

About the School

Meopham Secondary School is a school with a traditional family culture combined with an ambitious ethos for excellence.

Their ethos creates a supportive, energising and inspiring climate for success. Indeed, they were recognised as the highest performing non-selective school in Kent for the fourth year running in the October 2019 School Performance Tables.

However, at Meopham Secondary School they measure success not just in terms of excellent academic outcomes, but also in the development of strong character. Their traditional academic curriculum combines with their Excellence Through Character curriculum to ensure that every student is nurtured to uncover their talents and aptitudes. They recognise that excellent examination results are only a part of the story. Qualifications and personality open doors initially, but it is strength of character which keeps those doors open and allows young people to lead happy, successful, and healthy lives.

At its most recent inspection, Meopham Secondary School was granted a rating of Outstanding.

Meopham Secondary School will shortly be submitting an application to Kent County Council for a new school building. On the following pages you can read more about the proposals and the reasons behind it.

Involvement and Consultation

The Design Team is as follows:

Architect: Bond Bryan Architects Ltd.

Landscape Architect: Bond Bryan Architects Ltd.

Principal Designer: Bond Bryan Architects Ltd.

Transport Consultant: Sweco

Planning Consultant: 3BM



Meopham School

A Member of Swale Academies Trust
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN A RURAL SETTING



Pre-Application Advice Meetings have been held between KCC Planning and KCC highways prior any Planning Submission.

The School Expansion

Kent County Council (KCC) as the Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available.

Over the past ten years, the number of children being born in Gravesham has continued to be higher than it is anticipated. This means that there will be significant short and medium-term pressure for additional Year 7 places.

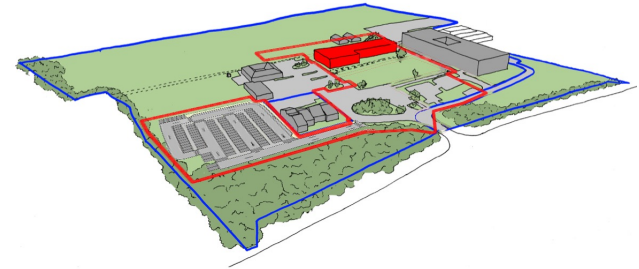
These population increases have required the expansion of nearby primary schools, and the increased numbers arising from the primary expansions are now impacting on the secondary school capacity. Medium scale housing development and these high birth rates are bringing new families to the area requiring enhancements to the infrastructure in order to meet the future needs of the town and its residents. The 2020 – 2024 Kent Commissioning Plan provided forecasts that indicate a sustained increase in the demand for secondary school capacity.

Meopham School is currently housed in a single building, commissioned by the EFA, and completed in February 2018. The building was built to accommodate 798 pupils: 700 Year 7-11 and 98 in the Sixth Form. The school cohort as of September 2021 is 936 students.

The school agreed to raise its Published Admission Number (PAN) from 140 to 200 in September 2021 at the request of KCC. Indeed, we have been accepting 170 students (30 over PAN) for the past 4 years, in response to requests from KCC due to the ever increasing demand for school places in the local area.

Meopham Secondary School is a popular school with an Ofsted rating of 'Outstanding' and the proposal to increase the number of secondary places at the school is therefore in line with the expectation of expanding popular & successful schools. The expansion will require the installation of additional accommodation.

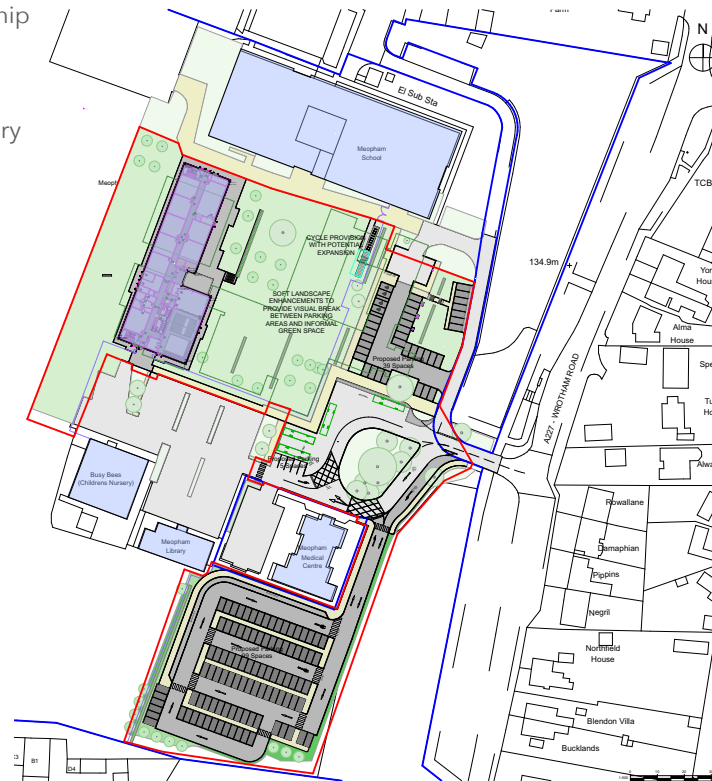
These population increases have required the expansion of nearby primary schools, and the increased numbers arising from the primary expansions are now impacting on the secondary school capacity. Below you can find an image of how the new building might look.



