

# Consultation Results

Student workshop on the  
proposed School Street at  
Highbury Quadrant Primary School

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Workshop.....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	Workshop.....	4
2.2	Assembly.....	8
2.3	Students' views .....	9
<b>3</b>	<b>Evaluation .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>11</b>

# 1 Summary

In preparation for the proposed introduction of a School Street at Highbury Quadrant Primary School, a workshop was held with students of the school. The purpose of the workshop was to explore children's current thoughts on streets and traffic in the vicinity of the school, inform of the planned changes, and gauge levels of support.

The workshop was held on 12 July 2022 with the School Council, a representative group of students from all year groups. This was followed by a presentation from the participating children to the rest of the school in a school assembly on 20 July 2022. Both events were facilitated by external consultant Mark Lemanski and supported and attended by the headteacher Terri Higgins.

The workshop yielded a 'snapshot' of children's views on streets both within the planned School Street zone and beyond. Crossing points especially across busier roads were one of the most frequently mentioned negative characteristics of motorized traffic. Students expressed balanced views on the overall School Streets proposal, and were predominantly supportive of the planned changes (see Section 3 Evaluation).

## 2 Workshop

### 2.1 Workshop

The Workshop aimed to provide some background knowledge of how the rise in motorised traffic has changed our cities, how this has affected children, and how related problems are addressed by the School Street initiative. Children then discussed the specific environment of the school through drawings and a walkabout, before reflecting on the qualities of their individual school routes.

#### **Awareness of how motorised traffic has changed London**

By comparing historic and current images of key London locations, students were able to debate how the rise of motorised traffic has changed roads; they discovered that the historic images show a softer distinction between pavements and carriageways, that carriages were mostly horse-drawn, seem to have been less frequent, and must have moved more slowly than contemporary cars. Pedestrians were often seen sharing the carriageway with other modes of transport.



Figure 1: A comparison of historic and current photos of Piccadilly Circus and Charing Cross Station

## Awareness of how motorised traffic has impacted children

Students discussed how depictions of children playing in the streets in historic photos differ from their own experience of growing up in a city. One pupil noted that children in the photos seem as if they do not need to be aware of traffic.

