

Planning Representation

Application Reference: 143452/F0/2025

Site: Westwood Nursing Home, 69 Crumpsall Lane, Manchester M8 5SR

Prepared by: [REDACTED]

**Proposal: Change of use from care home (Class C2)
to primary school (Class F1), with minor external
alterations, associated parking, access, boundary
treatment and play space**

Date: 31 July 2026



Introduction and Context

I have reviewed the full suite of application documents, the Planning Committee Report prepared by the case officer (Steven McCoombe), the consultation responses published on the Council's planning portal (87 representations as of late July 2026), the views of the three Crumpsall Ward Members, and the statutory consultee responses.

The application was originally scheduled for the 9 July 2026 Planning Committee. The officer report of that date recorded only 10 representations (9 objections and 1 neutral) plus Ward Member concerns. Subsequent public comments have risen to 87. The committee date has been deferred (portal currently shows 6 August 2026). This deferral is appropriate and allows the later representations to be properly considered.

Summary of the Proposal

The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the vacant former Westwood Nursing Home (authorised Class C2, 19 bedrooms) at 69 Crumpsall Lane to an independent two-form-entry primary school falling within Class F1. The building has a gross internal floor area of approximately 652 m². Early-years classrooms and dedicated play space would occupy the ground floor; general teaching classrooms and 1:1 support rooms would be located on the upper floors. Staff accommodation, administrative offices and WCs are distributed throughout.

Chestnut House care home ceased to operate around 26 February 2025, and is currently showing on the CQC website as archived, further information can be seen on the CQC website (<https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-126288055/registration-info>).

The school would be operated by Binas Yisachar (Belz School), an established private educational provider currently in its fifth year of operation. It specialises in the education of children with special educational needs and maintains a strict maximum class size of 20 pupils. The proposal involves the relocation of only the primary provision from the existing Belz School site in Salford, approximately 1.8 km to the north. Initial occupancy would be 60 pupils, rising to a maximum of 120. Staffing levels would mirror the existing school

(approximately 40 staff in total), with no more than 20 staff present on site at any one time; staff would work across both locations as required.

External works to accommodate the change of use are limited: two new access points (a new door replacing a front window on Crumpsall Lane and a new side entrance), 2.4-metre-high weldmesh perimeter fencing for security, reconfiguration of the existing front hardstanding for drop-off/pick-up, staff/visitor parking to the rear of No. 69, and outdoor play space to the rear (including part of the garden of the adjoining No. 67, which is in the same ownership and proposed for ancillary school use under a separate application). The existing in/out vehicular access from Crumpsall Lane would be retained.

The site lies at the corner of Crumpsall Lane and the residential cul-de-sac of Ansleigh Avenue. It is opposite Crumpsall Metrolink station, close to a small commercial parade and The Cleveland public house, and within a predominantly residential area characterised by a mix of two- and three-storey properties. An extant permission exists for conversion of the building to 10 residential apartments.

Overview of Public Representations

As of the latest portal extract, 87 representations have been received.

- Approximately 70–75 are objections.
- Approximately 12–15 are expressions of support (almost exclusively from current staff, managers and parents of the existing Belz School).
- A very small number are neutral or ambiguous.

The original officer report summarised the first 10 responses (9 objections + 1 neutral) together with the collective concerns of the three Ward Members (Councillors Ali, Riasat and Amin). The later comments largely reiterate and expand upon the same themes, with a particularly high volume of near-identical template objections focusing on the consultation process.

3.1 Principal Themes of Objection

Every distinct concern raised across the representations and the officer report can be grouped as follows:

A. Consultation and notification process

Many residents state they only became aware of the application very recently (some claim “last week” or “today”), that no letters, leaflets or site notices were received, and that they have been denied a meaningful opportunity to comment before a committee decision. Several request deferral specifically on process grounds. This is the single most frequently repeated complaint in the later comments.

B. Traffic generation, congestion and highway safety

Crumpsall Lane is already congested (existing school, Metrolink station and park-and-ride, recent traffic-light works, hospital route).

Drop-off and pick-up periods will generate concentrated vehicle movements, queuing on the main road, informal short-term parking near the junction, obstruction of driveways, compromised visibility splays and increased risk to pedestrians and cyclists.

Ansleigh Avenue is a narrow residential cul-de-sac not designed for school-related traffic intensity; existing on-street parking already restricts access (including for refuse vehicles).

Cumulative impact with nearby schools (Crumpsall Lane Primary, King David, Abraham Moss and others).

Limited access geometry (one vehicle in/out at a time) will cause queuing onto Crumpsall Lane.

