



St John's CE Primary School Thornham

Travel Plan April 2024

Key Information

School URN	105806
School	St John's CE Primary School Thornham
Address	Thornham Lane, Slattocks, Middleton, M24 2SB
Website	www.thornhamce.rochdale.sch.uk
School contact number	0161 643 4687
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Headteacher	Rebecca Hunter
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Introduction

This Travel Plan relates to the proposed extension to St John's Thornham CE Primary School for a 2-storey extension block in support of an increase in the Published Admission Number (PAN) by 15 pupil places per year, starting in September 2024. For the first year, the existing school site provides sufficient space, however for subsequent years the current building's size will not accommodate the additional children.

The increase in PAN and associated building extension is supported, and fully funded, by Rochdale Borough Council, and was approved by Council Cabinet on 19th December 2023 under Item 97, Appendix 2 ([Cabinet Minutes 19.12.2023](#)). As a Church of England school, the development also has the full support of the Manchester Diocese. Both the Local Authority and the Diocese are represented on the project team for the proposed development. Planning permission was submitted on 2nd April 2023.

Whilst this plan is relevant only to the impending 2-storey extension block, it is worth noting the proposed development represents Phase 1 of a 2-phase plan. Phase 2 is dependent upon the development of adjoining land by Redrow (planning reference 23/00650/HYBR). The school has been in discussion with Redrow and provided that the housing development goes ahead, Redrow has committed to funding a second phase extension to St John's Thornham which would incorporate the main school entrance being moved to the opposite elevation and accessed through the new housing development. Importantly, this would move the current traffic flow for staff, parents and deliveries away from Thornham Lane.

Site details and current arrangements

Vicinity	Thornham Lane is a rural location, sited between the A664 Rochdale Road to the West and the A627(M) and A671 Oldham Road to the East. The school is close to public transport routes and is within walking distance of the Castleton area
Type of School	Primary
Education Level	Reception – Key Stage 2 (Age 4-11)
Number of students	120 September 2024 Increasing each year by 15 until 2030 when school will be at full total capacity of 210 pupils, equivalent to 1 form of entry per year group
Number of staff	17, including 5 part time
Opening times (flexible drop off and collection times due to childcare and extra-curricular opportunities)	8:55 – 3:25pm core school hours 7:45am to 5:30pm, incorporating before and after school clubs: 8.30-8.55am- Monday and Friday- Book Club (up to 40 children) 8.30-8.55am- Tuesday and Wednesday- Sensory Circuits (10 children) 3.30-4.30- Tuesday and Wednesday- Sports (up to 20 children) 3.30-4.30- Thursday- Creative Clubs (up to 20 children) No community lettings
Parking	The site currently contains 8 parking spaces, one of which is a disabled parking bay. Parking capacity is increased by the use of double parking. There is cycle parking for 5 cycles

The site is owned by the Manchester Diocesan Board of Education. Under the terms of a Church Supplemental Agreement the site is occupied by the Cranmer Education Trust for the purposes of education.

All vehicles, including staff, parents and deliveries, access the school via Thornham Lane, an unadopted country lane with an unmade surface. Due to its unadopted status, there are no pavements, road markings or formal crossing facilities, however the lane is well lit. There is only one residential property neighbouring the school site. There is a small residential settlement at the junction of Thornham Lane and the A664 Rochdale Road.

Families attend the school from the local farms and Thornham area, accessing the school from the Oldham side of the lane, from the local area of Slattocks and Castleton, and a few children commute from Manchester and Heywood areas, accessing the lane from the Rochdale side. School uses the daily Living Streets Travel Tracker and children are awarded WOW badges if they walk to or from school two or more times a week.

- 25% of children walk to school each day
- 40% of children walk to school more than twice a week
- 5% of children cycle to school two or three times a week
- 65% of children come to school by car at least once per week: 20% of these park at the bottom of Thornham Lane or at the church and then walk the remaining distance
- 29% of staff walk to school each day

Existing safety measures

Thornham Lane has a 30mph speed limit, however due to the unmade surface, actual speeds are significantly lower by necessity.