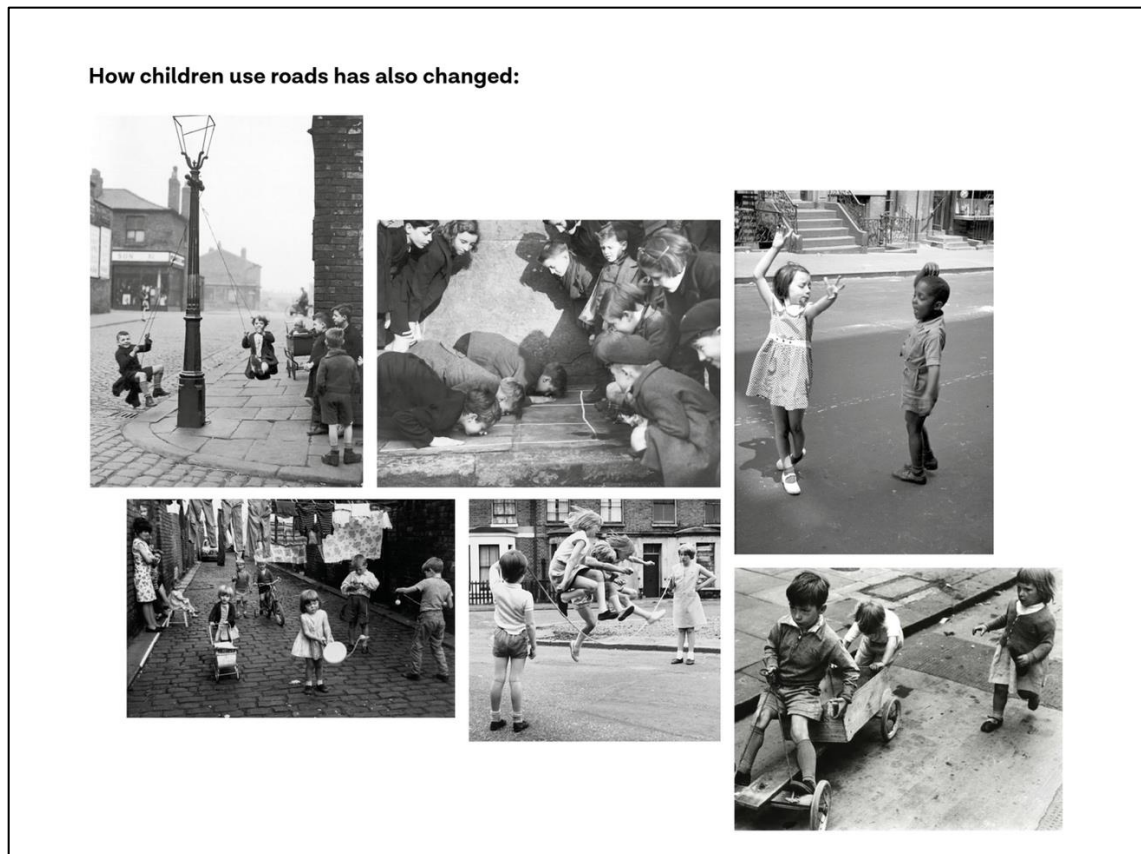


Figure 2: A selection of historic photos of children playing in streets

## Visualising the street as a public space

It can be difficult even for adults to imagine how spaces could be different from what we are used to. In order to 'see streets anew' as places to be in rather than to just move through, students made drawings of activities on a photo of the space outside their school entrance, from which road and cars had been removed. The drawings

demonstrated that there is enough space for a party, a football game, seating, etc.

