Foxlydiate First School

Engagement 2023

Key results and findings

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Introduction

In July 2023 Worcestershire Children First (WCF) and Worcestershire County Council (WCC) published an engagement survey to obtain the views of parents, residents, and young people of Redditch and Bromsgrove districts and surrounding areas. The aim was to gauge opinion about what is important in the delivery of a new first school for the Foxlydiate area.

The engagement exercise was designed so that stakeholders' views could be considered at the very start of the project, ensuring the vision and parameters of the design and specification drew on the opinions and expectations of those who would be directly impacted by the scheme.
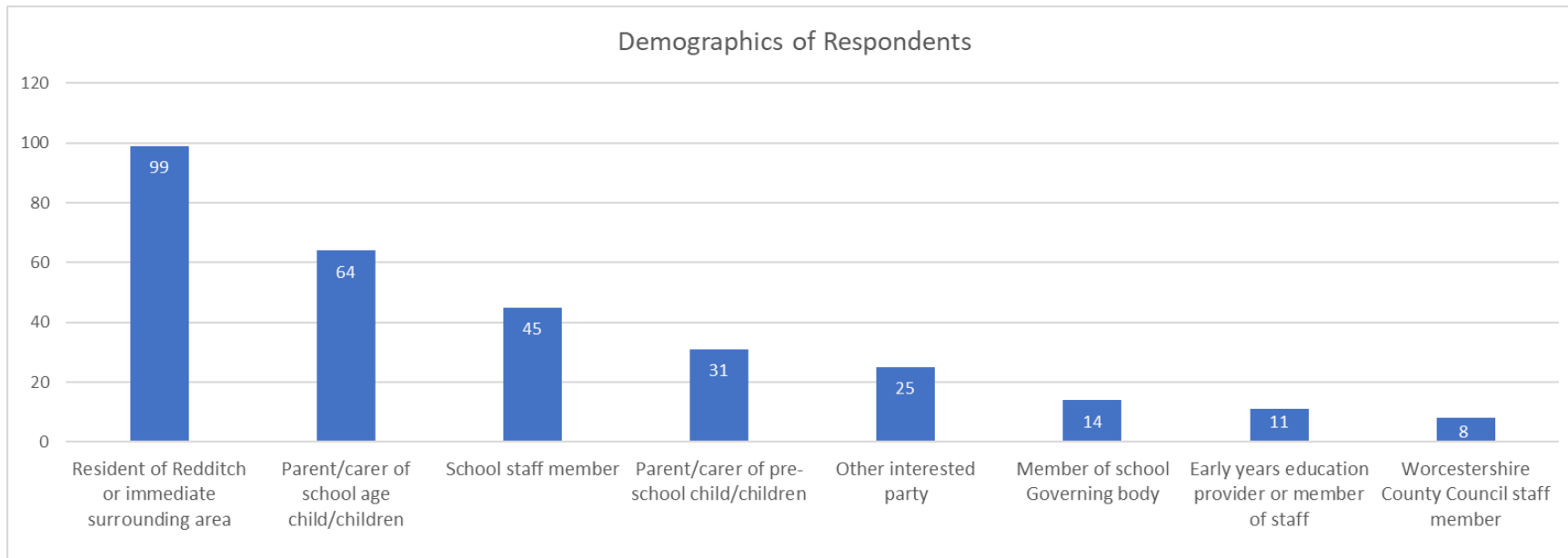
Thank You

We want to thank all 183 respondents who took the time to respond to the survey, their contribution is invaluable. As part of the survey, 526 written comments were submitted where we asked for other suggestions and feedback. We want everyone to know that colleagues across WCF and WCC involved in this project are using the results to guide the creation of the proposal for a new school and inform decisions about the project, as outlined below.

The results have provided invaluable insight into what is important to stakeholders and will enable us to develop a proposal to consult on.

