



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

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**St Joseph's Infants and Juniors Scheme Report**

**MP Smarter Travel**

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# St Joseph's Infants and Juniors School Street

## Background

In September 2020, a School Street scheme was introduced through an experimental traffic order on Waverley Avenue and Chatsworth Avenue, as highlighted on the map below. The St Joseph's Infants and Juniors School Street was created to reduce air pollution and improve road safety outside the two schools. This School Street is also intended to provide more space for social distancing, to help to ease the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

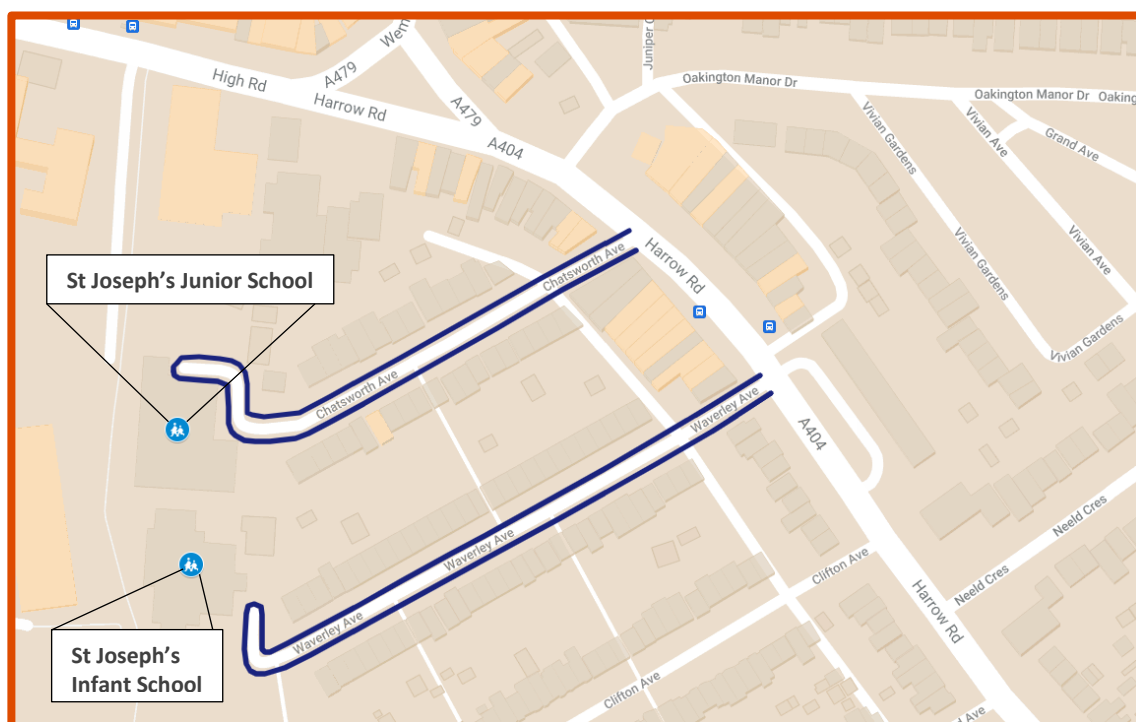


Figure 1 – Map showing location of the School Streets, St Joseph's Infant School, and St Joseph's Junior School.

## 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 August 2020 to June 2021, members of the public were invited to provide feedback on the experimental scheme. The St Joseph Infants and Juniors public consultation received 14 responses in total, 13 of whom live outside of the scheme. Six 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	13	1	12
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	Supports reducing inconsiderate parking	1
	Supports fewer disputes over parking	1
	Concern about rear parking for Harrow Road being blocked off by the scheme	1
Traffic Levels	Support reduced traffic/congestion due to scheme	2
	Observed increase in parents and children walking/cycling/scooting	1
Health	Support increased space for social distancing	2
	Support reduced air pollution due to scheme	2
	Support scheme for safety (particularly of children)	2
	Concern about parents gathering and not social distancing	1
	Concerned about increased pollution/danger due to displaced traffic	1
General	Concern about e-scooters on pavements	1

The most referenced themes were that respondents:

- Support reduced traffic/congestion due to scheme
- Support increased space for social distancing
- Support reduced air pollution due to scheme
- Support scheme for safety (particularly of children)

These themes as well as 14 respondents voting in favour of the scheme show that it has public support.