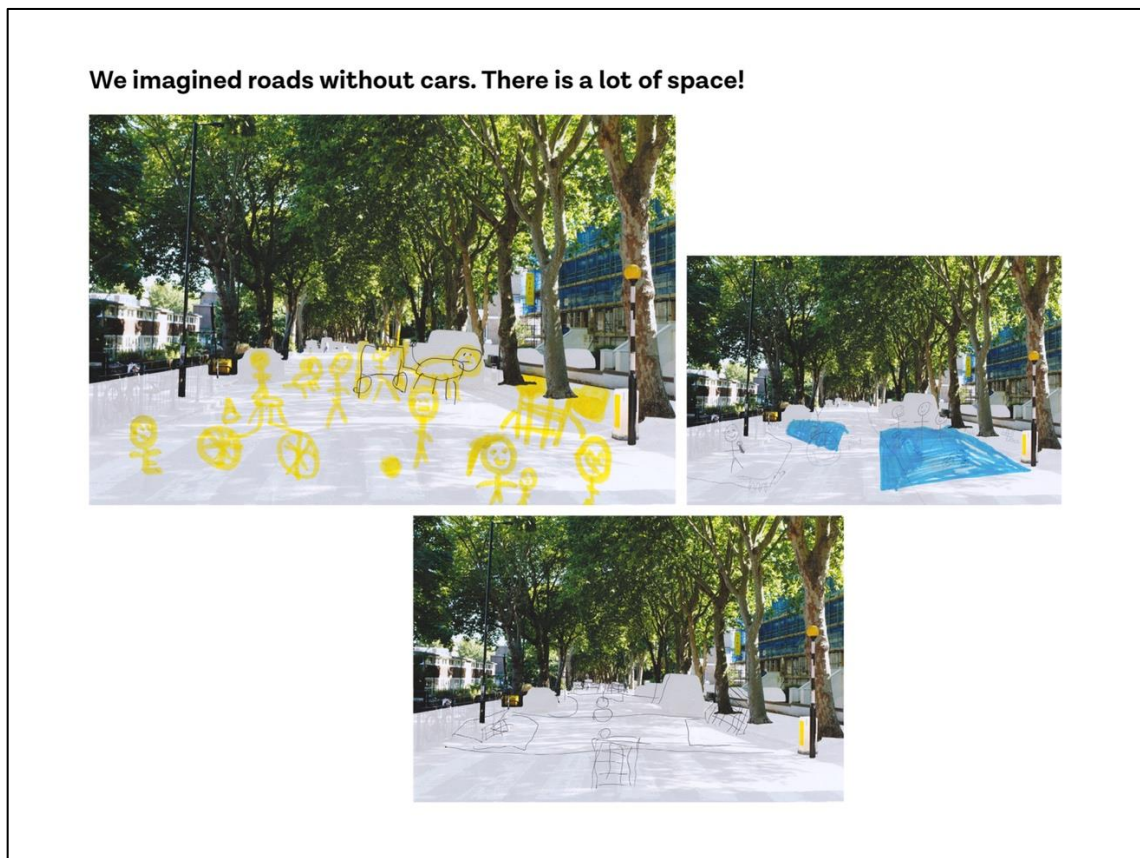


Figure 3: Drawings of alternative uses in the street outside the school

### **Imagining a more people-friendly road space**

Following the drawing exercise, students went on a walkabout along some of the proposed School Street zone, to share observations on road safety and spatial qualities, and discuss ideas on how roads could become more people-friendly, which were captured with chalk drawing and writing on the ground. They included proposals for street performance, a lolly pop lady, safer crossings, and fewer cars.



... and had some ideas on how to make them better.



Figure 4: Photos from the walkabout

### **Annotating school route and positive and negative characteristics**

Students also captured negative and positive characteristics of the public realm beyond the immediate school vicinity. They annotated their school route on a map of the area, and along this annotated positive experiences and qualities with yellow post it notes, and negative qualities with red post it notes.

The responses of individual children were collated into one drawing, see Appendix. Safe crossings are regularly commented on positively, and conversely the lack of safe crossings or long waiting times are commented on negatively, as are narrow pavements and lack of space to cycle and scoot. Trees, a quiet atmosphere, green spaces to play, walking with friends are mentioned positively.

We then thought what we like and dislike about our way to school...

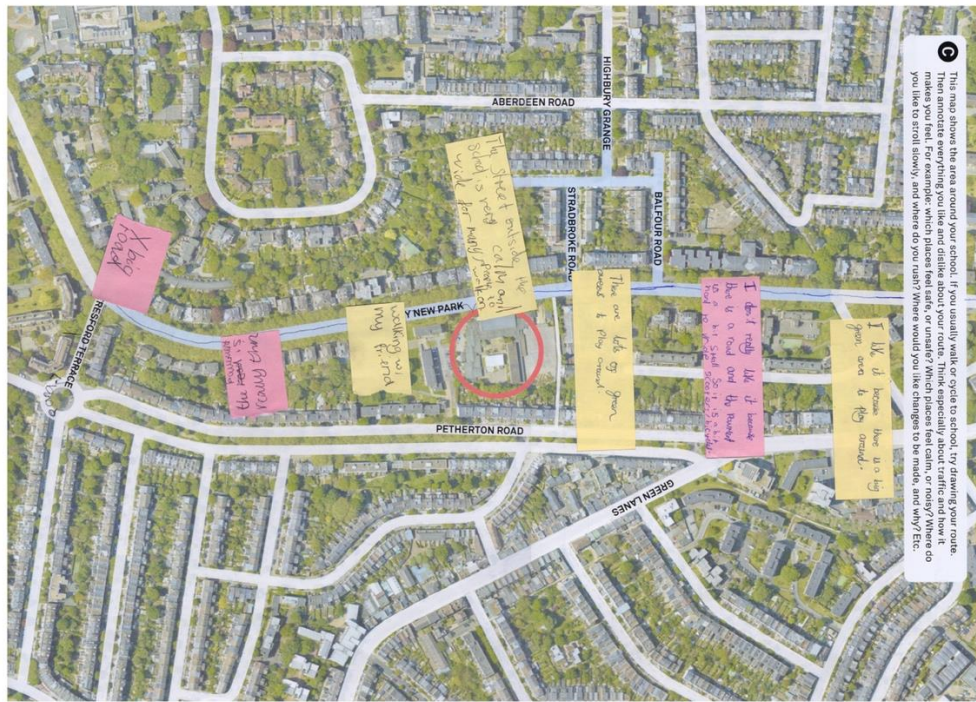


Figure 5: An annotated school route of two students

## 2.2 Assembly

The School Council members presented the proposals for the School Street and the findings from the workshop to the rest of the school in a virtual assembly, with each student presenting a slide, before taking questions from the school community.

