



Brent School Streets Review

St Joseph RC Primary School Scheme Report

MP Smarter Travel

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St Joseph RC Primary School Scheme

Background

In September 2020, a School Street scheme was introduced through an experimental traffic order on Goodson Road & Brownlow Road, as highlighted in dark blue on the map below. Shortly after the scheme's installation it was extended along Northcote Road, highlighted in light blue in figure 1. The original scheme and extension underwent separate public consultations and air quality monitoring took place on both Brownlow and Northcote Road.

The St Joseph RC Primary School Street was created to reduce air pollution and improve road safety. The Primary School educates students from age 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.

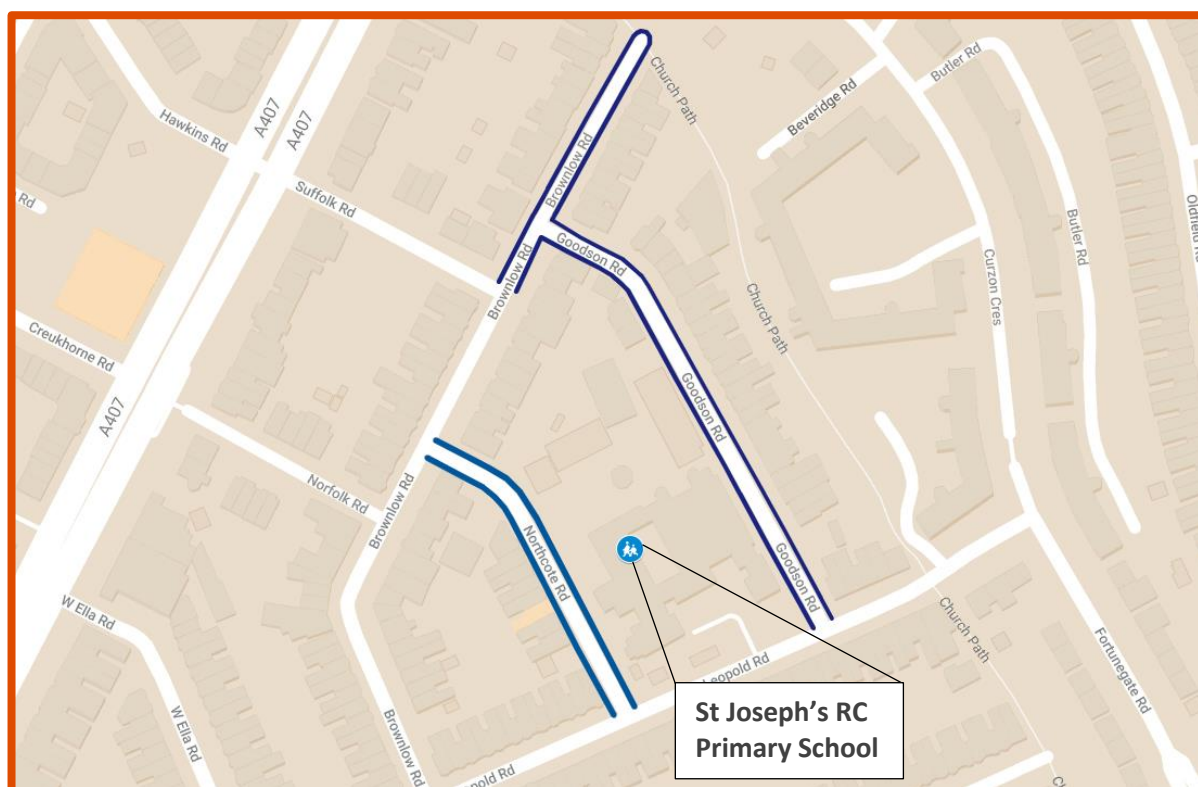


Figure 1 – Map showing location of the Goodson and Brownlow Road School Street, the Northcote Road School Street, and St Joseph's RC Primary School.

