

**REPLY BY THE MINISTER OF
THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
TO QUESTIONS ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 6 OF THE
RULES OF PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY LAURIE QUERIPEL**

Question 1

Does the Department acknowledge the concerns (pupils sitting on the floor eating lunches and inadequate toilet facilities) highlighted are founded and if so what will be done to resolve these issues?

Answer 1

Small numbers of Reception children at St. Martin's Primary School do sometimes sit in a small group on the floor and have a picnic lunch but this is not due to a lack of suitable facilities. Reception classrooms are not set out in the same way as other classrooms with a chair and desk for each child as this is not the way education is delivered to our youngest children. You will find similar arrangements across many of our primary schools.

It should be remembered that the majority of our primary schools have previously accommodated many more children than they do now and so toilet facilities will be sufficient for the small numbers of additional pupils who will be relocated from the former St. Andrew's catchment.

The Department understands parents' concerns in relation to the provision of sufficient and appropriate sanitary provision within Vale Primary School. Additional toilets and basins will be installed as part of the conversion works in accordance with the relevant British Standard, BS6465. Although the Department is not obliged to meet the overall requirements of that standard as the conversion project is not a new build or major refurbishment, the number of toilets will be as required.

Question 2

Why didn't the Department request that traffic impact assessments be carried out by Environment in regard to both St Martins School and the Vale School prior to the Report being submitted for publication in the Billet knowing that if the proposals to close St Andrews Primary School and St Sampson Infant School were approved there would clearly be an escalation in traffic congestion around the receiving schools, extra pressure on drop off points and perhaps an increase in the number of pupils walking to their new schools?

Answer 2

The Department did not request a traffic impact assessment by the Environment Department for St Andrew's receiving schools as it was not possible to know in advance how many children would be moving to each school until parents had had an opportunity to express a preference and the Department would know how many children would actually be going where. The majority of the St Andrew's pupils will not actually be moving to their new schools until September 2015 which will give sufficient time for the Education Department to consider transport arrangements and liaise with the Environment Department to introduce any necessary arrangements.

Similarly the Education Department did not request a traffic impact assessment for Vale Primary School, but has been working with the Headteacher to explore options to improve access and minimise disruption. It is worth noting however that a number of parents at St Sampson's Infants' School already have children at Vale Primary School. The Education Department will be working with the Environment Department to alleviate traffic congestion in the future.

Question 3

Can the Department confirm that they will be engaging with Environment at the earliest possible opportunity so that traffic impact assessments can be carried out and the most appropriate traffic management and road safety measures be identified?

Answer 3

The Education Department is and will continue to engage with the Environment Department to ensure that the most appropriate traffic management and road safety measures can be identified for all the schools. This is a key work stream within the overall Implementation Programme.

Question 4

Can the Department confirm whether they have communicated with the stewards of St Paul's Church and will continue to do so in order to address the current and possibly future issues?

Answer 4

Officers are in the process of engaging with various stakeholders, including the stewards of St Paul's Church, in order to clarify, quantify and manage various operational aspects arising from the merger of the schools. Although contact has not yet been made this is planned to be undertaken shortly.”

The Education Board appreciates your best wishes for the successful delivery of this work stream and we are fully committed to ensuring a successful implementation of the transition for all of the children and parents.

Date of Receipt of the Questions: 4th November 2013

Date of Reply: 18th November 2013