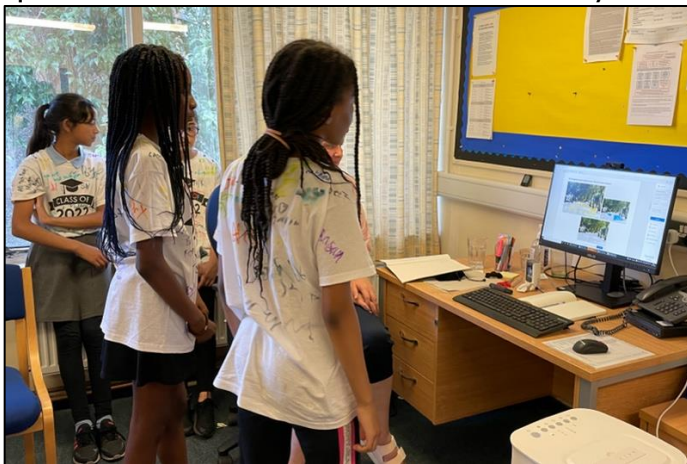


Figure 6: School Council members presenting slides to the rest of the school in a virtual assembly



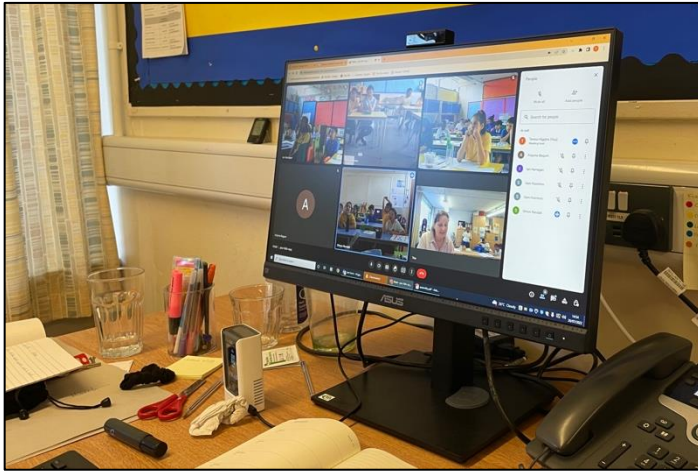


Figure 7: The school's classes joining the assembly.

## 2.3 Students' views

The School Council is a small group of engaged students who were able to discuss the topic of School Streets in nuanced and interesting ways, and presented the topic and related issues competently to the rest of the school.

Whilst children were very aware of safety issues especially in the wider area, pollution was less frequently mentioned than it had been in previous workshops at other schools, possibly because the road outside Highbury Quadrant Primary School is spacious and is lined with mature Plane trees which provide a relatively pleasant and quiet environment, giving the impression that there is relatively little traffic.

The assembly had to be postponed by a few days due to a heatwave; climate change was understood by students to be related to the topic of transport.

## 3 Evaluation

To expand beyond binary responses, manage peer pressure, and facilitate discussion and negotiation, students' opinions on the School Street proposal were invited by asking them to position themselves along an imaginary line between two room corners, with one corner representing the opinion that the School Street would be a positive change, and the other corner that it would be a negative change. Interestingly, of the School Council group, a sizeable percentage of students positioned themselves in-between these positions. Many of them said that they were aware that some children were travelling from

further afield and were dependent on car use, or that some car use was currently inevitable.

The students who thought that the School Street proposal would be a negative change stated that 'roads are for cars', despite the exercises they had previously carried out in order to counter these assumptions. Some other students challenged this argument, saying that streets came before cars, and that change was important.

Three students said that the School Streets proposal would be a positive change, two students said that School Streets would be a negative change, eight students took a more nuanced view, or were as yet undecided.



Figure 8: Students positioning themselves according to whether they think that School Streets would be a positive or negative change (blurred due to lack of consent forms for all students).

This exercise was repeated in all classes, but the school was unable to collate the responses in time before the end of the term. The exercise could be repeated at the beginning of the next term in September to determine students' support for the School Street proposals across the whole school.



# 4 Appendix