Summary of Data Analysis

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

- Public consultation (A. Goodson & Brownlow Rd., B. Northcote Rd.)
- Parent & guardian consultation
- Air quality data (A. Goodson & Brownlow Rd., B. Northcote Rd.)
- School interview
- 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 A

From August to July 2021, members of the public provided feedback on the experimental scheme. The Goodson and Brownlow Road public consultation received 11 responses in total, 10 of whom live outside of the scheme. 10 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	7	1	6
Opposes School Street	4	0	4

Table 2 displays the key points taken 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
Active Travel	Supports active travel for health and focus of children	2
Access	Feel residents of immediate neighbouring streets should be exempt from scheme	1
	Concern about scheme/displaced traffic making residents late to appointments and work	2
Parking	Concern about displaced poor/illegal parent parking	2
Traffic Levels	Support reduced traffic/congestion due to scheme	1
	Concern about displaced aggressive traffic (e.g., Brownlow Road)	3
Health	Support scheme for safety (particularly of children)	3
	Support scheme for improved air quality	2
	Concern that displaced traffic has increased air pollution	2
	Concern that aggressive displaced traffic will cause accidents	1
General	Request to expand school streets to a wider area to make parents think twice about driving to school	1
	Request that parking attendants are in place on Brownlow Rd. and the surrounding roads to ensure that parents that park illegally are given a parking ticket	1
	Feels the communication to residents of benefits of school streets and clean air should be improved	1
	Scheme seen as confusing due to unclear signage and lack of barriers	1
	Feels only parents should be restricted in their driving, not residents	1
	Feels scheme is unnecessary	1

The most referenced themes were that respondents:

1. Are concerned about displaced traffic (e.g., Brownlow Road)
2. Support scheme for safety (particularly of children)

More members of the public were supportive of the Goodson & Brownlow Road scheme than were opposed. They cited reasons such as improved air quality, the benefits of active travel for children, and safety of children (key theme 2). Many concerns were very specific, and not fundamental issues with the scheme.

Public Consultation B

From November 2020 to July 2021, members of the public provided feedback on the scheme's extension along Northcote Road. This public consultation received 7 responses in total, all of whom live outside of the scheme. 6 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 3 – Overall responses

Response	Count	Lives within scheme	Lives outside of scheme
Supports School Street	5	0	5
Opposes School Street	2	0	2

Table 4 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 4 – Public comment themes

Code Frame	Theme	Count
Parking	Concern about displaced poor/illegal parent parking	1
Traffic	Concern about displaced traffic (e.g., Leopold Road)	3
Health	Support scheme for safety (particularly of children)	1
	Support scheme for improved air quality	1
	Concern that displaced traffic makes roads less safe for children	3
	Concern that displaced traffic has increased noise pollution	2
	Concern that displaced traffic has increased air pollution	2
General	Request for scheme to be expanded to wider area	2
	Supports aims of scheme but does not feel like it achieves them	3
	Request for zebra or pelican crossing to be installed outside school	1
	Request for parking attendants on surrounding streets	1
	Request that the school should operate a catchment and only take in local children that live close enough that they can walk to school	1
	Feels cameras are unfair/money-making for the council	2
	Feels School Streets do not reduce congestion or air pollution	1
	Feels signage is unclear	1
	Feels scheme is poorly thought-out	1

The most referenced themes were that respondents:

1. Are concerned about displaced traffic, particularly on Leopold Road
2. Are concerned that displaced traffic makes roads less safe for children
3. Are supportive of the aims of the scheme but do not feel like the scheme achieves them

These key themes are negative, although the majority of public respondents were in favour of the Northcote Road School Street. Displaced traffic appears to be the biggest public concern with this scheme.

Parent & guardian Consultation – whole scheme

The parent & guardian consultation yielded one response, who was a non-resident in opposition of the scheme, they felt it caused congestion on nearby roads that are too narrow to cope with increased traffic. As a result of congestion, people are often late for work after having dropped off their children. This individual's most regular form of transport was driving, and they did not identify themselves as having a disability.

Key Concerns

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

Highways Changes

Within the St Joseph RC Primary School's scheme, three requests were made for specific highways changes, as shown in table 5, below.

Table 5 – Highways changes

Highways Change	Count
Request to expand school streets to a wider area to make parents think twice about driving to school	1
Request for zebra or pelican crossing to be installed outside school	1
Request for scheme to be expanded to wider area	2

Blue Badge Holders

Only one consultation respondent identified themselves as having a disability. They were in support of the scheme and did not leave any comment.

Air Quality A

As part of the Goodson and Brownlow Road School Street scheme, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels were monitored at St Joseph's RC Primary School from November 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.

*See Appendix A for full air quality datasets.