Overview

Demographics

The survey was shared across social media; emailed to local schools; organisations and representative bodies; shared with the Worcestershire Viewpoint Panel; and published in local media. In total 183 responses were received; 52% of respondents were parent carers, 38% were current school or early years staff members or members of Governing Bodies, and 54% were local residents.

Demographics of Respondents

Category	Value
Resident of Redditch or immediate surrounding area	99
Parent/carer of school age child/children	64
School staff member	45
Parent/carer of pre-school child/children	31
Other interested party	25
Member of school Governing body	14
Early years education provider or member of staff	11
Worcestershire County Council staff member	8

96 respondents provided usable postcodes, which showed a concentration within the Webheath area of Redditch, with additional clusters around Redditch and Bromsgrove town centres. Respondents were asked to select all groups that they identified as, with some belonging to several groups. 33% (99 total) were from the Redditch area, 21.5% (64) were parents/carers of school age children, 15% (45) were school staff members, 10% (31) were parents/carers of pre-school age children, 8% (25) were from other interested parties, 5% (14) were members of school governing bodies, 4% (11) were Early Years education providers or members of staff, and 3% (8) were Worcestershire County Council staff members.
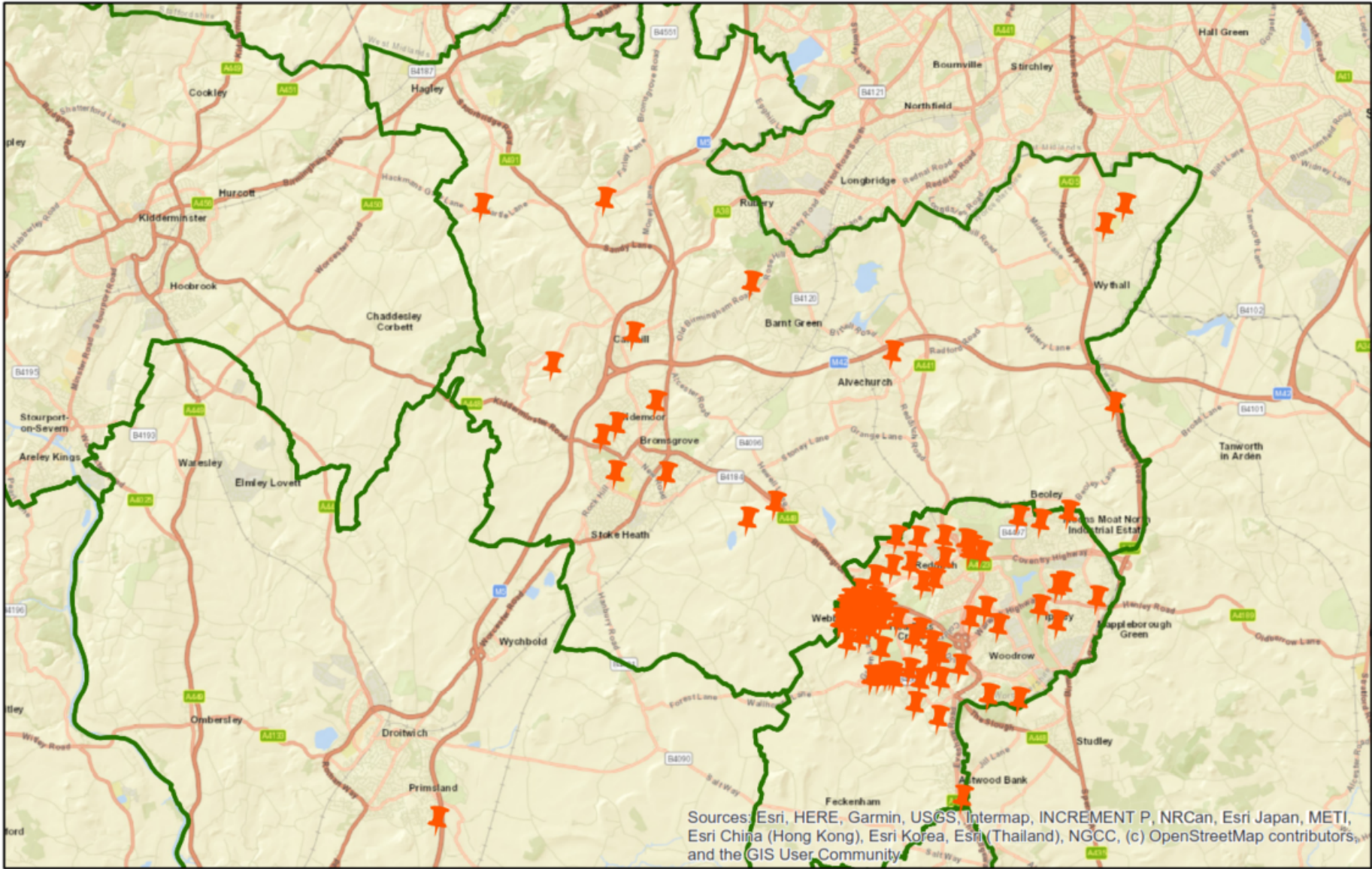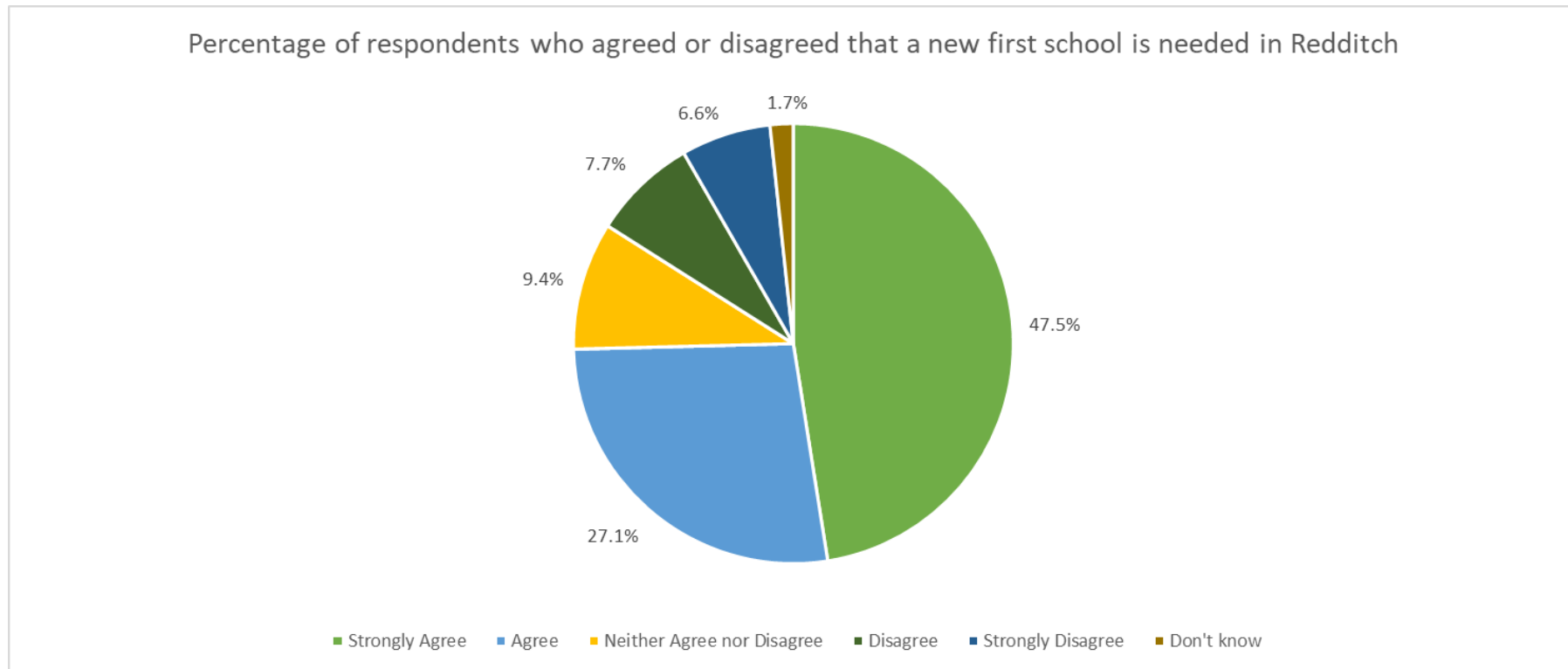
Figure 1 Map of respondents