## Air Quality

As part of the St Joseph Infants and Juniors 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](#)) for reference.

\*See Appendix A for full air quality datasets.

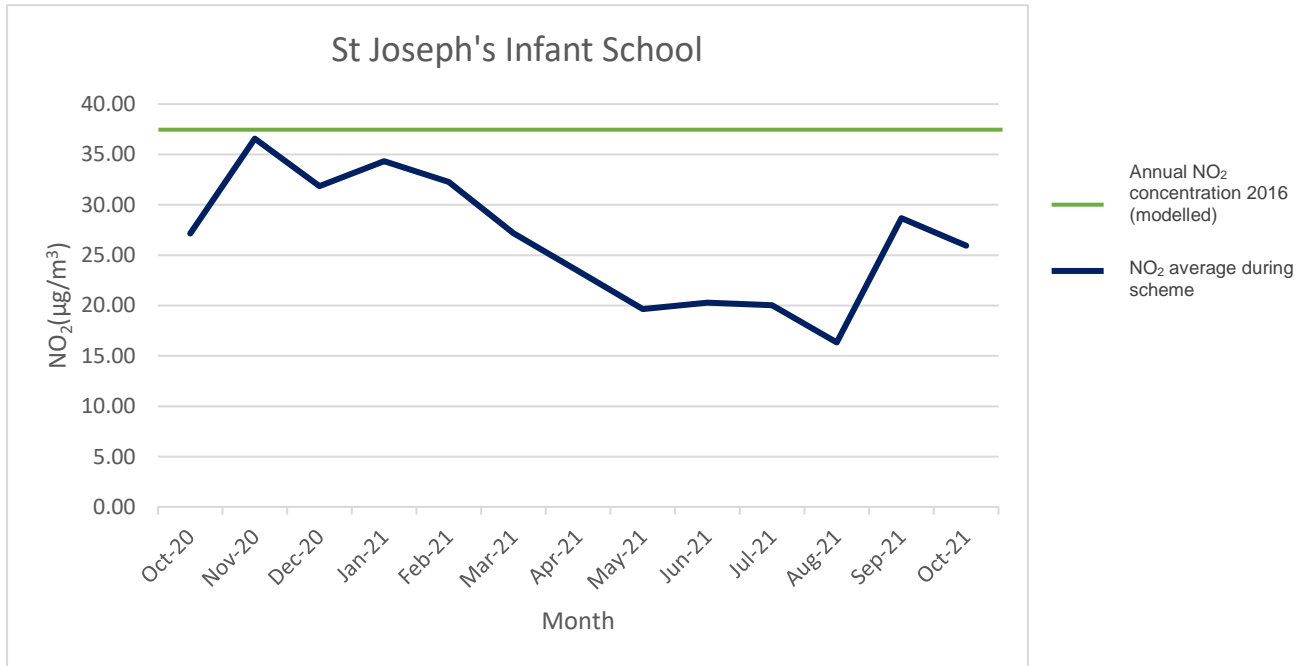


Figure 2 – NO<sub>2</sub> concentration at St Joseph's Infant School (Chatsworth Avenue)

