Brent School Streets Review

CJM Infant Scheme Report

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CJM Infant School Street

Background

In September 2020, a School Street scheme was introduced through an experimental traffic order on the access road to Convent of Jesus and Mary Infant School (CJM Infant School), as highlighted on the map below. The CJM Infant School Street was created to reduce air pollution and improve road safety outside CJM Infant School, which educates students from age three to seven. This School Street is also intended to provide more space for social distancing, to help to ease the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
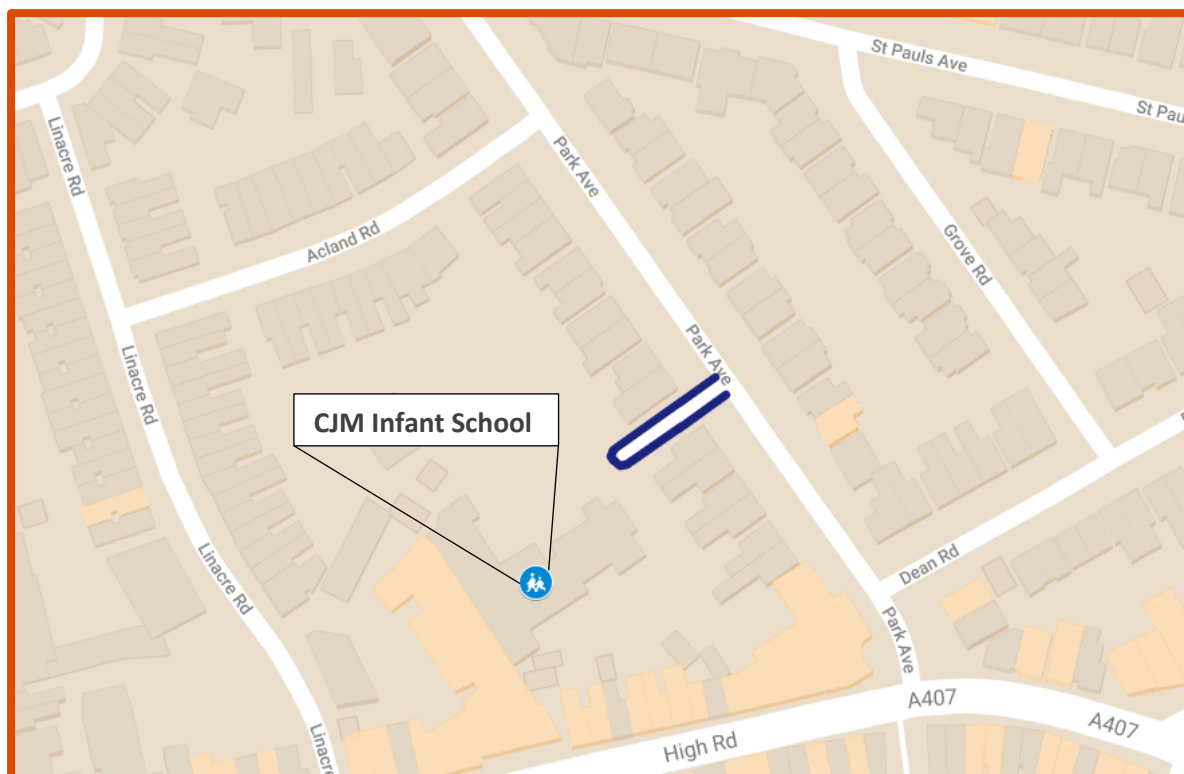

Figure 1 – Map showing location of the CJM School Street and CJM Infant School.

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 July 2021, members of the public were invited to provide feedback on the experimental scheme. The CJM Infant scheme public consultation received 11 responses in total, nine of whom live outside of the scheme. Nine 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	10	1	9
Opposes School Street	1	1	0

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	Supports scheme on the condition of residents being able to move their vehicles within restricted times	1
	Supports scheme on the condition of parents/carers being able to access Park Avenue within restricted times	1
	Concern about access of carers and deliveries to residents	1
Parking	Support reducing idling and poor parking	1
Traffic Levels	Support reduced traffic/congestion due to scheme	1
Health	Support low-traffic streets for safety (particularly of children)	1
General	Feels negative impact of scheme on residents is minimal	1
	Request for zebra crossing in front of school	1
	Thinks barrier should be put in place on Park Avenue	1
	Request for clearer signage and advanced warning	1
	Concern about traffic having nowhere to go (interaction with Linacre Road School Street)	1

There were no standout key themes as respondents cited different benefits and concerns, with none being collectively agreed upon. The overall consensus is positive, with 91% of respondents in favour of the scheme, and only one person being opposed to it.