Support for a New School

Most respondents agreed that a new first school is needed for the Foxlydiate area. 75% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, just 14% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, 9% neither agreed nor disagreed and 2% were unsure. Many of those who disagreed felt that there was a more prominent need for a new middle or high school and that existing schools should be expanded instead. Evidence from previous large housing developments shows that fewer secondary age children move into this type of new housing and in this instance, the lower numbers of older pupils do not justify the addition of another high school.

Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that a new first school is needed in Redditch

- Strongly Agree — 47.5%
- Agree — 27.1%
- Neither Agree nor Disagree — 9.4%
- Disagree — 7.7%
- Strongly Disagree — 6.6%
- Don't know — 1.7%

Key Outcomes

We asked respondents how important certain factors were in the delivery of a new first school. The top five aspects that were considered very important were that pupils feel safe at school; the school has facilities to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum; pupils feel their health and wellbeing is well supported; the school has a positive and respectful school culture; and pupils feel motivated and have a positive attitude to learning.

The factors that were less frequently selected as important to respondents were attendance and partnership working with parent carers and the wider community. We also asked respondents to provide further comments. Key areas of importance for school values revolved around having a strong leadership team to encourage a positive culture, a strong emphasis on pastoral care, and encouragement of play and practical skills.

Top 5 values respondents considered to be 'Very Important' in a new First School

79% — Creating an environment in which pupils feel safe

70% — Facilities and environment to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum

67% — The wellbeing and health of pupils and staff is prioritised

67% — Fostering a positive and respectful school culture in which staff know and care about pupils

65% — Developing pupils' motivation and positive attitudes to learning

"Strong pastoral care - designated staff member to deal with emotional issuesand challenges. Involvement of parents and volunteers. A welcoming and open culture where parents feel at home and teachers are accessible."

"Somewhere that focuses on outdoor learning as much as possible. Also where play and creativity is encouraged not just academic learning"
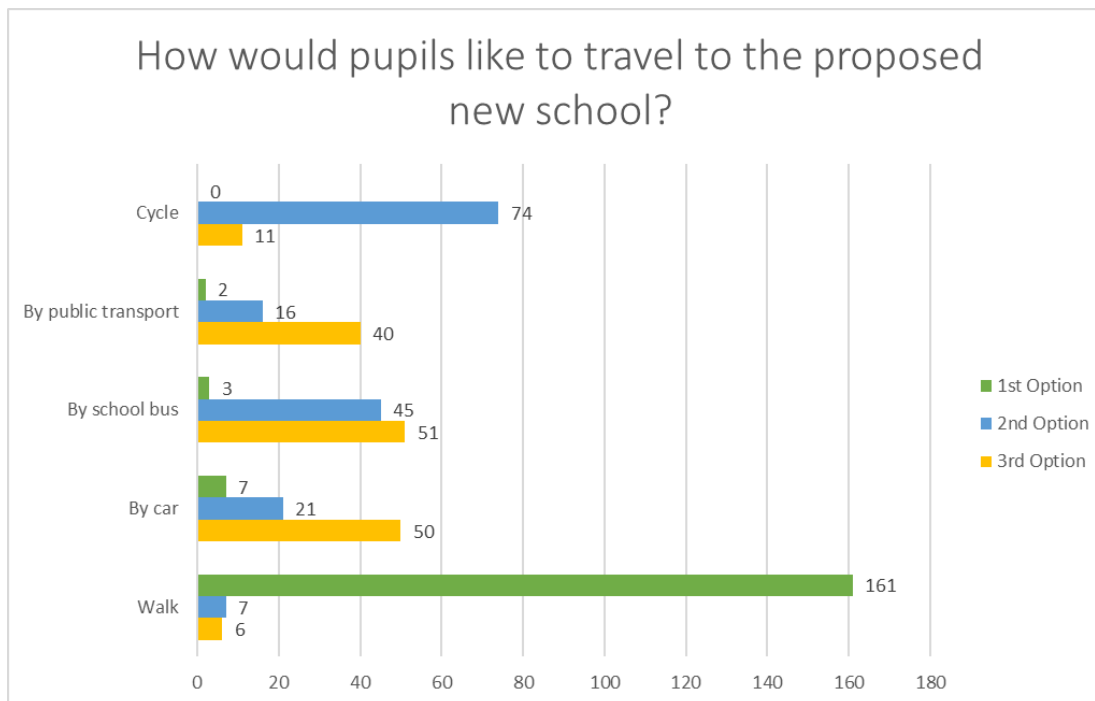
"Teaching to suit different types of learning and abilities. Not always classroom focused."

