

Department for Education - School Build Meeting Update - Tuesday 10th October 2023

Attendees: Ben Parnell (CEO), Emma Kerr (Executive Principal), Carla Barnard (Chair of Governors), Darren Crockford (Estates Manager), Gary Chapman (Deputy Estates Manager), Richard Malyon (DFE Project Director), Mark Collin (Kier Senior Pre Construction Manager), LPS staff and parents.

Background:

Richard gave a brief recap of the delay with the school build. This can be found in previous minutes on the [school website](#).

Current Position:

Richard explained that they are now in contract with Kier to build the school. If Kier does not meet this date, the company will be heavily fined. The aim was for the school build to be completed by summer 2024. However during demolition of the building they found that Caledonian (previous contractor) did not build the foundations correctly and would be unsafe to build on. DFE made the decision to remove the foundations and this requires an extension to the contract to 31 October 2024. Kier has assessed the ground below the foundations (now removed) and confirmed there are no further will no longer find any risks to Caladonian's previous work. Kier are now in the process of building the school back up. The school build is estimated to be completed by 31 October 2024. The steel frame will start to be installed in December 2023, and the remainder of the school going up quickly after that. Richard explained that they are looking at the programme, and as the site progresses they can determine whether they will be ahead of schedule or on track. Richard ensured all the risks have now been resolved.

Temporary accommodation:

Contingency for September 2024 - Once the steel frame is installed at the new school site, DFE will be able to understand if the programme will be met in time. At this point, an agreement will be reached with the trust on the contingency plan for 2024.

Potential options discussed with the school at a meeting on 09/10/23 were:

- Now the parties are in contract, discussions have commenced between DfE and Keir to investigate whether the works could be accelerated at the main site, and/or, if possible, enable partial access to the new building.
- If the build is going to be delivered by October half term, in accordance with the contract, there is potentially sufficient space at the current temporary site for 90 pupils in the existing three classrooms plus the additional activity space which would enable the school to organise across four discreet classes i.e. there are for rooms. It will be up to the school/trust how it organises education over that period.
- If there is a delay to the delivery date, the Trust has planning permission approval in place for a temporary classroom. The DFE will need to work with the Trust to confirm if this could go ahead, as it is trust land.

A discussion on mixed-age classes was held. Richard confirmed that the Department for Education does not advise any school how to organise teaching across the school and Mrs Kerr advised that pupils currently work in some ability groups across the school.

Actions:

- DfE/Kier to provide monthly site updates on the 1st of the month. School to receive this a few days before, ready to share this via DoJo and add to the build page on the website on the 1st of the month.
- Instead of using the previously provided email address, any questions on the build progress can be sent to richard.malyon@education.gov.uk The need to replace the foundations has extended the programme beyond the anticipated August '24 completion - contingency plans for the first half term to October 2024 have begun. An update on this will be provided at our December parent information event.

The next meeting will be scheduled near to Christmas for a further update. When a date is confirmed, it will be shared with our school families and staff. The parent/carer survey is live and will be shared again prior to this meeting, to ask any questions to the DFE.

Questions & Feedback received via Parent/Carer Survey (Live from 17/01/23 to 10/10/23) addressed in points above.

Have you taken the foundations up?

Do you plan to add extra resources to try and speed up the build? - DFE can use extra resources, but not needed at the moment

When is the work going to commence, I know in September you said it would be April, however has this changed or is there an opportunity to bring it forward now you know what needs to be done?

Updates on development and time frame

What is the contingency plan if there are further delays to the build and what capacity do you have at the temporary site?

Are the foundations being dug up? How far behind schedule are they? Where are the new intake in September going?

Request updated timeline, at the last meeting we were told that you didn't think extra resource would be needed to finish this project before September 24, has this changed and will this happen? Considering the foundations have now been dug up need to be relaid? DFE will use extra resources to get the build completed

Will the season have an impact on this? And if so how much of a delay do you expect. - Kier explained that only extreme weather conditions will affect the build progress.

Will the school definitely be going ahead or is the 'temporary' accommodation likely to be made permanent based on the problems this project has faced from the start. The Lack of communication is quite disappointing

No response to email sent to info.LPS@education.gov.uk - please email Richard.MALYON@education.gov.uk instead.