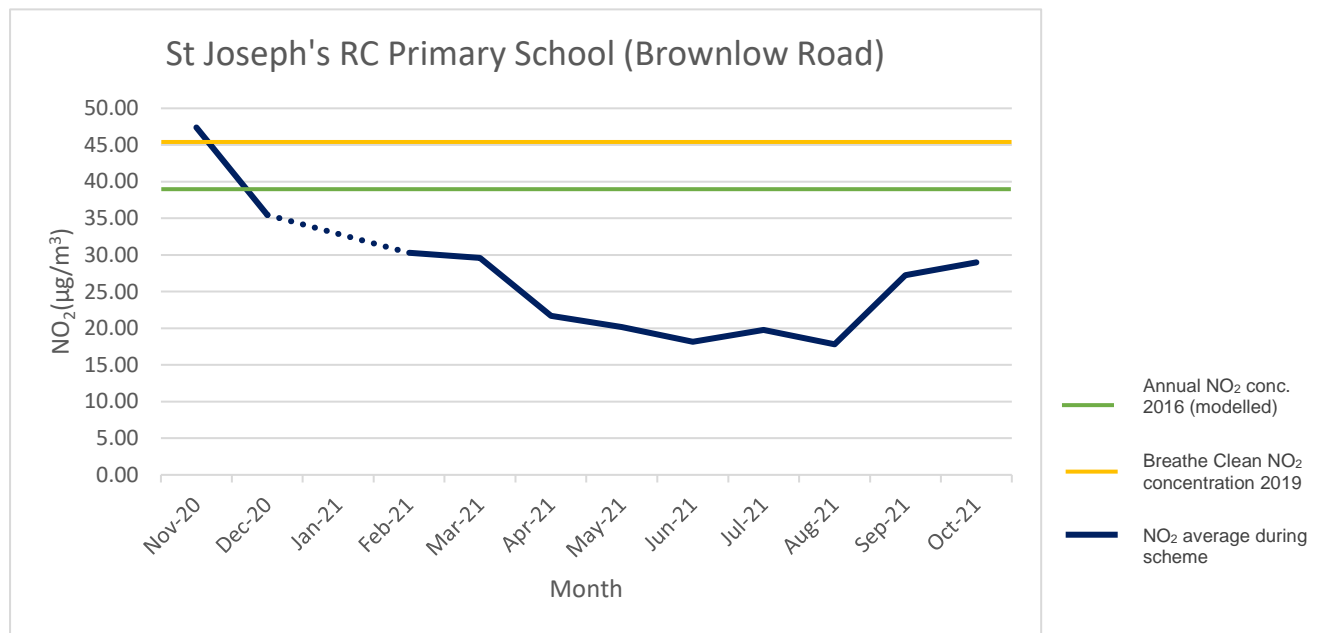


Figure 2 – NO₂ concentration at St Joseph's RC Primary School.

Figure 2 shows an initial rise in NO₂ concentration around the winter months, and then a downward trend into summer, which 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.

Air Quality B.

As part of the Northcote Road School Street scheme, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels were monitored at St Joseph's RC Primary School over a twelve-month period from October 2020 to October 2021*. Figure 3 presents this data along with the modelled annual average for 2016 ([Annual Pollution Maps](#)), as well as the average recorded in 2019 as part of the Breathe Clean programme, recorded by MP Smarter Travel, just before the scheme was implemented, for reference.

*See Appendix A for full air quality datasets.

