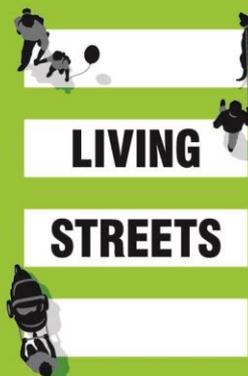


SCHOOL ROUTE AUDIT REPORT PRIORY PRIMARY SCHOOL DUDLEY

11TH September 2019



We are Living Streets, the charity for everyday walking. Our mission is to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more.





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Executive Summary

We are Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking. We are working with Priory Primary School to increase walking rates in Dudley.

On 11th September 2019 we conducted a school route audit (SRA) by walking streets around the school identifying, discussing and recording issues that encouraged or discouraged everyday walking. The issues identified were then discussed before agreement was reached on key short- and longer-term priorities that would improve the walking environment.

The key issues affecting Priory Primary School are as follows:

- Trees which have grown to a size where they make pavements impassable
- Speeding traffic in adjacent roads
- Fly tipping and broken glass
- Unclear road signs

Recommendations discussed at the SRA included:

Short Term

- Rubbish removal
- Sign cleaning

Long Term

- 20mph speed limit
- Widening pavements in conjunction with traffic calming to bypass trees

Living Streets

We are Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking.

We want to create a walking nation, free from congested roads and pollution, reducing the risk of preventable illness and social isolation and making walking the natural choice. We believe that a walking nation means progress for everyone.

Our ambition is to get people of all generations to enjoy the benefits that this simple act brings and to ensure all our streets are fit for walking.

For more than 90 years we've been a beacon for walking. In our early days our campaigning led to the UK's first zebra crossings and speed limits. Now, our campaigns and local projects deliver real change to overcome barriers to walking and our ground-breaking initiatives such as the world's biggest Walk to School campaign encourage millions of people to walk.

Progress starts here: one street, one school, one step at a time.

Walk to school campaign

Living Streets' Walk to School campaign supports over 900,000 children in 3,500 schools to walk more through national schemes and events including Walk to School Week, and WOW – the year-round walk to school challenge, making it one of the UK's leading behaviour change campaigns for young people.

Introduction

The aim of a school route audit (SRA) is to identify issues that encourage or discourage everyday walking. To increase walking rates, it is important that the condition of the streets and paths in the area be of a standard that encourage people to walk. This report provides more detail of these barriers and suggests practical solutions to overcome them.

The school route audit process

The school route audit aims:

- To identify ways to reduce the effects of the busy roads on pupils and their parents/carers (parents and carers will be referred to as parents for the purpose of this report) who walk and cycle, without creating further delays for motorists,
- To find ways to reduce congestion and enforce and facilitate slower speeds,
- To identify barriers to walking and to enhance opportunities to improve connectivity, attractiveness, state of maintenance and identify improvement measures.

