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Striving for **Excellence**  
**Empowering** Achievement  
Shaping **Learning**

**CEO:** Rebecca Scutt BSc (Hons), PGCE

**Chair:** John Barton

13<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **ACET Trust Board response to the public consultation regarding Listerdale Primary Academy – Change of Capacity from 315 to 420.**

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all parents and carers who took the time to respond to the recent public consultation regarding the intended application to the Department for Education to increase the academy's capacity from 315 to 420 pupils. Your feedback is incredibly valuable and plays an important role in helping us ensure that any future developments reflect the needs and views of the Listerdale Academy community. We are grateful for your engagement, thoughtful comments, and continued support.

The Trust received 40 responses to the consultation. This reflects approximately 11% of the current pupil population (FS1-Y6) and of the 40 responses, 10% of respondents supported the expansion, valuing the academy's growing reputation and welcoming plans for an additional sports hall. All concerns have been summarised below and a response from the ACET Trust Board has been provided.

#### **Traffic, parking, academy gates, road safety, air quality, pollution, and environmental and neighbourhood impact**

Parents describe the current traffic situation as dangerous, with gridlock on narrow residential streets, cars mounting pavements, and no safe crossing point for children. Parking is extremely limited, residents block spaces with bins, and disabled access is poor. The steep hill and narrow pavements make walking difficult, especially with pushchairs or mobility needs. Many fear emergency vehicles cannot reach the academy during peak times. Parents believe increasing pupil numbers will significantly worsen congestion, pollution, and safety risks.

Several respondents raise concerns about idling engines, traffic fumes, and poor air quality at the academy gate. They note the absence of signage, reminders, or enforcement to reduce pollution. The main road has no speed-reduction measures or traffic calming. Some worry that increased hall use outside academy hours will add further pressure. Parents state that increasing pupil numbers without addressing environmental health risks will worsen an already unhealthy situation for children.

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Local residents and parents highlight the strain on surrounding streets, including blocked driveways, bins used to reserve parking spaces, and increased litter. The steep hill and lack of gritting in winter create additional hazards. Residents feel the academy's growth is already affecting their quality of life and fear expansion will intensify these issues.

Parents express concern about dogs being brought to the academy gate, creating anxiety for some children and adding to congestion. There is no clear policy or designated area for dogs. Combined with already cramped entrance space, families fear this will become unmanageable with more pupils.

#### **Trust response:**

*We recognise that the current situation around traffic, parking, and environmental impact is challenging and requires coordinated action.*

*We acknowledge the risks caused by congestion on narrow streets, cars mounting pavements, and the lack of a safe crossing point. We will work with Highways, the Local Authority, and road safety partners to review traffic flow, explore traffic-calming measures, and ensure emergency access is protected.*

*Parking pressures, blocked driveways, and unsafe behaviours are affecting both families and residents. We will work with Highways to assess options such as designated drop-off areas, and improved enforcement. Winter safety on the steep hill will also be raised with council teams.*

*Concerns about idling engines, fumes, and poor air quality are well-founded. We will work with Highways and Environmental Health to assess air quality, introduce anti-idling signage and communication campaigns, and explore safer, cleaner travel options, including walking buses and staggered start/finish times.*

*We recognise the strain on surrounding streets, including litter, blocked access, and increased activity from academy and hall use. We will strengthen expectations around respectful behaviour and explore ways to reduce pressure on the immediate area.*

*We will work with the academy to develop a clear policy on dogs on or near the site and identify a safer, designated waiting area to reduce congestion and anxiety for children.*

*We take these concerns seriously and will commit to working closely with Highways, the Local Authority, and the community to ensure that any future changes are safe, sustainable, and considerate of the neighbourhood.*

#### **Class size, staffing levels, educational quality, and SEND provision**

Large cohorts—especially the 60-pupil FS2 group—are already overwhelming staff, reducing individual attention and affecting behaviour management. Parents report children being overlooked, quieter pupils not being supported, and inconsistent reading routines, with some children receiving the same book for weeks or only four books since September. Staff absences and lack of cover exacerbate the issue. Many believe teachers are doing their best but cannot meet children's needs with current numbers, and expansion without increased staffing will further reduce educational quality.

Parents raise issues about limited reading opportunities, lack of phonics updates, inconsistent progress monitoring, and insufficient recognition of achievements. They fear expansion will further reduce the academy's ability to deliver high-quality teaching.

Parents of FS2 children report that the environment feels overcrowded, noisy, and overwhelming for young learners. Some children arrive distressed and are not acknowledged promptly because staff are stretched. Issues include missed lunch checks, lack of emotional support, and inconsistent routines. Parents feel the early years' experience has declined as numbers have increased and that young children are not receiving the nurturing, individualised attention they need.

Parents are concerned that SEND support will be diluted if capacity increases, questioning whether additional funding, staffing, and specialist provision will be provided. They highlight that SEND learners already struggle to access consistent support and that the physical environment—narrow pavements, uneven surfaces, and crowded spaces—creates barriers for children with mobility or sensory needs. Families want clarity on how SEND provision will be strengthened before any expansion is approved.