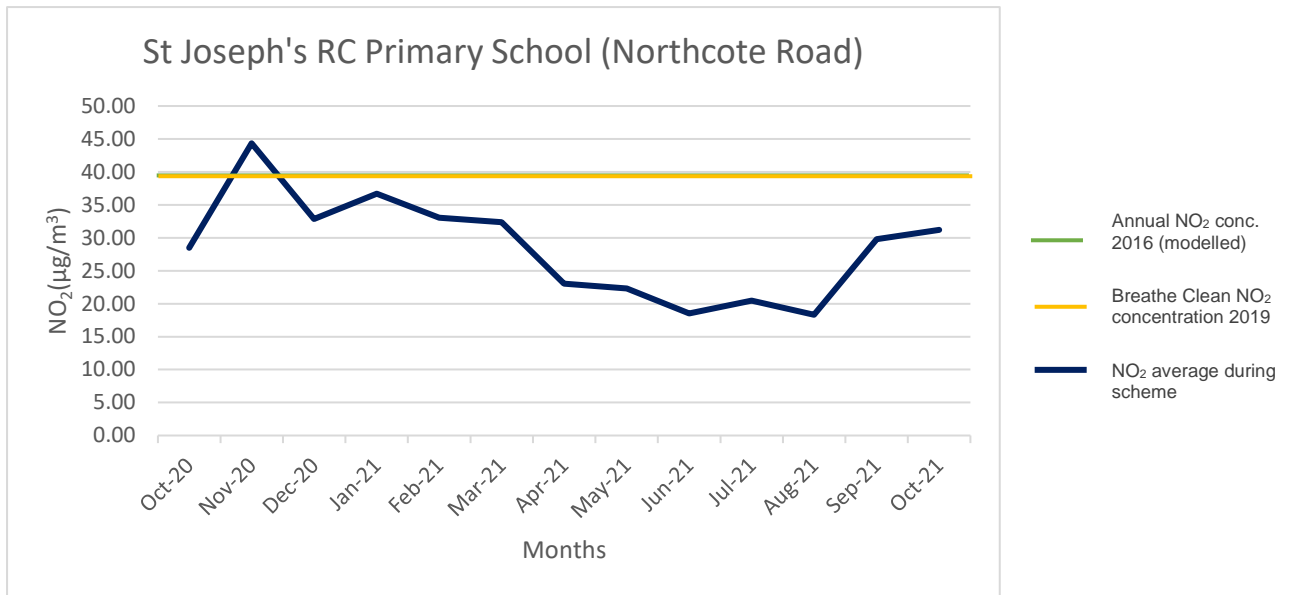


Figure 3 – NO₂ concentration at St Joseph's RC Primary School.

The data shows a clear and consistent decrease in NO₂ over the course of the scheme's implementation. By June, the concentration was more than 20 µg/m³ lower than that of the two baseline readings from 2016 and 2019. Additionally, all but November's NO₂ levels sit below the 2016 and 2019 levels. This 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.

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 St Joseph's RC Primary School has had a generally positive experience of the scheme, however they have received some unpleasant abuse from drivers – more details are shown in the table below. The school said that they would only want to continue if cameras and permanent barriers were installed. They highlighted some serious issues with the enforcement of the scheme regarding aggressive drivers who use dangerous driving and threatening behaviour.

Table 6 – Interview summary

Overall Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing space was available • More families walking/cycling/scooting & reduced driving • Road is safer • Residents are in favour of the scheme

Concerns/drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers (not residents or parents) have been moving the cones and driving down the road • Some drivers have been abusive to staff monitoring barriers and threatened violence • Drivers have driven over the cones, thrown the cones into school grounds, and driven the wrong way down one-way streets to avoid the scheme
Requests for continuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameras and permanent barriers

Travel Mode Analysis

Students at St Joseph's RC Primary School were surveyed before (March, 2020) and after (July, 2021) the implementation of the scheme, to identify any changes in travel modes.