Transport

Enabling pupils to travel to the school via active travel routes was extremely important for respondents due to the health and environmental benefits of walking and cycling. Walking was voted as the preferred option by the majority of respondents, with cycling being the most popular 2nd preference. Travel by car and bus were both the least preferred option chosen.

A significant number of respondents felt that walking and cycling should be promoted as the school will cater for children in the local area and therefore would like to see safer pedestrian and cycle routes to the school. They also felt that the existing road infrastructure would struggle to support additional traffic generated by the school and sufficient drop-off parking for parents would be required.

How would pupils like to travel to the proposed new school?

Travel method	1st Option	2nd Option	3rd Option
Cycle	0	74	11
By public transport	2	16	40
By school bus	3	45	51
By car	7	21	50
Walk	161	7	6

"It's important for children to be able to attend school close to home this allows them to walk, it's healthier and reduced traffic congestion and need for parking"

"There is already a huge amount of traffic and very limited parking around this area during school time. Especially around the two first & primary schools already in Webheath"

"Walking is the healthiest, safest and most environmentally friendly method for both the children, parents and the local community."
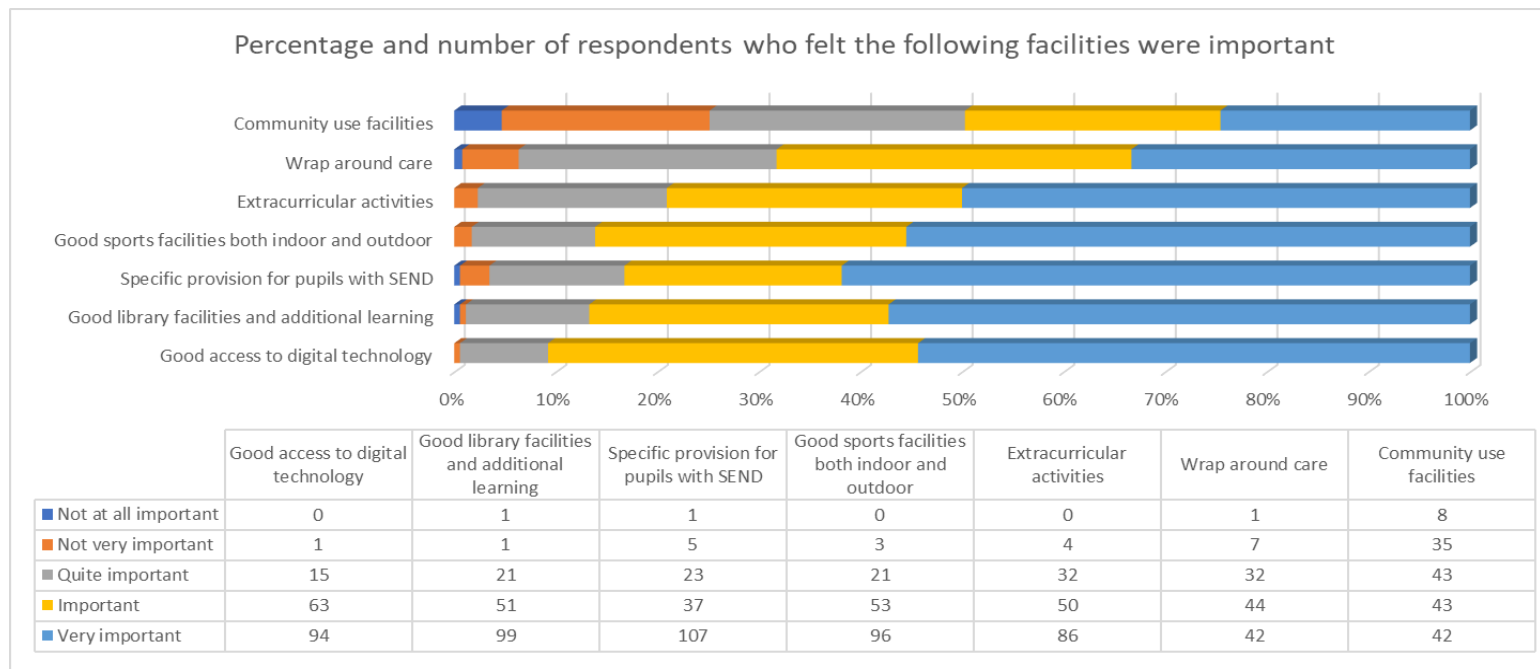
Facilities

The survey asked respondents for their views on which facilities were important to them in a new school. The following were rated as very important by the majority of respondents:

- Specific provision for pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Access to digital technology
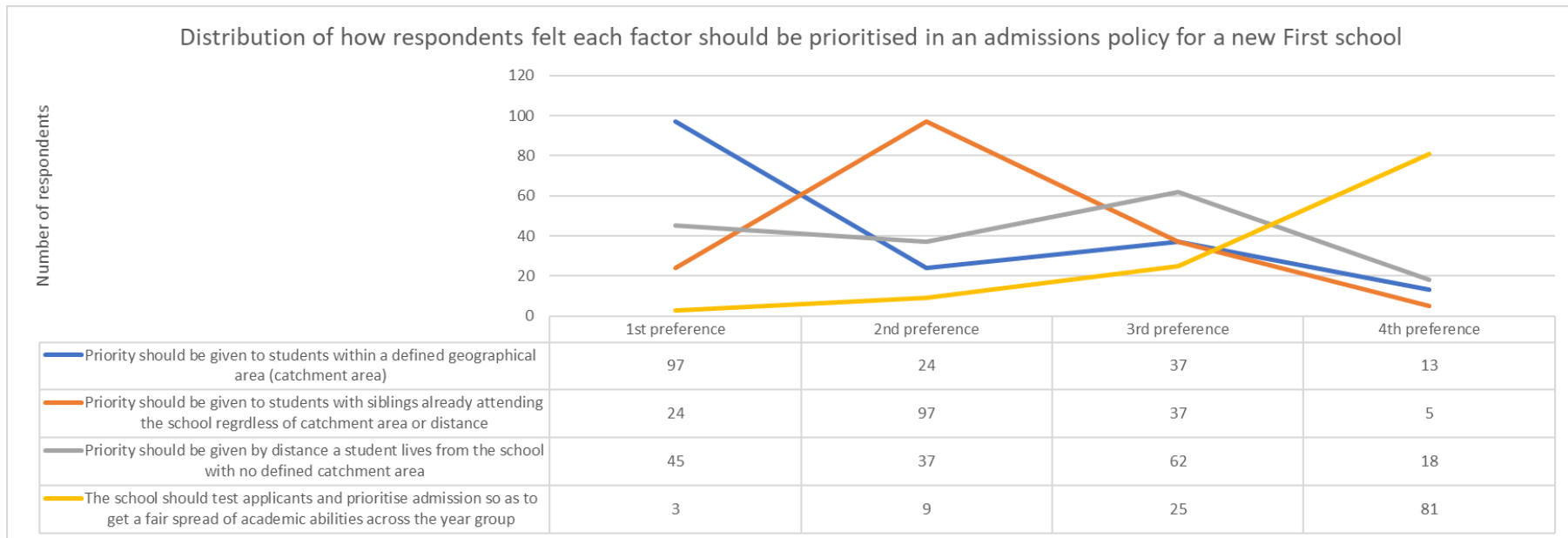- Library facilities and additional learning
- Sports facilities

