



# **Ombersley Endowed First School**

## **Travel Plan**

**June 2016**

## **Introduction**

A school Travel Plan is a package of measures aimed to reduce the impact of journeys to and from school. A series of different measures, introduced by the school through the plan aim to contribute to reducing congestion outside the school gates and associated negative impacts. The Travel Plan seeks to reduce the number of car journeys made to the school and encourage the use of sustainable modes.

Ombersley Endowed First School has developed this Travel Plan to address the key issues relating to travel, safety and sustainability.

A Travel Plan group was formed in the autumn term of 2014 to examine the school's transport issues and identify potential measures to implement.

## **Aims of the Travel Plan**

The key aims of the Travel Plan for Ombersley Endowed First School are:

- To improve safety around the school site for pupils, staff, visitors, pedestrians and drivers
- To encourage more car sharing to reduce the number of vehicles bringing/taking children to and from the school
- To achieve a greater number of journeys made by sustainable modes of travel
- To address the difficulties relating to parking outside the school

## **Description of the School**

Ombersley Endowed First School is a single form entry local authority first school for children aged 4 to 9 years. A nursery is also located on the site for children from 2 years 9 months.

There are 116 (April 2016) children at the school with a further 28 children attending the nursery who have varying patterns of attendance. The school employs 24 members of staff, some of whom work part-time.

The school is located on the eastern edge of the village of Ombersley in Worcestershire, approximately 3 miles to the west of Droitwich and 6 miles to the north of Worcester. It is located on School Bank, directly adjacent to the A4133 Droitwich to Holt Heath road and close to the southbound exit slip road from the A449 Worcester to Kidderminster road.

Whilst the nominal catchment area of the school covers the village and areas immediately surrounding it, the majority of the children attending the school come from Droitwich. As a result, a large number of children arrive at school by car.

The school day begins at 8.45am and ends at 3.00pm. In the morning the gates to the playground open at 8.35am. Nursery children are taken by parents directly to the nursery building (the Treehouse) between 8.45 and 9.00am.

A breakfast club is run on school premises from 7.45am which is typically attended by around 16 children, with an afterschool club until 5.30pm, attended by an average of 13 children. Attendance at the afterschool club varies across the week, with figures from Spring Term 2016 showing an average of 14 children attending on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 15 children on Thursdays and 8 children on Fridays.

Activity clubs take place on some afternoons after school until 4.00pm, these vary from term to term.

The school building also includes an occupied residential house, which is accessed from the school playground.

Numbers of children in the school have been growing in recent years, which increases the impact of journeys to and from school.

### **The School Site**

There are two accesses into the school site, both situated to the front of the school from School Bank and both gated. The first of these is in front of the school office at the western side of the school. This access leads to an area for staff parking, with further gates providing pedestrian access to the side of the school and onto the playground. The parking area does not have marked spaces but has room for around 12 vehicles. The second is to the east of the school building and leads onto the playground. It is occasionally used for drop off and pick up parking.

To the west of the school is Ombersley and Doverdale Tennis Club, accessed via School Bank. The Tennis Club includes a gravelled car parking area with space for approximately 16 vehicles.

The school and Tennis Club are elevated from the level of the A4133. Outside of the school gates is a layby with a total of 28 marked spaces. These include four disabled spaces. There are also School Keep Clear markings directly outside the school gates. The layby is owned and maintained by Worcestershire County Council. The layby is separated from the A4133 by a grassed verge. There is a further grassed area to the east of the layby adjacent to the A4133.

Opposite to the school on the other side of the A4133 is a small driveway leading to a gate used by a farmer for access to a field.

To the west of the school site, there is a tarmaced area on the northern side of the A4133 underneath the bridge carrying the A449. This provides room for eight vehicles to park.

