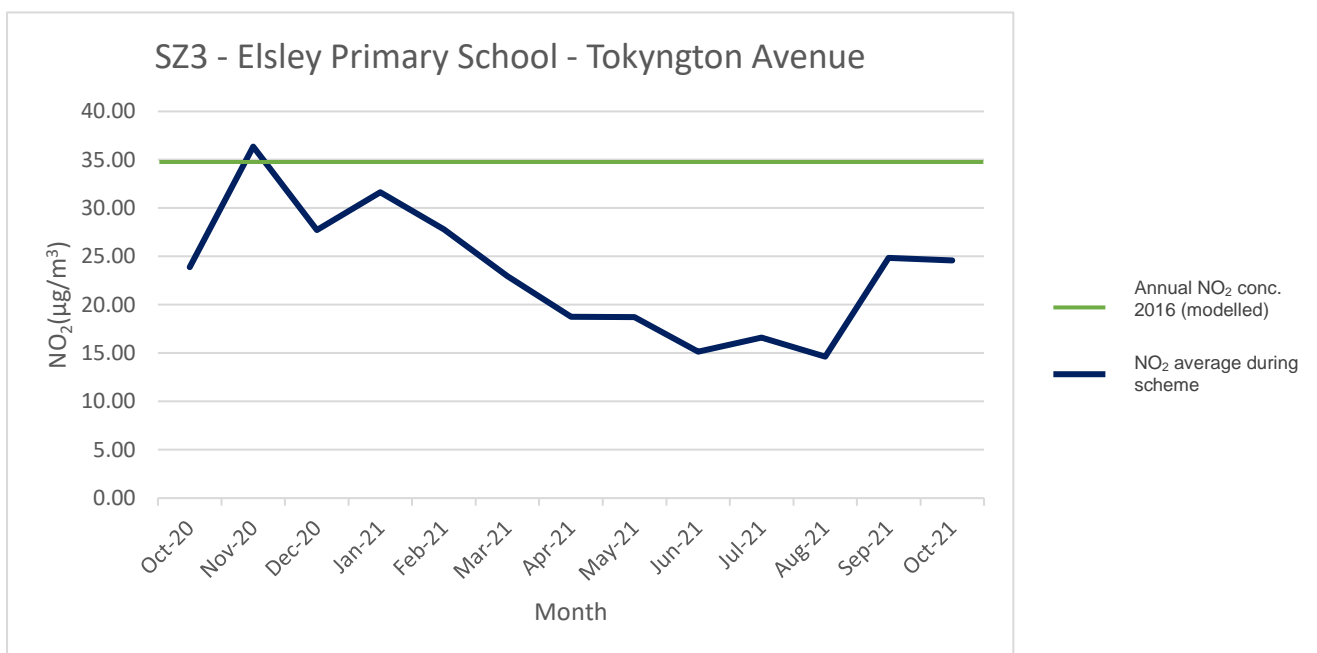


Figure 3 – NO<sub>2</sub> concentration at Elsley Primary School, Tokyngton Avenue

Both sets of data follow a similar path, with figure two and three showing 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>. 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. All of the readings taken on Berkhamstead Avenue sit below the 2019 reading taken during the Breathe Clean project, suggesting that pollution levels have decreased over the two year period.

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

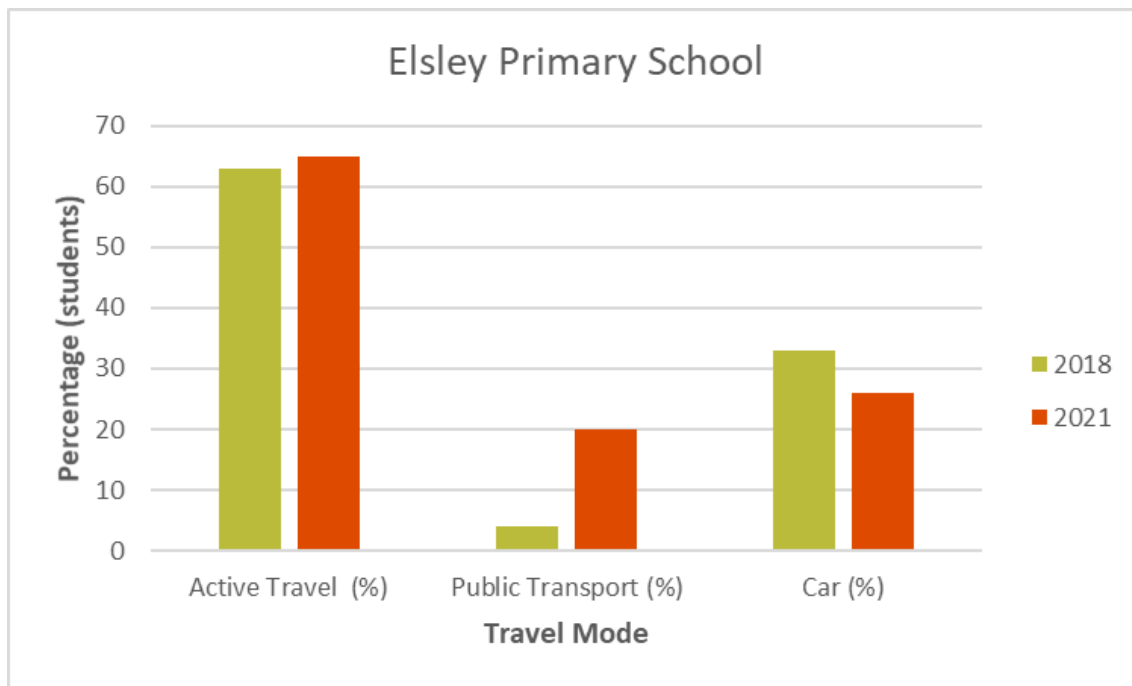
Through interview, MP Smarter Travel found that Elsley Primary School initially had a positive experience of the scheme, with more details of the interview shown in the table below. At the beginning of implementation, the school reported the benefits of having reduced traffic, improved road safety, and space for social distancing. However, when staff no longer had time to always be standing at the barrier, those benefits significantly reduced, as parents realised there would be no repercussions for ignoring the scheme. The school requested that cameras be installed to monitor the scheme long-term, and that enforcement officers occasionally visit to ensure people are not breaking the rules.