Extracurricular activities and wrap around care were also deemed to be important but community use of facilities was not considered to be a priority.

Many of the comments reflected a desire for outdoor learning facilities and sports fields to support mental health and encourage creativity. Respondents also requested SEND provision to cater for more pupils needs. Specific facilities that were suggested for SEND pupils included quiet/sensory areas, smaller classrooms, and accessible entrances, toilets and play areas.

Percentage and number of respondents who felt the following facilities were important

	Good access to digital technology	Good library facilities and additional learning	Specific provision for pupils with SEND	Good sports facilities both indoor and outdoor	Extracurricular activities	Wrap around care	Community use facilities
Not at all important	0	1	1	0	0	1	8
Not very important	1	1	5	3	4	7	35
Quite important	15	21	23	21	32	32	43
Important	63	51	37	53	50	44	43
Very important	94	99	107	96	86	42	42

Admissions

Respondents were asked to rank how priority should be given to admissions for a new first school. 97 of the 169 of respondents who provided their 1st preference (57%), said that first priority should be given to pupils within a defined geographical area (catchment area), 24 respondents (14%) said priority should firstly be given to pupils with siblings already attending the school regardless of catchment area, and 45 respondents (27%) said first priority should be determined by distance from home to the school, with no defined catchment area. Only 3 respondents (2%) felt that a test to prioritise admissions to get a fair spread of academic abilities across the year groups should be prioritised, with 81 respondents (48%) suggesting this should be rated as the lowest priority.

Distribution of how respondents felt each factor should be prioritised in an admissions policy for a new First school

	1st preference	2nd preference	3rd preference	4th preference
Priority should be given to students within a defined geographical area (catchment area)	97	24	37	13
Priority should be given to students with siblings already attending the school regrdless of catchment area or distance	24	97	37	5
Priority should be given by distance a student lives from the school with no defined catchment area	45	37	62	18
The school should test applicants and prioritise admission so as to get a fair spread of academic abilities across the year group	3	9	25	81

'You said, We Will'

The 183 responses and 526 comments provided as part of this engagement exercise have provided guidance to shape the specification and proposals for a new first school. The below outlines the key themes presented and how these will be integrated into the design, build, and specification for the new first school.

Some matters such as the values, leadership and operation of the school will be in the control of the academy trust to be chosen for the school. Wherever a requirement has been identified in these areas, we will include our expectations for this area within the specification, and score applicants against this standard within the application.