Parent & guardian Consultation

The parent & guardian consultation yielded one response. This person was in favour of the scheme and wanted it to be made permanent, saying it helps a lot with the safety of students. They used public transport as their most regular form of transportation and were not a resident of the scheme.

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 both the public and parent & guardian consultations, only one request was made for a specific highways change, as seen in the table below.

Table 3 – Highways changes

Highways Change	Count
Request for zebra crossing in front of school	1

Blue Badge Holders

None of the respondents to the consultation identified themselves as having a disability.

Air Quality

As part of the CJM Infant School Street scheme, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) 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.
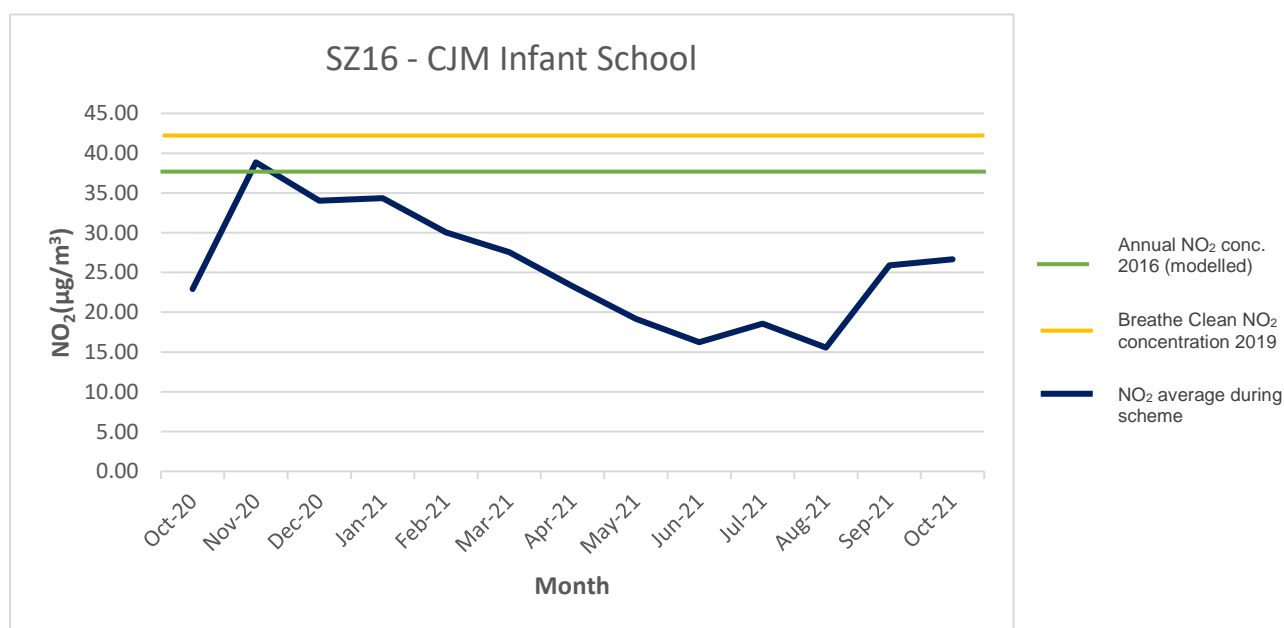
*See Appendix A for full air quality datasets.

Figure 2 – NO_2 concentration at CJM Infant School.

Figure 2 shows an initial rise in NO_2 concentration around the winter months, and then a downward trend into summer, which is in line with seasonal trends for NO_2. 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_2 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 CJM Infant School has had a generally positive experience of the scheme, with more details of the interview shown in the table below. The school requested camera enforcement and bollards to prevent pavement parking by the barrier.

Table 6 – Interview summary

Overall Opinion	• Positive
Benefits	• Improved road safety through reduction in cars • More parents must be travelling actively because there are fewer cars • Provided space for social distancing and allowed people to spread out
Concerns/drawbacks	• Long wait for barriers and signage • Parents are pulling up onto the curb on Park Avenue, by the barriers
Requests for continuation	• Camera (with exemption process for visitors) • Bollards at scheme entrance to prevent pavement parking