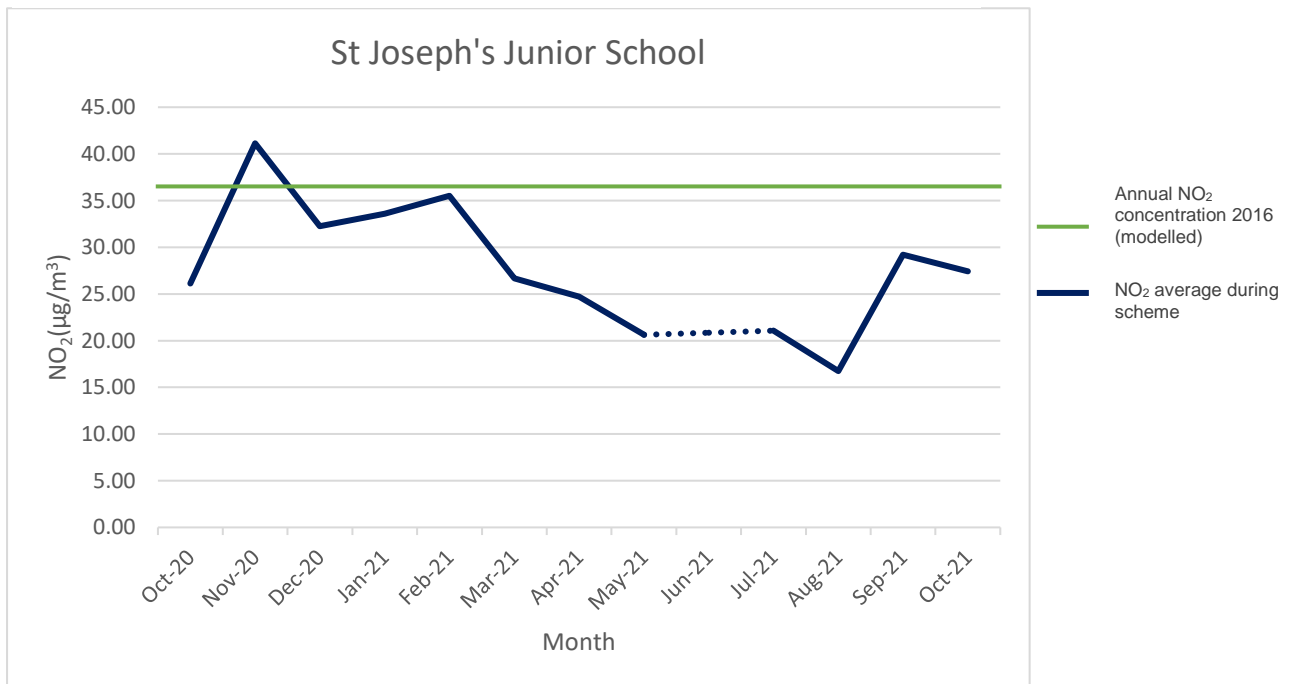


Figure 3 – NO<sub>2</sub> concentration at St Joseph's Junior School (Waverley Avenue)

The data from the two schools are very similar, the only real difference being that St Joseph’s Junior School experienced a 4.57 µg/m<sup>3</sup> larger peak in NO<sub>2</sub> concentration in November than St Joseph’s Infant School. This may be due to St Joseph’s Junior School being located slightly closer to Harrow Road/High Road. Overall, figure 2 and 3 show 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.

