



Homefield Preparatory School

FOUNDED IN 1870

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why has the school decided to make these developments?

Like all successful schools, we regularly review our strategic options as part of our commitment to providing pupils with the best possible education. Whilst we constantly strive to develop and improve all aspects of our provision, we have for some time been frustrated from realising some of our ambitions by the inescapable constraints of some of our facilities.

When Homefield ceased to be a private proprietary school and became a charitable trust in the 1960s, scarce funds meant that the school was built on its current site with pre-fabricated accommodation, only ever designed to last a few decades. Whilst much of the school has subsequently been replaced and improved, parts of the original building remain that have come to the end of their useable life. As our 150th anniversary in 2020 draws ever closer, the time is now right for the next stage of investment in the estate to ensure consistently high quality facilities for future generations.

Q: What are the benefits of the developments?

At the heart of the developments is a desire to create an excellent learning environment that will benefit the boys for many years to come. The boys, and their teachers, will gain larger and more comfortable classrooms from the build; indeed, the whole school will enjoy improved heating and ventilation. There will be a larger hall to cater for more regular whole school assemblies and to act as a much-improved venue for music and drama performances. The development will also provide a modernised kitchen with new catering equipment, as well as a series of new music rooms for peripatetic teachers to further enhance the music provision. A new library and ICT hub will provide a great resource for the boys. The school will look and feel a place to be really proud of.

Q: How was the decision made?

The Governors and Senior Management Team have taken this decision together following a lengthy period of consideration and consultation with professionals, such as architects, with due diligence. We appointed an architectural consultant in 2018, following a robust tender process.

Q: How is this being funded?

The school has carried out detailed financial planning as part of our due diligence and the financial implications have been carefully scrutinised alongside the educational case. The funding will be through a balance of our accrued reserves and loan capital. We have exposed the financial planning to rigorous 'stress testing' over both the short and medium term, in order to mitigate risk and plan the scope of the build accordingly. We do not plan on passing on costs to parents by following this pathway.

The total cost for the building programme is approximately £6M, with around $\frac{2}{3}$ from reserves and $\frac{1}{3}$ from a bank loan. The school has no other loans and owns the freehold to our land. We are in a very good financial position. We have been careful with capital expenditure for the last decade, so that we could be in the position to complete these works to a good quality and with confidence.

Q: How long will it all take?

The programme is multi-staged with construction carefully organised in clear phases to limit any disruption. We expect to complete all phases of the work within 30 months.

Q: How will this affect my son?

We have purposefully adopted an innovative phased approach to minimise the inconvenience to boys. This means that the school will remain usable throughout the programme and we will not require any temporary accommodation.

Q: How many pupils will there be in the school in the future?

Homefield has always been a close-knit community and we intend for this important feature of our school to remain. The school currently provides up to three forms of entry per year and we do not intend to expand this capacity as part of these plans.

With its new classrooms and enhanced provision, the school will move to provide three forms of entry in Reception. By doing so we can keep class sizes down and focus on quality outcomes and our specialist provision for boys. By utilising and adapting the existing Nursery space into an additional Reception class we can provide against the growing demand for entry into the Homefield Preparatory School's Junior Department and then on to our Senior Department.

Q: Will class sizes go up?

We are committed to maintaining the small classes and individual attention, which are a hallmark of Homefield.

Q: Will this change the school's aims, ethos and values?

We cannot stress strongly enough that the much-loved aims, ethos and values will remain unchanged. We know from talking to parents that our family atmosphere and safe and happy environment is highly valued. Confident, courteous children with a sense of civic and community responsibility will continue to be an integral part of Homefield long into the future.

Q: How will this impact on academic standards and results?

A real strength of our school lies in helping boys fulfill their individual potential and achieve academic success. This project is about providing an even better learning environment for the boys' learning journey with us, thus helping them to achieve the very best results of which they are capable.

Q: What will this mean for the school's green spaces and outdoor play areas?