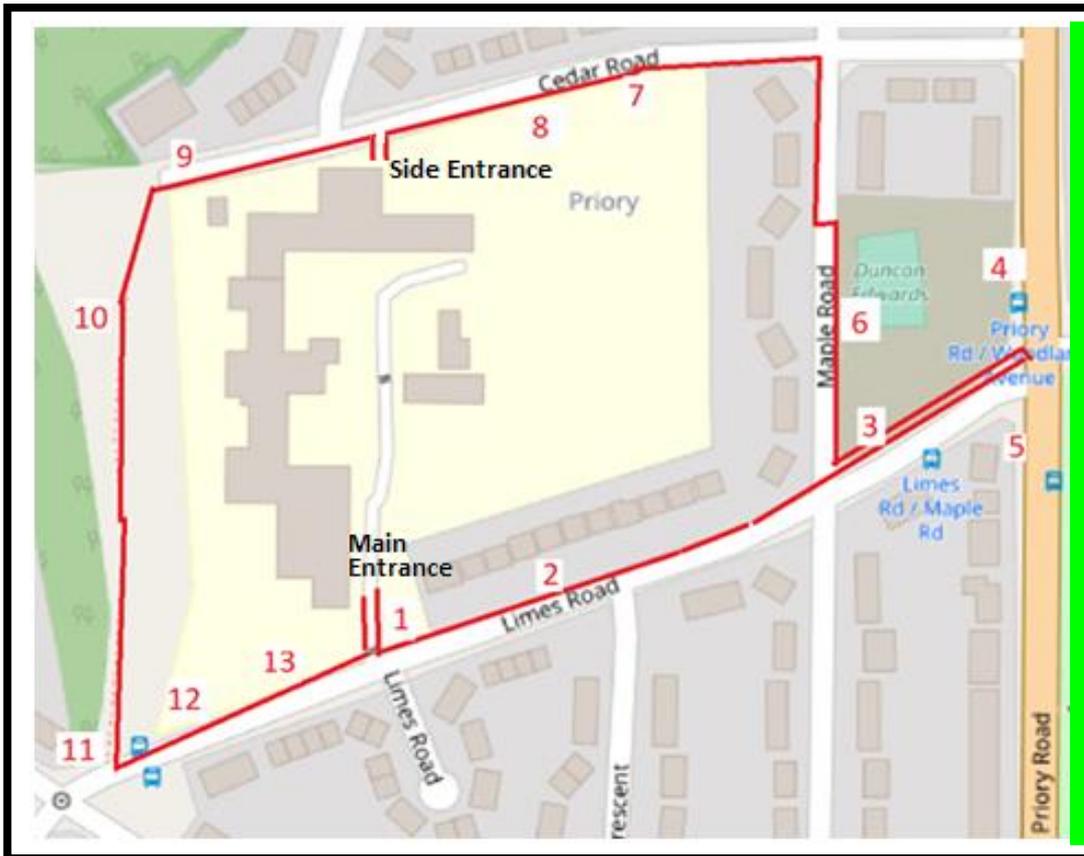
On 11th September 2019, Living Streets facilitated a School Route Audit with five children from Priory Primary School accompanied by two members of staff Mrs Peace and Miss Powell. The Audit was facilitated by Living Streets Project Coordinators David Hackney and Ed Wicks.

The SRA of the area surrounding the school allowed us to critically review the walking routes to access the school. We were able to identify issues and decide on priorities, create solutions and to take action to influence on-the-ground changes.

On the SRA we walked around the school periphery identifying, discussing and recording issues that encouraged or discouraged everyday walking. Issues identified were then discussed before agreement was reached on key short- and longer-term priorities that would improve the walking environment.

In addition to the SRA, a pre-audit was carried out by Living Streets staff to observe the behaviour of drivers in the morning and ensure the route was safe to walk with children.

Map of area



© OpenStreetMap contributors



Audit Route



Points on map referred to in 'Findings' section

Area context

Priory Primary School is a mainstream, state-funded primary school in Dudley, West Midlands, the school has 672 pupils and is located approximately 1.5km from Dudley Town Centre, in a 1960's building within a residential area.

The school has its main entrance on Limes Road to the south, this is a busy side road which is also a bus route. To the east is Maple Road. The northern boundary of the site is along Cedar Road with a pupil side entrance and separate kitchen delivery entrance. To the west is a footpath running through open parkland.

Priory Primary School started taking part in WOW, Living Streets year-round walk to school challenge in January 2019 with the objective of increasing active travel, reducing congestion and improving air quality around the school.

Area findings

Main School Gate (1)

The main school gate is protected from the road by fencing. Zigzags are visible on the road and the associated signage is present and clear.



Main School Gate Zigzags



Main Gate Signage

Pavement Parking (2)

Cars were parked on the pavement in several places along the route, forcing pedestrians onto the road. Limes Road has some newer houses with driveways and a single solid white line in front of the row of houses. Children and school staff reported that this is largely ignored by motorists on the school run and driveways are regularly blocked.



Pavement Parking

(3) Trees Obstructing Pavement

Trees, along the footway adjacent to the school, enhance the appearance of the area but have grown to a size where they severely restrict pedestrians on the pavement. Six of these are along Limes Road on the north footpath. The photograph shows in the most severe case, there is only 12 inches of space for pedestrians to pass. The tree roots have also severely disturbed the pavement surface.



Crossing Priory Road (4 & 5)

Priory Road is the main road which passes the east end of Limes Road, a number of children live on the other side of this road. There is a pelican crossing north of the junction and an uncontrolled refuge on the south side of it. Children on the School Route Audit said that the crossing was used by pupils coming to the school from the other side of Priory Road.



Fly Tipping (6)

There is significant fly tipping in Limes Road near the corner of Maple Road, on the site of the former Duncan Edwards public house. The fly tipping detracts from the ambiance of the area. This is exacerbated by the lack of fencing but may be eradicated if the plot is sold.