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

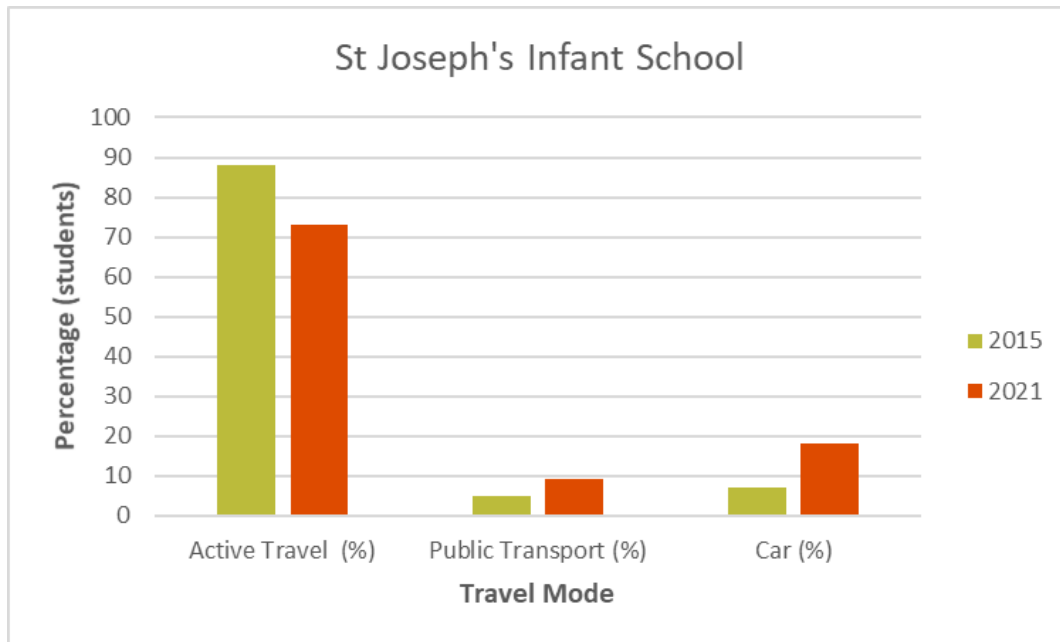
Through interview, MP Smarter Travel found that St Joseph Infant and Junior Schools have had a generally positive experience of the scheme. Both schools have the same head teacher and therefore both schools were covered in one interview, the details of which are shown in the table below. The school requested that cameras be installed to save staff time and also ensure a reduction in abuse from drivers who want to pass through the scheme unpermitted. The school also requested that delivery drivers are banned during restricted times, because they often witness issues with them speeding down the road.

**Table 6 – Interview summary**

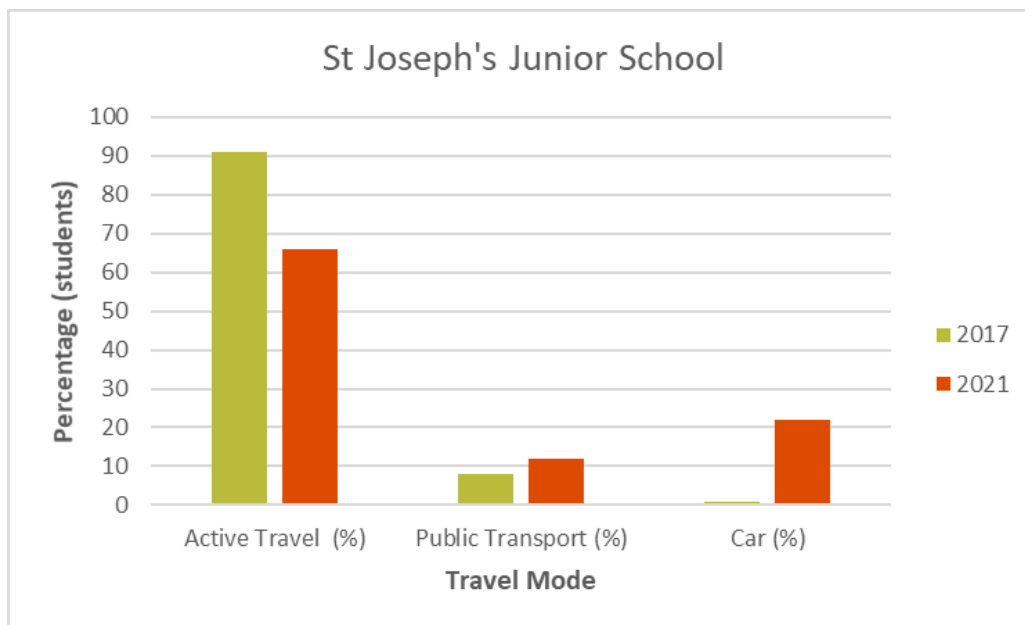
Overall Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive</li> </ul>
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very happy with the implementation process</li> <li>• Big reduction in number of people driving</li> <li>• Many more children are scooting to school</li> <li>• Improved community relationships from having staff on the street engaging with local community</li> <li>• Provided extra space for people</li> </ul>
Concerns/drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff sometimes receive abuse from cars trying to gain access</li> <li>• Pupils are sometimes too relaxed on the road, forgetting that residents can still drive down the road</li> </ul>
Requests for continuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cameras</li> <li>• Ban on delivery drivers during restricted times</li> </ul>

## Travel Mode Analysis

Students at both St Joseph's Infant and Junior School were surveyed before (July, 2015) and after (May, 2021) the implementation of the scheme, to identify any changes in travel modes.