Theme	Comments	What we will do
Values	Pupils feel safe in and around the school	• Focus on strong behavior policy in the specification for the academy sponsor and a requirement for any academy sponsor to provide information and evidence of such. • Ensuring the school is built with safeguarding best practice.
Values	A focus on the wellbeing and mental health of pupils and staff	• A requirement for the academy trust to show their approach to wellbeing and mental health for pupils and staff as part of their application. • A requirement for the school to offer ongoing development opportunities for all staff. • Integration of small teaching spaces and quiet zones within the school where possible. • Prioritise locations that offer access to green space. • Clear processes in place to provide early help and social care for pupils and staff.
Education	Pupils make good academic progress and have access to a broad and balanced curriculum	• Selection of an academy sponsor will prioritise those that show how educational offer/ curriculum ensures excellent outcomes and high quality of teaching and learning to ensure all pupils can succeed. • A requirement for academy applicants to provide evidence and details of their approach to meeting the needs of all children and ensure accessibility for all pupils to the curriculum and school life, including Looked After Children, Young Carers, and those with Special Educational Needs.
Values	An ethos and practice of inclusivity	• The chosen sponsor must have a strong ethos and evidenced practice to ensure inclusivity of all pupils, and ensure all pupils are able to access the curriculum and quality first teaching (QFT) and high-quality teaching, in particular making appropriate adjustments for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), vulnerable learners and Looked after Children. • The chosen academy sponsor will be expected to build an ongoing, holistic understanding of their pupils and their needs, and facilities will reflect an ethos of inclusivity. • The school will have a strong IT Policy that seeks to utilise technology to support inclusivity and accessibility for all pupils, including children with SEND including dyslexia, hearing impairment etc.

Theme	Comments	What we will do
		• The management of other facilities such as bathrooms and staff facilities must link to the inclusivity policy of the school, in particular with regard to gender and self-identity. • The school will work closely with the Local Authority and other organisations to ensure all pupils receive the correct support to ensure full access to the curriculum and school life. • The school should commit to staff continuing professional development (CPD) and training to upskill senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and other school staff in understanding the requirements to meet the individual needs of pupils.
Leadership	A strong bullying policy which focuses on the root cause of bullying that is consistently applied	• The school must have a strong behaviour policy and an academy sponsor who can evidence the effectiveness of the policy. • The school should have a behaviour policy that does not discriminate against pupils with SEND or vulnerable learners. • The school will be proactive in preventing exclusions and will following the Graduated Response to preventing exclusions in mainstream schools.
Location	The location of the school should be within the local community of the pupils who will be accessing the school	• The site is being provided by the developer and is part of the Foxlydiate housing development.
Location	The location of the school should consider existing traffic congestion and ensure active travel routes are in place for pupils from the point of school opening	• When possible, the site will be easily accessible by bus travel routes. • A Traffic Impact Assessment will be carried out by the Council as part of the planning process for the build project. • The appointed sponsor will be required to develop a School Travel Plan encouraging safe travel to school which promotes walking and cycling. • Consideration will be given to the design of the whole Foxlydiate site by the developers to ensure the creation of a high quality space that enables safe trips to be made to key facilities via all modes of transport.
Facilities	Pupils should have access to sports pitches and natural areas to support mental health	• The location of the school will prioritise being close to natural spaces and where possible utilise outside space for teaching and school life.
Facilities	The school should have good facilities, in particular digital technology	• An emphasis on identifying an academy sponsor with experience of using innovative digital technologies to support learning, particularly to support children with special needs or disability to access the curriculum.

Theme	Comments	What we will do
Facilities	Facilities should be mindful of inclusivity and ensure specific facilities are available for pupils with special education needs and disability requirements	• It is expected that the chosen Academy Sponsor will build an ongoing holistic understanding of their pupils and their needs, and facilities must reflect an ethos of inclusivity. • The chosen Academy Sponsor must commit to implementing reasonable adjustments so pupils with SEND can be an active and valued part of the school community and access learning • The management of other facilities such as bathrooms and staff facilities must link to the inclusivity policy of the school.
Facilities	Facilities should be accessible for community use out of school hours	• The design of the school will take account of after school use of facilities, particularly sports facilities. • The chosen academy sponsor will be expected to agree community use and ensure wherever possible facilities can be used outside of school hours by the community.
Admissions	Admission to the school should prioritise catchment area, distance to the school and siblings of pupils at the school	• There will be an expectation that the academy sponsor will be mindful of this when determining their admissions requirements.