The speed limit outside the school is 30mph. However, directly to the east of the school, within 100 metres, the speed limit is 50mph, and this means that vehicles in the westbound direction have often not reduced their speed sufficiently by the time they pass the school. The A449 has a 70mph speed limit as it passes Ombersley, and vehicles travelling eastbound on the A4133 who have just exited the A449 are also often travelling at more than 30mph. Speed surveys undertaken in the village over a seven day period in June/July 2012 showed an 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed at School Bank of 40.3mph in the westbound direction (entering the village) and 42.3mph in the eastbound direction (towards Droitwich). 57.4% of westbound and 83.3% of eastbound traffic was travelling at over 30mph, indicating high levels of non compliance with the speed limit outside the school. There are flashing light school signs on the A4133 on the approach to the school in both directions.

## Parking

In the morning parents begin to arrive as early as 8.00am to park in the layby. Parking also occurs in the Tennis Club car park, on the grass verge adjacent to the layby and beyond it, and in the farm access and on the main road outside it. Some parents park under the A449 bridge. The school operates a 'drop and go' system in the mornings, where parents can pull up outside the playground access and parent volunteers help the children from the cars to the playground, allowing the dropping parent to drive straight out of the layby without parking. A survey undertaken across a week in April 2016 showed numbers of vehicles using the drop and go averaging 15 vehicles per day, with a maximum of 16 and minimum of 14 using the facility each day.

The drop and go facility is shown in the photos below.



Parents of children in Years 1-4 are not required to stay with their children once they are on the playground, although many remain on the playground until the start of school. Parents of Reception children have typically been required to remain on the playground.

In the afternoon, the parking situation is similar, but there is no drop and go in operation, meaning that the central spaces (including the Keep Clear area) are used for parking. Parents also park down the middle of the eastern side of the layby, and typically also behind the central spaces, blocking one another in. Again, parents begin to arrive significantly before school finishing time to secure parking, sometimes as early as 2.15pm.

Extensive parking takes place in the tennis club car park. A survey at the end of January showed between 11 and 19 cars parked there per session. It is the official position of the tennis club that parking in their car park is for members only. The leadership of the club recognises the problems that parents have, do not at present actively seek to prevent parents parking there, and are interested in working with the school to solve this problem. The school in its turn tries to manage parents' behaviour by regularly encouraging them to park there for as short a time as possible but this is frequently ignored. This has in the past led to heated disputes between parents and tennis club members, usually in the afternoon when parents tend to park for longer and the tennis club is more active

A problem similar to that of the relationship with the tennis club occurs on the opposite side of the A4133 to the school. Several vehicles park in the entrance to a farmer's field during the morning and

afternoon peak periods and this has resulted in complaints from the farmer about a lack of access at these times. Once again, this has led to disputes, sometimes heated, with parents and, once again, the school has drawn parents' attention to these difficulties.

Examples of typical parking outside the school are shown below.

Parking in the centre of the layby



Parking across the A4133



Parking on the grass verge to the east



Parking under the A449 flyover



Parking in the Tennis Club car park



Staff parking is primarily in the school car park, but some staff parking also occurs in the layby due to insufficient space for all staff vehicles.

A survey of parking was carried out in January 2016, and is summarised in the table below.

Date	Main layby	Layby grass	Tennis Club	Over the road	Under the bridge	Total
Mon 25 <sup>th</sup> Jan am	26	5	14	2	6	53
Tues 26 <sup>th</sup> Jan am	27	3	11	4	6	51
Wed 27 <sup>th</sup> Jan am	25	5	19	4	8	61
Mon 18 <sup>th</sup> Jan pm	37	1	17	4	9	68
Wed 27 <sup>th</sup> Jan pm	37	3	14	3	8	65
Thurs 28 <sup>th</sup> Jan pm	38	2	12	1	7	60

This illustrates the substantial amount of parental parking relative to the size of the school and number of families. It also shows the beneficial impact of the morning drop and go system in reducing the amount of school related parking.

### Current Travel Patterns

An analysis of the home postcodes of children on the school roll in November 2014 showed that 84% of pupils live more than 2 miles from the school with the majority between 2 and 4 miles away, mainly in Droitwich. There are also a number who travel from the Warndon area of Worcester. The distance from the school, age of the pupils and nature of the road between Droitwich and Ombersley mean that there are limited opportunities for most pupils to travel to school using sustainable modes.

