

Scrutiny Panel Notes- 28/09/17

How big a problem is parking outside your school?

Parking is a significant problem outside our school gates and we have almost daily complaints from parents and local residents regarding the inconsiderate parking of some of our parents/carers. In addition, other parents, local residents and staff have to respond to verbal abuse when discussing parking issues with those parents/ carers who have parked inconsiderately and/or dangerously.

Chapel Street is used as a 'cut through' by other road users to miss out traffic lights – therefore making the road very busy. Although there is a weight restriction in place, HGV lorries regularly use Chapel Street to avoid waiting at Oxford Street lights.

Sometimes parents/carers leave cars double- parked in the middle of the road.

A number of the residents outside school are frustrated with the inconsiderate parking of some parents/ carers and therefore choose to park their car on the road outside their house during 'busy' periods so that their cars do not become 'trapped' on their drive. However, this considerably reduces the amount of parking available outside school and therefore creates further congestion at the start and end of the school day.

How many accidents or near misses has there been outside your school in the last year?

Whilst there have been no reported accidents outside school, we have had a number of near miss incidents that we have been made aware of, where children have emerged from behind parked cars, straight into the road. However, we believe there are many more 'near miss' incidents that we are not aware of.

What advice do you give to parents about where to park?

School advises parents not to park on zigzags or to block residents' driveways. We encourage parents to park in streets further away and walk to school and we participate in a number of initiatives to support this.

- Newsletters
- Flyers
- E-mails
- Text messages
- Presence at the start and the end of the school day
- We also ask that parents do not park across the school gates so as not to restrict access to emergency vehicles should it be needed. Parents/ other road users often use the school gates to do a u-turn. This area has restricted visibility as it is.



In what ways, have you tried to deal with this issue and how successful have you been?

- As a school, we have tried to speak personally with local residents to request that they may consider leaving their cars on their drives for the short space of time at the start and end of the day, but this has proved unsuccessful.
- We have staggered the morning drop-off times so that children can be dropped off anytime between 8-8:30 for Breakfast Study Club and between 8:45 and 8:55am for the start of the day. The morning sessions are not as problematic because parents are able to 'drop and go' at different times. They are not awaiting a specific collection time.
- School promoted a hard- hitting campaign using literature where children were lying in zigzags in the road. The school received very positive feedback from this campaign, as it was quite graphic. However, it is those 'hard to reach parents' who we struggle to engage with in all areas, who do not respond to the school's requests for considerate parking.
- Loxdale supported 'Beat the Street' campaign and we are now one of the schools engaged in 'WOW'- however, as this only started on Monday it would be difficult to measure its success.
- Bikeability Cycle Training is undertaken annually to encourage children to cycle to school and the school has purchased bicycle racks to enable the parents to lock their child's bicycle. Currently, two or three cycles are parked on a daily basis.
- Safety Outside School's Programme- school has used a number of the yellow parking signs outside school that mean parents are unable to park where the signs are located. Unfortunately, several parents park between the signs where there are spaces! We have also purchased banners, which we attached to the railings- unfortunately, these were cut down!
- Deployment of the traffic enforcement vehicle- this is highly effective when outside school but its presence is very limited.
- Paul Lever came to do a parking/road survey at the request of school.
- Children have designed their own posters (through School Council) to send home to parents re parking considerately. However, it is NOT our children who are inconsiderate; it is a minority of parents. Until these parents take on board the seriousness of the message and are prepared to act upon it themselves, then all the initiatives we attempt with our children will have only a limited impact.

What else could be done that would help?

- When parents park recklessly on the zig-zags, children are having to walk between the parked cars to cross over the road. The road was recently re-surfaced, however, some of our road markings have still not been fully re-instated, which leaves outside of school very vulnerable because there are no road markings outside of our Early Years/ Year 1 entrance. If the road markings were re-instated, this may act as a deterrent for some parents.
- The situation is also exacerbated by the fact that Chapel Street is used as a 'cut through' both ways from non- school traffic. Although there are speed bumps in Chapel Street, the drivers often speed between the bumps outside school. We have spoken to officers of the council to request that Chapel Street may become one way, but were told that this would



increase the speed of the traffic using Chapel Street as a thoroughfare. In addition, the weight restrictions are ignored by many of the HGV drivers, who continue to use the 'cut through'.

- Because of Loxdale Sidings tram stop, a number of users of the tram park their cars in Chapel Street for the whole day (because there is no charge). This also adds to the congestion difficulties. The tram stop needs dedicated parking.
- If time restrictions were to be placed on Chapel Street being used at certain times by non-residents, then this may at least disperse the problem somewhat as not everyone will be using the space outside of school at the same time.