**Figure 4 – Graph of travel modes of students at St Joseph's Infant School in 2015 compared to 2021.**



**Figure 5 – Graph of travel modes of students at St Joseph's Junior School in 2017 compared to 2021.**

For both schools, the number of students using active travel has decreased, while use of public transport and cars has increased since 2017. This indicates that the scheme has not been successful

in encouraging active travel, although without more recent years' data to compare to the 2021 data, it is not possible to be certain of the impact of the scheme on active travel.

## Site Observation

The Brent Officer site observation of the St Joseph's Infant and Junior scheme was carried out in May 2021. The following observations were made:

- Scheme is well-run: pedestrians use one side of the road to walk up and the other to walk down.
- No parking issues.
- Alleyway between both schools is used as a short cut to get pupils to school – gets blocked with vehicles.
- Headteacher has requested that the crossing by the bus stop opposite Waverly Avenue be reinstated as people keep crossing there.

There was no recommendation made by the Brent Officer.

## Conclusion

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

### **Providing Space for Social Distancing**

The interview with the representative of the schools revealed that the scheme has provided space for social distancing. Children and parents can now walk in the road to maintain distance from each other, although the school did note that this can lead to students becoming too relaxed in the road and forgetting that residents may still be driving up and down it.

The success of this aim is supported by the observation from the Brent Officer. They observed that the school is running the scheme so that parents and children walk up to the school on one side of the road, and away from the school on the other side, preventing bottlenecks of foot traffic. Therefore, this aim has been a success.

### **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>. An indicative conclusion about the impact of the scheme on air pollution could be drawn if pre-implementation air quality data was available.

### **Encouraging Active Journeys to School**

According to the schools, they have seen an increase in the number of children taking active journeys to school. The majority of these are in the form of scooting rather than cycling, which the schools attribute to their policy of not allowing scooters and cycles on the school grounds, so parents have to take them home.

This anecdotal evidence is not supported by the mode split data for either school. However, as there is six-year gap between the data for St Joseph's Infant School, and a four-year gap between the data for St Joseph's Junior school, it may be that there were fluctuations in active travel during the



intervening years. Therefore, it is difficult to know if there has been an increase in active travel compared to more recent years.

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

The schools have reportedly seen a large decrease in the number of parents driving to school, and two people within the public consultation said they supported the reduced amount of traffic and congestion, so this aim may be considered a success. The one issue described by the school during the site observation was that some are using their private vehicles to drop off their children in a nearby alleyway, blocking it up.

Only one resident responded to the public consultation; they were in support of the scheme but did not leave a comment explaining why.

## **Recommendation**

Based on the data analysed, we are recommending that the St Joseph Infant and Junior School Street scheme is made permanent. Of the 14 public respondents, 13 were in support of the scheme, the schools are very supportive of it, and according to the Brent Officer the scheme is well-run, so it appears to be having a positive impact on the community around the school.

We also recommend that, per the request of the schools, ANPR cameras are installed to monitor the scheme during the restricted times, freeing school staff of the responsibility and the threat of abuse from drivers and ensuring that those who ignore the scheme are penalised appropriately.

A highways officer should be consulted about the school's request to re-install a crossing by the bus stop on Harrow Road, opposite Waverly Avenue, helping students and parents to cross safely.

# Appendices

## Appendix A – Air quality data

**Table A1 – Air quality data for St Joseph’s Infant School**

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.
36.98	27.16	36.57	31.86	34.32	32.28	27.20	23.43	19.65	20.29	20.03	16.33	28.66	25.93

**Table A2 – Air quality data for St Joseph’s Junior School**

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.
36.05	26.12	41.14	32.24	33.59	35.52	26.68	24.71	20.63	X	21.07	16.74	29.19	27.42