A survey of parents was undertaken in November 2014. A total of 57 completed forms were returned, this was considered to be a very good response rate taking into account the number of families in the school. A hands up survey of pupils was also undertaken in December 2014.

The results of the hands up survey are shown below.

Mode of travel	Mode of travel to school		Preferred mode	
	No.	%	No.	%
Walk – including push scooters	8	6%	14	13%
Cycle	0	0%	44	39%
Car – one pupil only	43	34%	19	17%
Car – with siblings (same house)	68	54%	8	7%
Car – with other pupils (from other houses)	8	6%	12	11%
School Bus	0	0%	7	6%
Other (public) Bus	0	0%	1	1%
Taxi	0	0%	6	5%
Other (e.g. train)	0	0%	1	1%
Total	127		112	

The survey shows 94% of pupils travelling to school by car, with a third travelling as the only pupil in the car. The remaining 6% walked to school. The children showed enthusiasm for using sustainable modes of transport, with 39% saying they would prefer to cycle and 13% that they would prefer to walk. Whilst the home locations of pupils limit the opportunity for walking or cycling to school, this

interest raises the possibility of encouraging parents to park elsewhere and walk for part of the journey.

Results from the parent survey were similar, with 47% saying they travelled to school by car with just one pupil, 39% with siblings and 11% with other unrelated children. Only 4% said they walked to school. Parents who drove to school were asked about their willingness to car share. 25% said they would be prepared to take other children, 7% to allow their children to go with someone else, and 23% that they would both be prepared to take other children or allow their children to travel with others. 37% were not willing or able to car share.

Just over two thirds of parents said that they would be prepared to park and walk if a suitable location and route could be identified.

Almost a quarter had ever used the drop and go facility. The main reasons given for not using drop and go were their child being too young, wanting to stay with their child, the child not wanting to do it, and the parent enjoying the opportunity to talk to other parents.

A suggestion was raised in the questionnaire that rather than parents staying on the playground, all parents of Year 1 upwards would leave their child at the gates, with the aim of this relieving congestion in the mornings. This was met with strong support from almost half of the parents, but around a quarter opposed it slightly or strongly. Comments from parents opposing this mainly related to their child not wanting to be left.

The parent survey also examined parents' views on introducing a walking bus. Almost half of parents said they would be prepared to allow their children to use a walking bus, but only 18% were willing to volunteer to help to run it.

Parents had the opportunity to comment in an open ended question on areas of the route to school that caused them concern. Frequently mentioned concerns were crossing the slip road from the A449 and the speed of vehicles on the main road outside the school.

Full survey results are included in Appendix A.

### **Key Transport Issues**

Based on the information gathered and discussions in the Travel Group, the following have been identified as key transport issues for the school:

- Parking outside the school at drop off and particularly pick up. Parking issues lead to some conflict with the Tennis Club and the opposite farm, and at times have also caused aggression between parents. Particularly at pick up, much of the parking is unsafe, leading to vehicles reversing onto the main road, or pulling out with poor visibility.
- The home locations of the majority of the pupils mean that there is little potential for walking and cycling the whole journey to and from school.
- The speed of vehicles travelling on the A4133 presents a danger to pupils.

## Development of Travel Plan Measures

Following on from the parent survey, a number of measures were considered by the Travel Group in the process of developing the Travel Plan.