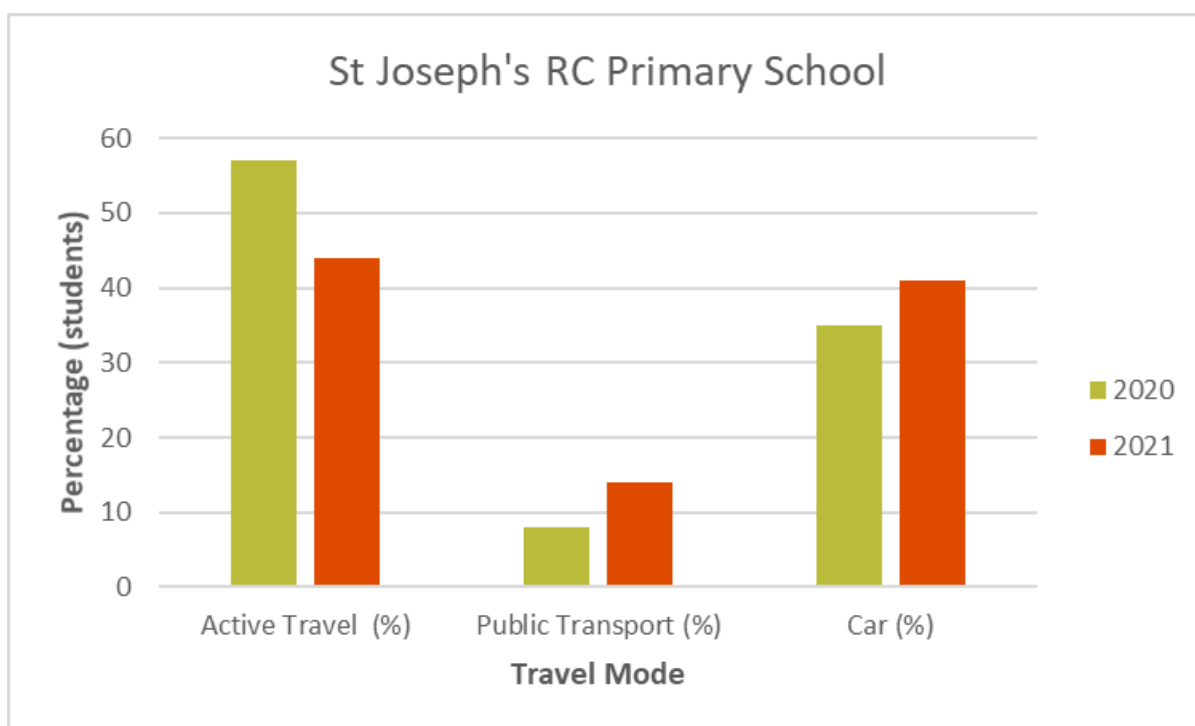


Figure 4 – Graph of travel modes of students at St Joseph's RC Primary School in 2020 compared to 2021.

According to this data, there has been a decrease of 13% in the number of students using active travel to get to school. This is accompanied by a 6% increase in public transport use and a 6% increase in car use. This suggests that the scheme has not yet been effective in increasing the number of students arriving by active travel.

Site Observations

The Brent Officer site observation of the scheme was carried out in May 2021. The following observations were made:

- Barriers are manned at a distance, due to verbal abuse and threat of violence
- Some drivers insist on moving the barriers, some get very aggressive

The recommendation made by the officer was to install a further closure on Leopold Road/Fortunegate Road to Leopold Road/Brownlow Road, or change Leopold Road to a one-way street.

Conclusion

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

Providing Space for Social Distancing

The aim of providing space for social distancing has been achieved. The school reported that they now have more space for parents to socially distance at pick-up and drop-off, and they highlighted that this as one of the key benefits they have experienced due to the scheme.

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.

Encouraging Active Journeys to School

According to the mode split data in figure 4, active journeys have decrease by 13% since March 2020. However, in contrast, the school has observed an increase in active journeys, reporting in their interview that more children have been walking, scooting and cycling. Two respondents highlighted that the scheme had benefitted active travel for young children. With contrasting data, it is therefore hard to make a clear conclusion about the scheme's impact on active travel.

Reducing Private Vehicle Use/Resident Views

While the 2020 to 2021 data shows a 6% increase in car use, the school asserts that there has been a reduction in the number of parents driving to St Joseph's RC Primary School. Again, based on this conflicting data, it is hard to determine the scheme's impact on private vehicle use.

Only one resident responded to this consultation; they were in favour of the scheme, feeling that it makes the streets safer, reduces pollution, and improves the focus of children in school. They also suggested that the communication around school streets be improved and reinforced.

Recommendation

Based on the data analysed, we are recommending that this scheme is made permanent, as it seems to be benefitting the school and road safety, and the majority of public respondents support it. We also recommend that the council continue to monitor air quality and mode split at the school to measure the scheme's impact over a longer period.

For the highways change requests in table 5, we recommend consultation with highways engineers about the potential for a new crossing, and to investigate expanding the scheme to nearby roads, followed by an additional public consultation.

Appendices

Appendix A – Air quality data (Brownlow Road)

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.
39.06	39.2	X	47.39	35.47	X	30.28	29.58	21.70	20.15	18.16	19.77	17.81	27.24	28.97

Table A1 – Air quality data for St Joseph’s RC Primary School (Brownlow Road)

Appendix B – Air quality data (Northcote Road)

Table A2 – Air quality data for St Joseph’s RC Primary School (Northcote Road)

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)											
		Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.
39.06	39.2	28.49	44.34	32.84	36.67	33.04	32.36	23.03	22.31	18.51	18.32	29.80	31.20