The New Building

On this map, the red line is the area of the planning application. The blue line shows the land ownership of the school.

The proposed new building will contain additional classrooms, including specialised rooms for art, dance and design/technology, and will enable the school to meet the increased demand for secondary school places. The proposed new building is shown on the map below.



The New Building

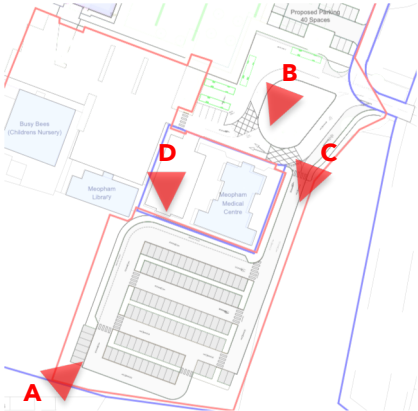


Above you can see an image of the proposed new building. The colours of the cladding are indicative only

Below you can see an image of the proposed new building from across the car park.



Additional Parking Area



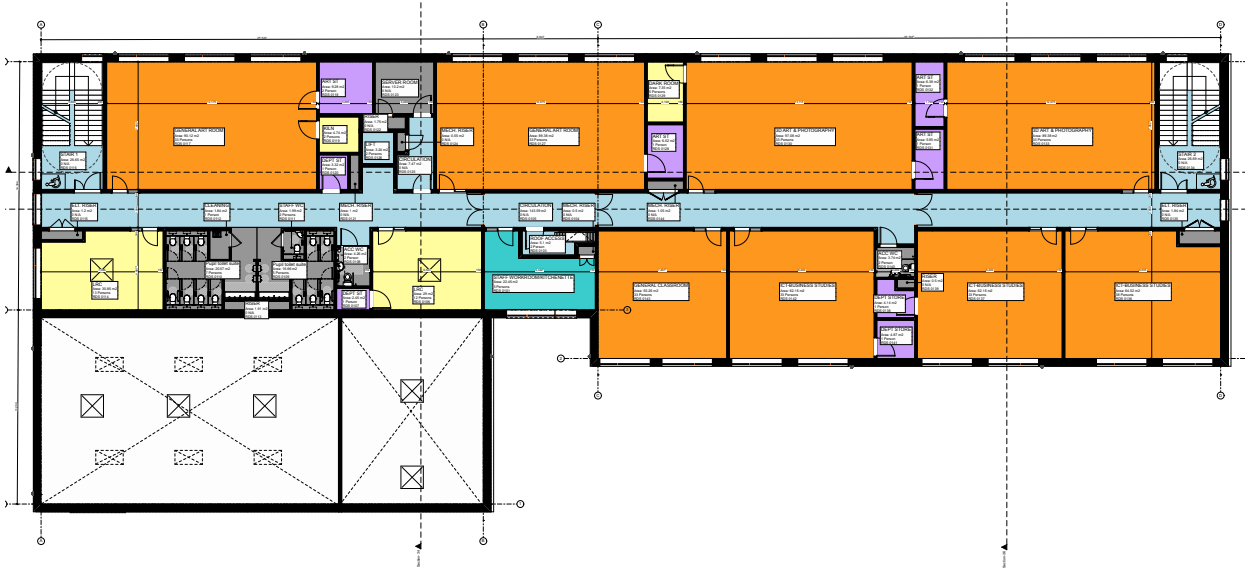
The New Building

Detailed Ground Floor Plan



The New Building

Detailed First Floor Plan



Transport Analysis

The new drop-off and pick-up facility will provide space for parents to park on-site, away from Wrotham Road and the local streets. The car park has been designed with a 'fast-track' drop-off lane for use in the mornings, and standard parking bays to allow parents to park up and wait at the end of the school day.