We understand the importance of green spaces on well-being and learning. Having plenty of room to play outside and let off steam throughout the day is vital to growing boys. Rest assured that our green land and outdoor space will be carefully conserved throughout the development to ensure that the boys still have the same amount of space to play and relax. The plan will realise an increase of green space of around 10% compared to current.

Q: How will sports be affected?

Boys are fortunate enough to have access to our indoor PE hall as well as local sporting facilities for cricket, hockey and rugby. The use of all these facilities will continue as normal throughout the development, meaning sport will remain a strong feature of Homefield throughout the works. We already have use of Sutton Cricket Ground which we have leased for many years. We will also have a pitch on site, as we will not need to use 'porta cabins' within our phased approach.

Q: What about the extra-curricular provision, how will that be affected?

The extra-curricular provision contributes greatly to the stimulating and inspiring environment at Homefield and provides many additional opportunities for the boys to shine. Our existing programme of activities and clubs will remain in place throughout the development; the provision will only be strengthened by the additional opportunities the enhanced facilities will provide on completion. Should we need to make any room or timing changes during the build, we will let parents know ahead.

Q: How will pastoral care be affected?

Pastoral care has always been a great strength of the school and the well-established tutorial and house systems will continue. Maintaining our happy, caring, family feel is very important to us; staff will ensure that the boys are safe and well looked after during the building development.

Q: Will there be an impact on the learning environment?

Today's exceptionally high standards will remain in place. Careful phasing will ensure that the impact of the development is kept to an absolute minimum.

Q: Will this move have any impact on fees?

We are committed to providing excellent value for money and do not intend the development programme to impact on fees.

Q: How will you manage the build (safeguarding, disruptions, noise, dirt, etc.)?

The boys' safety will always be our driving force. We have selected a building company with extensive experience of working with schools and conforming to all necessary safeguarding standards. Disruption noise and dirt will be kept to a minimum in term time and any work that may cause disruption will be scheduled for school holidays. The Governing Body has formed an overview committee and day-by-day checks will be implemented by our site team. We will have rigorous external quality control and checks throughout via our architectural consultants.

During the initial phases of the planning we have undertaken extensive surveying of the existing building structure, the surrounding ground, utility supply lines and invasive surveys to check for asbestos. We have found no issues that should cause delay or concern.

Q: How will this impact pick up and drop off?

We are very conscious of the demands on busy parents and have given careful consideration to keeping pick up and drop off as smooth as possible for as long as possible. It will only be when work starts on the front of the school that we will look to provide alternative arrangements. The school has a green travel plan established to encourage sustainable travel.

Q: How will you safeguard the school's traditions?

Just as Homefield's traditions were upheld when we moved to our current site in the 1960s, so they will remain strong as we start to enjoy our new facilities in time for our 150th anniversary celebrations in 2020.

Q: Why was this news not shared sooner?

It is the Headmaster's and Governors' responsibility, as custodians of Homefield for future generations, to set the future strategic direction of the school. Our plans needed to be researched, finalised and agreed before they could be shared. We are delighted to be in a position to share this good news now that planning permission is in place from the local authority.

Q: How will staff be affected?

Having a talented, motivated and passionate staff has always been a central tenet of Homefield. There will be no changes to staffing as a result of the developments.

Q: What about the school pavilion kindly donated by the Homefield Parents' Association?

We remain very grateful to the Homefield Parents' Association for all they do for the school. We will ensure the much-loved pavilion is protected throughout the works. As part of the redevelopment, it will be carefully relocated to a sunnier spot to allow for even greater use in future.

Q: When will detailed plans be made available?

We have shared our detailed plans with you on the 10th June and will be kept regularly informed of any updates.

Q: Who can I talk to if I still have questions?

Mr Towers, Headmaster, and Mr Harper, Bursar, are available if you have any questions. We also have colleagues from our architects at the launch event who you are welcome to talk to.