Staff are on duty at the start and end of each day to supervise children arriving at, and leaving, the school. Until children are collected by parents, they are not permitted to exit the school gates with the exception of Year 6 pupils who have permission from parents/guardians to journey to and from school independently.

The school actively manages end of day finish times by class, to ease congestion on the surrounding roads.

The school has a breakfast club and after school club, which provide childcare extra-curricular after school until 4.30pm four times per week, and before school extra-curricular club 8.30am- 8.55am 4 days per week. These sessions are well attended (see above) and avoid whole school arrival /exodus, thereby diluting vehicular movement at peak times.

As the school grows there will be an additional 15 children each year until 2030. On average there are 6 siblings in each cohort; in September 2024 there will be 8. Therefore the increase in families attending school is lower than the increase in PAN.

Travel Plan Objectives

This travel plan will evolve over time and accommodate improvements in local and regional transport infrastructure as well as offer updates to current and planned initiatives to encourage sustainable travel. It will also be a credible plan for how travel information will be communicated to staff, pupils and visitors.

The aim of this travel plan is to:

- Reduce the number and length of car journeys
- Reduce social and environmental impacts
- Reduce economic costs
- Maximise safety of journeys to and from school
- Encourage walking and cycling to and from school for pupils, staff and visitors
- Provide detailed information to staff, pupils and visitors about sustainable travel options
- Support road safety and general health and safety measures

The school has newly established a working group to address the aims and objectives of this plan. The working group is made up of:

- Rebecca Hunter, Headteacher
- Dr Joanne Sharp, Chair of Governors
- Hattie Callaghan, Staff member/class teacher
- Lorna Wright, Deputy COO, Cranmer Education Trust

The working group meets on a termly basis to discuss the travel plan and to drive and maintain momentum on actions and improvements.

Sustainability

The Cranmer Education Trust and St John's Thornham support the promotion of sustainable transport to make the school environment safe for all and the reduction of vehicular movement. The school is accessible to good transport links and many families already choose to walk to school.

The proposed development will incorporate 2 EV charging points which will be available to staff and visitors on a pay-as-you-go basis and encourage use of plug-in and ultra-low emission vehicles. The new development will also improve accessible parking facilities. A covered cycle rack will also be introduced which will accommodate up to 20 cycles.

Travel options

All access to the school is via Thornham Lane. There are no school buses.

Method	Existing	Post-expansion (existing + additional)
Walking	There are three pedestrian access points to the school site which are open at the start and end of the school day and locked at other times. A gate at the school boundary enables families to safely complete their journey to and from school by using a path within the school perimeter, taking them a third of the way down to the Rochdale side of Thornham Lane. Children are dropped off and collected from the main playground. Staff are on duty at the start and end of the day to supervise pupils.	The existing safety measures will continue and staff will continue to supervise at the start and end of the school day. Parents can wait in the outside classroom in wet weather and the school will open the doors 5-10 minutes early in bad weather conditions

Cycling	Cyclists access the site from Thornham Lane. There is secure cycle parking for 5 cycles. Currently 0 staff and 4 pupils cycle to school and in the summer months this increases to 8. The school runs Bikeability cycling safety classes every year which are targeted at Year 6 pupils, and Reception class learn how to ride a balance bike and progress onto a pedal bike in their PE sessions.	New cycle shelter will accommodate 20 cycles
Public transport	Both the A664 and the A671 are well served by a regular bus service which covers the boroughs of Rochdale, Oldham and Manchester.	
Private vehicles	The school car park has a one-way system and accommodates 8 cars with 1 designated accessible parking space. A further 4 cars can be accommodated through double parking. Thornham Lane has no parking restrictions and staff and visitors can park on the lane. 5 staff park at the bottom of Thornham Lane and attend school on foot. This increases in the summer months to 8-9 staff members.	Staff and families will continue to be encouraged to car share or park away from the school site which is supported by the WOW walk to school campaign. Improved staff car parking will increase the number of spaces available and reduce the number of staff parking on Thornham Lane. 2 EV charging points will be installed to accommodate low emission vehicles. An additional accessible parking space will be created.
Delivery vehicles	Where possible, deliveries are scheduled to avoid busy periods at the start and end of the school day. Regular deliveries are: - Waste collection (weekly) - Fruit delivery (daily) - Milk delivery (weekly) - School kitchen (weekly) Where possible, other general orders are combined to minimise vehicular movement	It is not anticipated that delivery vehicle frequency will change.