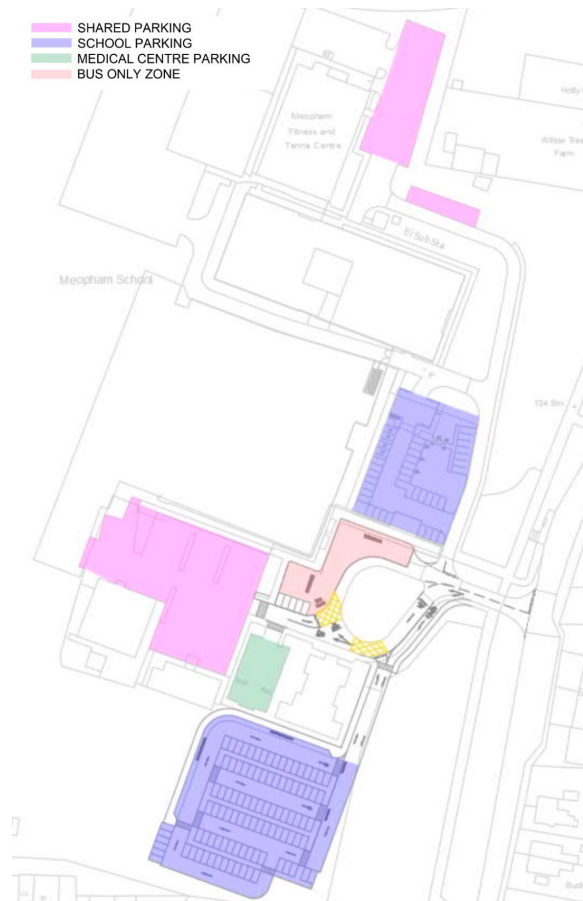
Upon entering the site, the carriageway will be widened to two lanes to separate traffic using the new drop-off and pick-up facility and traffic accessing the library, medical centre, nursery and leisure centre. Priority will be given to traffic entering the site, with traffic exiting the new drop-off and pick-up facility being required to give-way. Signage and road markings will be improved to clearly guide drivers through the site.

A new bus only zone will be created so that buses are separated from other traffic and do not block vehicles when they are stopped. All car parking currently situated in the proposed bus only zone will be relocated so none is lost.

A new car park management plan has been created by specialist transport consultants to assist the school in managing the new access and parking arrangements. The school will be enforcing this management plan on school staff, children and parents.

In conclusion, the addition of this new dedicated car park and drop-off / pick-up facility will have significant benefits for all users of the site and surrounding area. It will help to ease congestion at school start and finish times. It will help discourage parents from parking away from the school site, and instead use the new safe and conveniently located new car park. It will help discourage parents from using the parking bays in front of the medical centre, nursery and library, which in turn improves the overall capacity during pick-up/drop-off times.

Overall, the new car park and amended access arrangements will improve the parking and highways situation in this part of Meopham.



F.A.Q

What are you proposing?

We are proposing to provide an additional school building on the site of Meopham Secondary School. The proposed building will contain additional classrooms, including specialised rooms for art, dance and design/technology, and will enable the school to meet the increased demand for secondary school places.

Is there a demand for a new building?

Yes, over the past ten years, the number of children being born in Gravesham has continued to be higher than it is anticipated. This means that there will be significant short and medium-term pressure for additional Year 7 places.

These population increases have required the expansion of nearby primary schools, and the increased numbers arising from the primary expansions are now impacting on the secondary school capacity.

Who makes the decision on the application?

Kent County Council's planning team will analyse all the application documents and plans that will be submitted as part of the application. All these will be available to view on the council's website once the application has been submitted.

The summary of their analysis will be presented to a group of elected councillors - the Planning Committee. At a meeting open to the public, they will hear a summary of the application from the planning officers and will also hear from supporters and objectors. They will then decide whether or not the application should be approved.

The meeting will either be online or in person depending on the situation at the time.

Will construction be noisy or disruptive?

Modern construction methods tend to be less noisy than in the past. Whilst there will inevitably be some disturbance, the hours of operation will be limited by the council to 8am to 6pm Mon to Fri and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays.

The selected contractor will be part of the Considerate Constructors Scheme. All works will take place onsite and deliveries will be carefully timed in order to prevent disruption and traffic.

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Are there any other ways I can have my say on the proposals?

Yes, comments can be shared with the email provided on the Planning Consultation Letter. You will also be able to view and comment on the Planning Portal website once the planning application is submitted short after this consultation period. The council will also hold their own statutory consultation, following the submission of a planning application.