Fly Tipping – Limes Road

Road Signs (7)

School road signs are covered in algae, making them difficult to read, and would not reflect well in low light.



Algae Covered Road Signs

Cedar Road (8)

Cedar Road provides an additional pedestrian entrance to the school for pupils approaching from the north. The entrance is protected from the road by fencing and the road markings are clear.



Cedar Road Entrance

Pavement Parking Cedar Road (9)

Further pavement parking was evident along Cedar Road. This required the group undertaking the School Route Audit to pass in single file.



Further Pavement Parking

Footpath to West of School (10)

The footpath through open ground to the west of the school is in good condition and has a safe, open feel to it. The path does not link local housing to the school (Cedar Road entrance is closer) but could be used as a route for onward journeys.



Footpath to West

Restricting Gateway (11)

This gateway at the Limes Road end of the path above (10) restricts walking, pushchairs and wheelchairs in the area, particularly for ongoing journeys from the school.



Restricting Gateway

Limes Road (West of Main School Entrance) (12)

Limes Road is a bus route with traffic calming measures in the middle of the carriageway. In spite of the traffic calming, children on the School Route Audit and school staff identified speeding vehicles as an issue. Combined with illegal parking, restricted pavements and a bus stop, children in the group said “this section of the route felt chaotic”.



Limes Road

School Road Signs (13)

The school road sign on Limes Road is covered in algae to the same extent as the one in Cedar Road, making it difficult to read.



Limes Road School Sign

Sharing Findings Assemblies

ASSEMBLY

The children who took part in the School Route Audit had leading roles in two school assemblies (lower and upper) on the 16th October 2019, where they shared their findings and gathered thoughts and questions from the rest of the school.

LIVING STREETS

INTRODUCTION
Dave Hackney

WOW

- Encouraging walking, cycling and scooting to school.
- What things may be preventing active travel?
- What can be done about these things?
- School Route Audit.
- Keep you informed and let you have your say.

WHO IS INVOLVED

Bryan Batu
Emily Claverton
Emma Simons
Matthew Dixon
Regan Harrow
Miss Pease
Miss Powell
Ed Wicks (Living Streets)
Dave Hackney (Living Streets)

WHERE WE LOOKED
Emily

We walked all the roads surrounding our school.

BIG TREES – NARROW PAVEMENTS
Regan

There are some big trees which stop people being able to use the footpath.

BIG TREES – NARROW PAVEMENTS

We want to extend the pavement so people can get past.

BIG TREES – NARROW PAVEMENTS
Miss Pease

Three questions or statements:

FAST CARS
Matthew

We want the speed limit around the school to be lowered to make it safer.

FAST CARS
Miss Pease

Three questions or statements:

DIRTY SIGNS
Bryan

School road signs need cleaning.

DIRTY SIGNS
Miss Pease

Three questions or statements:

DUMPED RUBBISH
Emma

Fly tipping on the estate.

DUMPED RUBBISH
Miss Pease

Three questions or statements:

NEXT STEPS
Dave Hackney

- Use children's notes and photographs and the comments and questions from today to create a report.
- Report to be approved by the school.
- Report to be sent to Dudley Council asking for action.
- Celebrate success.

LIVING STREETS
THANK YOU

The children in the assemblies generally concurred with the findings that were presented and gave the following input.

BIG TREES - NARROW PAVEMENTS:

- Some places are better than others, but some are worse with bushes.
- Remove tree or make pavement wider.
- Path is uneven, trees are lifting it by the corner shop near Priory Park.
- We could chop the trees down.
- They are dangerous, people could help.
- Make the pavements wider.
- Staff pointed out that there were children in the school who used wheelchairs and a child who was blind. These children are particularly disadvantaged by the narrow pavements.

FAST CARS:

- Cars travel too fast on Cedar Road.
- Some drivers let children cross the road.
- Reduce speed outside school.
- Motorbikes go fast as well as cars.
- Lower the speed limit.
- What could be the lowest speed we could make the cars do?
- Have lower speed limits so cars go slower.