Travel Plan Initiatives

Initiative	Action	Lead	Target date	Status
Car sharing (staff)	Promote air quality benefits	R Hunter	Ongoing	This is encouraged at all times with staff sharing lifts particularly up Thornham Lane.

Car sharing (parents)	Promote air quality benefits	R Hunter	WOW walk to school scheme supports this and will continue next year	Ongoing Funding confirmed for the online record keeping, posters and badges for children for 2024-2025
Parent parking	Promote responsible parking Regular reminders on the school newsletter about where not to park and how to keep the flow of traffic smoothly operating at peak times. Parking dummies with reminders Address with pupils in assemblies	R Hunter	Ongoing throughout the year	Ongoing
Cycle purchase scheme	Cranmer Education Trust to establish	C Kearns	31/12/2024	Planned
Walk to school	Ongoing through WOW scheme. Summer 2 increases the challenge to gain a WOW badge, upping the amount to four times a week to receive a badge and gain a large trophy for the best class	R Hunter	23/06/2024	Planned
Cycle parking	Provide cycle and scooter parking for staff and pupils	R Hunter	31/03/2024	Complete. Cycle parking to be improved as part of proposed works
Public transport	Promote benefits of public transport over cars	R Hunter	15/07/2024	Ongoing
Road safety training	As part of the new PSHCE scheme children are taught about risks in their environment which includes road safety	R Hunter	Ongoing through curriculum work	Ongoing
Bikeability training	Year 6 bikeability session November 2023 Reception Balanceability sessions	R Hunter	31/12/2023	Complete Autumn complete Summer ongoing
Parent open evenings	Promote road safety, emphasising sustainable methods	R Hunter	Ongoing	Ongoing

	of travel to and from school			
Public transport information	Add bus timetables/link to school website to encourage greater use Use buses and trains for school trips to encourage use	R Hunter	26/4/2024 Trip to Lancaster Farm Trip to Neili Mosque	Complete Complete
Regular safety announcements	Build road safety and sustainable travel themes into assembly rotas	R Hunter	13/4/2024	Summer 2 theme linked to PSHCE curriculum

Consultations

Consultation to increase the PAN and create a new build to accommodate a one form entry school took place for six weeks from Monday 3rd April until Monday 15th May 2023. The consultation was shared with parents/carers, local primary and secondary schools in Rochdale and Oldham, local residents through the community notice boards, the local MP, Rochdale Council, Manchester Diocese and church PCC.

There were six responses to the consultation, four of which were from current members of staff and five were received after the end of the consultation date. All responses were very complimentary about the current teaching and learning and facilities at the school.

One response from a parent shared concerns about the loss of playing space. In response, the school confirmed that the building would be two-storey to minimise its footprint, and that the development would add an additional Sport England MUGA, ensuring that sports will be able to be played all year round. The parent was satisfied with the justification.

The other parental response raised concerns regarding the growth of the school as they like the feel of a small school and the ethos, and they were happy with the teaching and learning their children currently received and were concerned that the classes would change with in-year transfers across the school. Clarity was provided to the parent around the graduated growth from Reception 2024 upwards and reassurance that the current classes would remain the same. They also raised concerns around the potholes and increase in traffic, given the narrow width of Thornham Lane, however the lane's condition remains the same whether the school grows or not and the number of siblings in each new year group significantly reduces the risk of additional traffic.

The staff responses were overwhelmingly supportive of the school growing from half to one form of entry, with staff comments including single year groups being more effective, particularly those who are currently teaching a mix of two different curriculum phases. Growth also increases opportunity for staff progression and therefore aids staff retention, and provides more teaching and learning space and resources, including a library, an increase in pastoral/teaching assistants to support vulnerable children, group workspaces and sensory space. Full class sizes also aid transition to secondary school, particularly for Year 6 pupils who find it daunting going from a small, half -form entry school to a secondary school. The growth will also

allow adapted outdoor space to enable children to be more active during the day and year-round access to outdoor sports facilities.