1. A measure often suggested by parents is to extend the layby onto the grass verge, or otherwise rework the layby to provide more parking. However, the school is not able to implement any such change as the layby is owned by the County Council Highway Authority rather than the school. Similarly, the land around the school is not owned by the school so it is not currently possible to use that to create a car park.
2. The positive reaction to car sharing in the survey led to an attempt to initiate a car sharing scheme, with a form being sent out to parents in the Spring Term of 2015. However, actual uptake was small and of those who responded all but one family were willing to take other children but not prepared to allow their children to travel with other parents. There would however be the potential to try to launch the scheme again in the future.
3. Another measure which was considered was to open up the playground for parking on a regular basis. This is currently done very occasionally when a coach returning from a school trip blocks the layby. This was explored with the Local Authority, with whom the school is insured. However, the use of the playground for parking would invalidate the insurance and they will not condone the mixing of pupils and cars within school premises. The playground surface is also not capable of handling the weight and movement of cars which would lead to deterioration and damage very quickly. There are also health and safety issues for children playing where vehicles could have left oil or other fluids.
4. A walking bus also received a positive response in the survey, and was investigated by the Travel Group. However, there were not enough offers of volunteers to run this. The Group therefore agreed instead to encourage an informal park and walk amongst parents walking together, with the Memorial Hall in the village having a car park which they are happy for parents to use.
5. Parents were also given the opportunity for the school to introduce a late pick up at 3.30pm for a low cost per term, with the aim of staggering the pick up times. However again uptake was low and was not sufficient for it to be viable for the school to run.
6. As it was considered to be afternoons which pose the greatest parking problems, the possibility of staggered finishing times for KS1 and KS2 was examined. Whilst this was met with a positive response from many parents, there were concerns over the practicality for families with children in both key stages. This was ultimately not progressed further on safety grounds, as parking takes some time to disperse following the end of school, and a staggered finish could result in vehicles of KS2 parents trying to enter the layby as KS1 parents were leaving, increasing the risk of an accident.

It can be seen that the school has not been short of ideas to improve parking during peak times, and that some of these measures have been well received in principle by parents. However, the real difficulty has been to convert these into measures that parents will accept and therefore change their behaviour in the long term.

It is recognised that some of these ideas may well be able to be revisited in the future. Some are re-introduced below.

## **Travel Plan Measures**

It is clear that “drop and go” has been a real success, works well with parental support and plays a significant role in reducing parking congestion in the morning. It is also clear that there is a potential for increasing the usage of “drop and go” and the likelihood that this will be well received by parents.

The school has also identified that there is potential to increase the uptake of the afterschool club and this could help to spread parking times in the afternoon and so reduce congestion at peak times.

Therefore, the following measures will be promoted in the short term:

- We will encourage parents to car share or park and walk on an informal basis – promoting the idea that just doing this on one day a week would reduce cars outside school by 20%
- We will extend drop and go to Reception children after their first term to enable a greater number of parents to use drop and go. This was introduced in February 2016.
- We will continue to promote drop and go throughout the school
- We will introduce and promote special activities in the afterschool club on the worst congested days to encourage children to stay until 4 on an occasional basis.
- We will continue to try and engage the Local Authority Highways Department on wider issues relating to speed on the A4133 and the layby. Parents will be encouraged to raise safety concerns with the Local Authority.

In the longer term, the school is in early discussions with the Landowner, The Ombersley Conservation Trust, to alter the boundaries of the land the school has use of as part of the Governors future planning, and this could result in the creation of a new car park in the future. In this case, the co-operation of the Local Authority Highways Department will be necessary and a means of financing would need to be found.

It should be noted that there is no potential to develop a parents’ car park without an increase in the land that we lease from the Ombersley Conservation Trust.

## **Targets**

The Travel Plan aims to achieve the following targets over the next two years (by the end of the 2017/2018 academic year).

- To increase numbers attending the school’s afterschool club from the current daily average of 13 children to an average of 16 children. This will be achieved through the school’s promotion of the club to pupils and parents;
- To increase drop and go usage from the current daily average of 15 vehicles to an average of 18 vehicles. This will be achieved through continued promotion of the scheme to parents, particularly to new Reception parents at the start of each year and at the start of the Spring term when their children will be able to use the facility;
- Through the above measures, in combination with encouraging parents to car share or to park and stride, to reduce the number of cars using the car parking facilities outside or close to the school at the start and end of the school day from the current average of 60 to an average of less than 50.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Travel Plan will be reviewed on a two yearly basis and updated surveys undertaken. The Travel Group will monitor the delivery of the plan and review and update it as required, taking into account changing pupil's and staff travel needs.

The school will keep parents, pupils and staff up to date with information about the Travel Plan.