**Table 6 – Interview summary**

Overall Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initially positive, before benefits somewhat wore off</li> </ul>
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More children have been using scooters (school had to buy more scooter parking), but this is mainly those who walked anyway</li> <li>Initial large improvement in traffic reduction on both roads, improving safety</li> <li>Initial provision of space for social distancing</li> </ul>
Concerns/drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff did not have time to monitor scheme (especially Tokyington Avenue), road safety worsened again as parents started ignoring scheme</li> <li>Parents started gathering together regardless of space for social distancing</li> </ul>
Requests for continuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cameras and occasional presence of enforcement officers to deter rule breaking</li> </ul>

## Travel Mode Analysis

Students at Elsley Primary School were surveyed before (May, 2018) and after (July, 2021) the implementation of the scheme, to identify any changes in travel modes.



**Figure 4 – Graph of travel modes of students at Elsley Primary School in 2018 compared to 2021.**

The travel mode data reveals a 2% increase in the number of students arriving by active travel, while public transport has increased by 6%. The 8% decrease in car use suggests that the scheme is having the desired effect and nudging parents & guardians to more sustainable forms of travel.

## Site Observations

The Brent Officer site observation of the Elsley School Street scheme was carried out in July 2021. The following observations were made:

- Scheme is running smoothly
- Scheme pushes cars to park on other roads

There was no recommendation made by the officer.

## Conclusion

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

### Providing Space for Social Distancing

The scheme has been successful in providing space for social distancing, as reported by the school in their interview. However, parents have not been taking the opportunity to use the space for social distancing, gathering together outside the school gates. Regardless, the aim of providing the space has been met by this scheme.



## **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**

The scheme has somewhat achieved this aim. The number of students engaging in active journeys has increased by 2% since 2018, which is still relatively low, particularly for a school that is gold accredited within the STARS scheme. This may partially be an impact of the school being unable to monitor both barriers, resulting in more parents being able to drive their children to school and ignore the School Street. With improved enforcement of the scheme, Elsley Primary School may be able to further increase the number of students travelling actively. Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more families have taken to their cars to avoid social contact, perhaps reducing the impact of the scheme on promoting active travel.

## **Reducing Private Vehicle Use/Resident Views**

As with the previous aim, there has been a small reduction in the number of children travelling by cars, decreasing by 8% since 2018. This suggests a decrease in parents using their private vehicles, making this aim successful.

Two residents responded to the consultation, one in support, requesting that somebody is always physically present to monitor the barrier, and the other unsupportive, offering no comment.

# **Recommendation**

Based on the data analysed, we are recommending that the Elsley School Street scheme is made permanent. The scheme seems to have encouraged active transport. Additionally, there were only five negative comments submitted through consultation over the 10-month period. To resolve the school's struggle with enforcing the scheme, we recommend ANPR cameras are put in place to monitor and deter drivers.

# Appendices

## Appendix A – Air quality data

**Table A1 – Air quality data for Elsley Primary School, Berkhamstead Avenue**

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.
34.99	41.9	24.09	36.76	28.40	29.19	29.98	25.43	22.44	19.89	14.71	X	X	21.72	24.15

**Table A2 – Air quality data for Elsley Primary School, Tokyington Avenue**

Baseline LAEI 2016 Annual mean NO <sub>2</sub> (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.
34.82	23.89	36.36	27.74	31.64	27.80	22.96	18.74	18.72	15.16	16.59	14.63	24.84	24.58