Governors met to discuss all responses and sent the following summary to reinforce that the school's ethos will remain paramount throughout the growth and that the growth would be from reception 2024 upwards and would not affect current classes.

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Additional information shared with parents following the governors meeting



Love 2 learn ✝ Love 1 another

Further information about the one form entry expansion

Our school is an amazing place to learn and work. The school ethos is embedded and the school building has developed over the last few years to provide a stimulating and effective learning environment. Two years ago, following consultation on school expansion, we were very lucky that Rochdale Borough Council agreed to fund the current 'new build'. This was a commitment from the Local Authority (LA), with the support of the Diocese, to develop our school to enable all of our classes to be taught in classrooms that are fit for purpose, provide the required square footage as well as access to sink areas and additional toilets. This recent expansion of the school to a PAN of 15 provided short term stability however, due to increased costs and a lack of increase in school budgets, planning for the needs of the school is becoming increasingly difficult.

As mentioned in the consultation letter dated 17/04/23, the proposed new build outlined is not linked to the 'Places for Everyone (PfE)' scheme from the government and Redrow to build houses on the greenbelt area next to school.

Funding for the proposed new build is coming directly from basic need funding that Rochdale Borough Council is given each year to help them fulfil their duty to make sure there are enough school places for children. The proposal for us to increase our PAN from 15 to 30 and become a one form entry school has been made due to increased demand for school places in the Castleton and Middleton areas mainly due to recent housing developments and an increased birth rate affecting school places in 2025. Schools cannot grow without the need for additional places being identified by the school place planning team in Rochdale.

The governing board have worked tirelessly over the years to ensure the current and future needs of our children are met, that our school is resourced to ensure learning in all areas of the curriculum is supported and that the school staffing structure enables all our children to thrive. If St. John's is going to continue to

be a good school serving our community we need to ensure we secure its future. Moving to one form entry will enable this.

Difficulties in a small school

- Budget is linked to the number of children in each school so our school receives one of the lowest budgets in Rochdale
- Increase costs and no increase in budget (especially energy costs)
- Retaining staff as there are very limited leadership positions for experienced teachers in a small school
- Teaching pay is capped at SJT so teaching jobs do not always look desirable to experienced teachers
- Only one school administrator who works term time only
- Limited amount of teaching assistants

What moving to one for entry will bring

- Additional reception places for current and future demand
- Greater sustainability for the school
- Children taught in dedicated year groups (not mixed) which is more desirable for current and potential teachers
- Ability to continue to provide and maintain a quality school site with good accommodation
- Opportunities for teachers to become 'middle' leaders and further develop their professional career
- Recruitment of additional staff for teaching and learning and administration
- The new build may bring space for a much-needed library area. Should this be possible within the realms of the building plans and available funding, it would mean that funds raised through the PTFA and year group activities could be utilised to provide an amazing creative space and an electronic library system. This would create an ultra-modern learning resource suitable for our progressive technological age. (If a dedicated space within the new build was not possible then we would continue with plans for a 'library cabin')
- Having more children in straight year groups will enable us to have stronger school sports teams making competing against local schools more equal and giving us more opportunity to win (for example, currently if it is a year 6 boys football competition we have to ask children from year 4 and 5 to make up the team where they might play teams from bigger schools who have a full team of year 6 boys. This makes it very difficult for our children to win although it shows what great resilience they have)

Risks if we do not increase capacity

- The school budget would not be able to cover the resourcing costs for the curriculum which would mean our children do not have access to the same resources as in other schools
- Budget restrictions would lead to a need to reduce staffing.
- A reduction in the number of teaching assistants would mean:
 - less teaching assistants to support children in class
 - not enough teaching assistants to cover lunch times
 - inability for school to offer a range of additional activities
 - increase in teacher workload
 - inability to offer Forest School
- Experienced teachers will move to other schools to seek leadership positions
- The school would not be able to remain feasible and will be forced to close with staff and children needing to be relocated to other schools in the future.

We hope this gives you further insight as to why an expansion of St John's is a great opportunity to ensure sustainability, providing a positive future so we can continue to serve the community for years and years to come.

If you have any questions please do come and ask or respond to the consultation

Yours faithfully

Mrs Hunter and the Governing Board