Travel Mode Analysis

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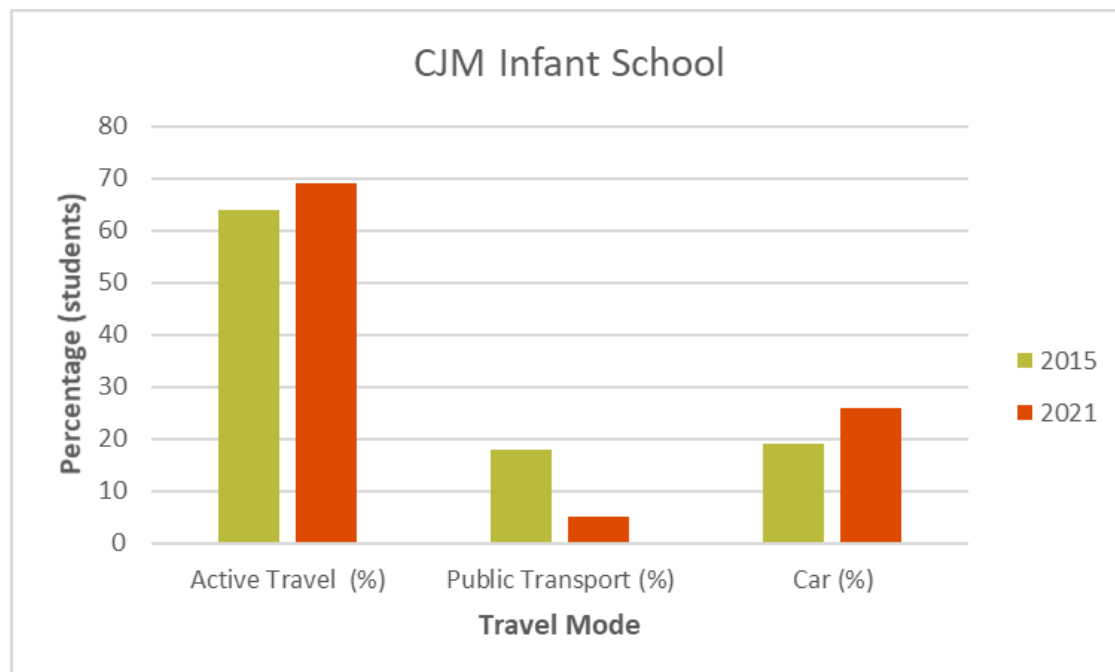

Figure 4 – Graph of travel modes of students at CJM Infant School in 2015 compared to 2021.

During the COVID-19 pandemic many families were encouraged to avoid public transport. To ensure social distancing, many families have moved to travelling in cars. This change in behaviour is a likely

explanation for the 7% increase in car use, as well as the 13% decrease in public transport use at the school.

Site Observations

The Brent Officer site observation of the CJM Infant scheme were carried out in June 2021. The following observations were made:

- A couple of parents park opposite the closure. However, most parents walk with other parking and striding.
- Barrier is unmanned, using a mix of cones with a barrier and hazard tape to close the road.
- Staggered times are also being used.
- No need to extend the school street.

There was no recommendation provided by the officer.

Conclusion

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

Providing Space for Social Distancing

The school mentioned that the scheme had provided more space for social distancing and allowed parents to spread out. They are also using staggered pick-up and drop-off times to ensure there is not bottlenecking in the mornings. Therefore, this aim can be marked as a success.

Improves Air Quality

Air quality monitoring completed outside of the school shows a general decline in NO_2 concentration throughout the spring and summer of 2021, in line with seasonal trends for NO_2. A 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

The school feels that active journeys to school have been encouraged by the scheme, because they have observed fewer parents driving. While the mode split data does not reflect this, the data available represents a large range of years. Had 2019 mode split data been available, this would have helped more accurately assess the success of this aim.

Reducing Private Vehicle Use/Resident Views

The observation from the Brent Officer revealed that most parents were either walking or parking and striding. While the latter is technically still private vehicle use, it is preferable to private vehicle use in the immediate vicinity of the school. The school also feels that private vehicle use has been reduced, so this aim can be seen as met.

Recommendation

Based on the data analysed, we are recommending that the CJM Infant scheme is made permanent. Based on the public and parent & guardian consultations, it appears there are few negative impacts

of the scheme. The scheme reportedly benefits child safety and social distancing at pick-up and drop-off.

We recommend that the request for a zebra crossing to be installed outside the school be assessed by a highways officer, as it may make the area outside the school even safer. We also recommend that additional mode split data is collected from the school to help track the scheme's impact on active travel.

Appendices

Appendix A – Air quality data

Table A1 – Air quality data for CJM Infant 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.
37.69	42.1	22.90	38.85	34.01	34.34	30.02	27.55	23.29	19.19	16.24	18.57	15.56	25.88	26.66