DIRTY SIGNS:

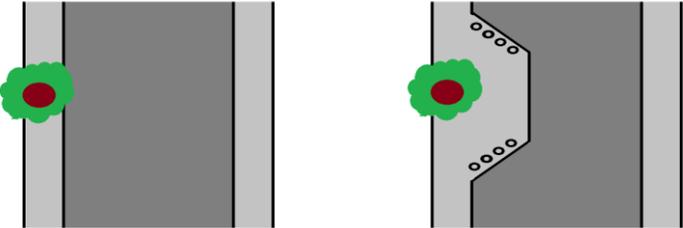
- We need a cleaner to come round every week.
- Why have they never been cleaned.
- People can't be bothered to clean them.
- Signs should be closer to the roads.
- Put up lights.
- Get school cleaners to wash them.

DUMPED RUBBISH:

- More litter bins on the estate.
- Scattered glass.
- A closer tip to the school.
- Skip for rubbish.
- Glass by bus stop.
- Have signs to stop people dropping their litter.
- Make people pick up their litter.
- Build houses on land so people can't drop their litter on wasteland.

Some of this input is reflected in the recommendations on the next page of this report.

Recommendations

Area/Issue	Recommended Action	Level of Action Quick Win/ Long Term	Responsibility/ Involvement	Recommended Deadline
Pavement Widening and Traffic Calming – Limes Road	<p>One possible solution is traffic calming measures which restrict the road width whilst at the same time widening the pavement. This would enable trees to be passed without needing to go into the road with prams, pushchairs, and wheelchairs. The illustration below shows existing blocked pavement on the left and a suggested solution to the right.</p> 	Long Term	School, Community, Dudley Council, Living Streets	September 2020

Speed Restriction	Reducing the speed limit on roads adjacent to the school (Limes Road, Maple Road, and Cedar Road) to 20mph would be a practical, cost-effective way of making the walking routes to school feel safer. A link to Living Streets' policy on 20mph Speed Limits is provided in the appendix to this document, along with a link to a fact sheet, produced by The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. It is recommended that the school progress this with Dudley Council.	Medium Term	School, Community, Dudley Council, Living Streets	March 2020
Fly Tipping and Broken Glass	<p>Fly-tipping degrades the local environment and makes the walking route to school less inviting. It is recommended that fly-tipping along Limes Road be reported to Dudley Council.</p> <p>Broken glass on the pavement is a hazard which is a direct risk to children walking to school and should be reported to Dudley City Council.</p> <p>The Link to the relevant reporting form is contained in the appendix to this document.</p>	Short Term	School, Community, Dudley Council, Living Streets	November 2019
Gate on Pathway at Junction of Limes Road	This gateway restricts walking, pushchairs and wheelchairs in the area, particularly for ongoing journeys from the school. It is recommended that the gate be replaced to be more inclusive or removed.	Medium Term	School, Dudley Council, Living Streets	March 2020
Pavement Parking	It is recommended that Dudley Council commit to occasional enforcement to act as a deterrent to pavement parking	Short Term	Dudley Council	November 2019
School Road Signs	It is recommended that Dudley Council arrange for signs to be cleaned and schedule regular cleaning in future.	Short Term	Dudley Council	November 2019
Behaviour Change	Priory Primary School should continue to use WOW to encourage behaviour change by children and parents in relation to sustainable travel to school.	Short Term	School, Living Streets	November 2019

Conclusion

Action as a result of School Route Audit for Priory Primary School

This report is being submitted to Priory Primary School, members of staff at Dudley Council and Transport for West Midlands so that recommendations can be taken on board and actions can be undertaken.

A School Route Audit was undertaken with school staff and pupils to identify any issues that may discourage families from walking to school. The observations highlighted that impassable footpaths forcing pedestrians into a fast-moving bus route road was of particular concern, as this may discourage walking.

The School is also able to use this report as a testimonial to request improvement works alone or alongside any other developments, and to help with their School Travel Plan. The School should also work to carry out action points and ensure their longevity, calling on residents and parents to help and support. Living Streets will ensure the school has the appropriate resources to run WOW until July 2020.

Appendix

Supporting Documents

LIVING STREETS POLICY ON 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/policy-and-resources/our-policy/20mph>

RoSPA 20MPH LIMIT FACT SHEET

<https://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/drivers/20-mph-zone-factsheet.pdf>

DUDLEY COUNCIL FLY TIPPING AND STREET CLEANING REPORT

<https://customer.dudley.gov.uk/gis-report/st-cleanse-grit/>

DUDLEY COUNCIL STREET SIGN MAINTENANCE

<https://customer.dudley.gov.uk/gis-report/st-maintenance-create/>