**Trust response:**

*We recognise the issues raised around class size, staffing capacity, educational quality, and SEND provision, and we are committed to addressing them.*

*We acknowledge that where we have larger classes, this places extra challenges on staff. Staff absence has also added to this challenge. Working with the Leadership Team at Listerdale, we will review staffing levels and cover arrangements and ensure any future expansion is matched with appropriate staffing and resources.*

*If the academy's capacity is not increased to 420, the class structure would need to be organised around mixed-age classes of up to 30 pupils in order to ensure that funding aligns with the staffing levels and resources required.*

*By increasing the academy's capacity, our intention is to avoid the need for mixed-age classes and instead maintain single year-group classes. It may take several years for the academy's pupil population to grow to 420, so class sizes are not expected to increase significantly beyond their current levels during this period.*

*Parents have highlighted that FS2 can feel overcrowded and overwhelming for young children. We understand the need for a calm, nurturing early years setting. The Foundation building, built to accommodate FS1 and FS2, has capacity for over 80 children. There are currently 60 pupils across FS2 and no FS1 children within this building. However, considering your concerns, we will support the academy to:*

- *Review FS2 layout, routines, and staffing*
- *Review arrival and lunchtime processes*
- *Review how pupil well-being is supported*

*We recognise concerns about the capacity and consistency of SEND support, as well as the suitability of the physical environment for children with mobility or sensory needs. Any expansion of provision would come with increased funding and staffing levels. Our role is to support the academy in ensuring that any expansion is underpinned by appropriate funding and resources. We will also ensure that the SENDCo and Leadership Team continue to work closely*

*with the Site Team to maintain a fully accessible environment and ensure the site remains compliant with all relevant legislation.*

*We take these concerns seriously. We will work with academy leaders and families to ensure that any future changes protect educational quality, strengthen staffing capacity, and enhance SEND provision.*

### **Academy infrastructure, buildings, and site condition**

Responses highlight visible deterioration, such as paint peeling from the hall ceiling, and a lack of intervention spaces, cool-down rooms, and storage. The entrance can become congested, and the single barrier restricts movement. Potholes, uneven pavements, and narrow walkways pose risks to families. Parents question whether the site can safely accommodate more pupils without significant upgrades.

#### **Trust response:**

*We recognise the issues highlighted regarding the condition of the academy site, the suitability of the current buildings, and the capacity of the infrastructure to support additional pupils. Any deterioration, including peeling paint in the key areas of the academy, will be assessed by the Site Team. Uneven pavements, potholes, if posing a safety risk will be raised as issues with the council. Repairs will be prioritised that affect safety and accessibility on the academy site.*

*Parents have raised concerns about congestion at the entrance, limited storage, and the lack of intervention spaces and calm-down rooms. We understand how these constraints affect both learning and daily routines. The ramp, with railing, is required at the main entrance so that it is accessible for all. The layout of the main entrance offices is currently under review. We will support the academy in assessing the use of internal spaces to increase flexibility for interventions and support. We are committed to ensure that any growth is supported by appropriate investment in buildings and infrastructure. A second hall is vital for the smooth day-day operation of the academy.*

### **Concerns about the consultation process**

Several respondents state that the proposal lacks essential information about when improvements will happen, how they will be funded, who is responsible, and how progress will be monitored. They fear expansion could be approved before solutions are in place, leaving families to cope with immediate negative impacts while improvements take years. Parents want a transparent, costed, time-bound plan before any decision is made.

Some parents feel the consultation materials are incomplete or misleading and worry that the process may be a “paper exercise” rather than genuine engagement. They question whether their concerns will be taken seriously.

#### **Trust response:**

*We recognise the concerns raised about the level of information provided and the request for greater clarity and transparency. No expansion will proceed without a clear plan in place.*

*This consultation is genuine, and all feedback is being taken seriously. The views shared will directly inform next steps and decision-making at Trust Board level. We are committed to an open, honest, and meaningful consultation. We will continue to share information, respond to*

*concerns, and ensure that families have a full understanding of the proposals before any decisions are taken.*

Some comments which, while not directly related to the expansion, have been passed to the Leadership Team to address. Those included:

### **Communication, leadership, and parent engagement**

Many parents describe communication as inconsistent, last-minute, or unclear, often relying on children to relay important information. They feel there is little meaningful feedback on progress, especially in KS1, and limited recognition of children's achievements. Some parents find staff unapproachable and feel leadership has not addressed ongoing issues. Concerns include poor coordination of events, lack of updates, and minimal parent-teacher interaction.

Thank you once again for your engagement with the consultation. The Board has carefully considered all responses and has decided to proceed with an application for a significant change to the funding agreement to increase pupil capacity. This application is subject to approval by the Department for Education, and we anticipate a decision prior to July 2026. If approved, the increase in capacity would take effect from September 2026. We will, of course, keep parents informed and communicate the outcome as soon as a decision has been made.

In the meantime, the design and planning for the additional hall space is underway. The Principal and Local Governing Body will play an active role in shaping the proposals and will ensure that parents, carers and pupils are kept informed and given opportunities to contribute as initial plans develop and begin to take shape.

Yours sincerely,



John Barton  
Chair of Trustees



Rebecca Scutt  
CEO