Potential obstruction of emergency vehicles travelling to North Manchester General Hospital.

Existing bus stops near the Station Road junction already create near-misses; the proposal will exacerbate the problem.

Air-quality impacts from idling vehicles.

C. Parking pressure and overspill

Insufficient dedicated on-site parking for staff, visitors and drop-off will lead to overspill onto surrounding residential streets, pavement parking, blocked driveways and competition with Metrolink park-and-ride and hospital workers. Recent introduction of double-yellow lines is cited as evidence of existing problems that will worsen.

D. Noise, disturbance and residential amenity

Outdoor play noise (daily and at weekends) will constitute a substantial and ongoing intrusion into neighbouring homes and gardens. The introduction of an institutional use operating seven days a week represents a harmful change to the quiet residential character of the cul-de-sac. Privacy, general activity levels and quality of life for elderly and disabled residents are also raised.

E. Character, appearance and visual impact

The proposed 2.4 m weldmesh security fence is described as visually intrusive, out of character and harmful to the street scene. The overall intensity of use is said to be incompatible with the predominantly residential character of the area.

F. Need and site justification

Objectors question the need for a further school given the proximity of King David Primary (reportedly reducing intake), Crumpsall Lane Primary, Abraham Moss and other schools. Some argue that limited evidence has been provided to justify this particular location or to demonstrate that alternative sites were properly considered. A minority of comments express concern about the faith-based nature of the school and its potential impact on the multi-cultural character of the area.

G. Other matters

Adequacy of play space, impact on refuse collection, litter, and claims that the decision appears pre-determined (e.g., sudden appearance of double-yellow lines).

3.2 Support Representations

The support comments, largely from individuals with direct experience of the existing Belz School, emphasise:

- A. Low car ownership among the parent and staff body (linked to religious and lifestyle factors).
- B. High proportions of walking and school-bus travel.
- C. Staggered arrival and departure times (breakfast club spreads arrivals over approximately 45 minutes; afternoon collections are age-staggered).
- D. Calm, well-managed operation and positive behaviour of pupils.
- E. Genuine educational need within the community served by the school.

These representations provide useful real-world context for the travel-survey data submitted with the application.

Assessment of the Material Planning Issues

4.1 Principle of Development

The site is previously developed land. The proposal re-uses an existing building that is currently vacant. Core Strategy Policy EC1 supports education facilities as significant contributors to economic growth and productivity. The National Planning Policy Framework attaches great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

The school is independent and will not form part of the Council's statutory school-place planning or basic-need provision. Education officers have confirmed that the Authority has no intention to commission or fund places. This is a material consideration: the proposal is not required to demonstrate that it meets a shortfall in mainstream places, but rather that it is acceptable in land-use and amenity terms.

The extant permission for 10 apartments represents a realistic fallback. A care-home use would generate its own pattern of staff, visitor and service vehicle movements. The change to a managed educational use of modest scale is not inherently unacceptable in principle.

4.2 Highway Impact, Traffic and Parking

The Transport Statement is based on a “hands-up” travel survey of the existing Belz School. Highways Services have accepted the survey methodology and results. The data show a strong sustainable travel profile:

- Approximately 50 % of pupils travel by school bus.
- Almost one-third walk, cycle or use public transport.
- Around 13 % travel by multi-occupancy car.
- Only 5 % travel by single-occupancy car.

Staff travel patterns are similarly sustainable (approximately 60 % walk, cycle or use public transport).

At the maximum capacity of 120 pupils, and after accounting for breakfast and after-school clubs, the forecast is 22 two-way pupil vehicle movements in both the AM and PM peaks. Including staff (maximum 20 on site at any one time, with very low car use), total two-way trips are estimated at 31 in the AM peak and 36 in the PM peak. When the former care-home use is taken into account, the net figures fall to 29 (AM) and 27 (PM). These levels sit below the threshold that would normally trigger a more detailed highway assessment and are considered acceptable by Highways.

Swept-path analysis has demonstrated that vehicles can safely access and manoeuvre within the site. The existing in/out arrangement on Crumpsall Lane is to be retained for the managed drop-off facility; staff and visitor parking is proposed to the rear.

Highways raise no objection in principle, subject to a series of detailed requirements:

- Further engineering details for the Ansleigh Avenue access (width, visibility splays and supporting swept-path analysis).
- Relocation of the existing 20 mph speed limit further west to encompass the site.
- Review of Traffic Regulation Orders in the vicinity, including the introduction of double-yellow lines along the site frontage on Crumpsall Lane and parking restrictions near the accesses to protect visibility and prevent inappropriate drop-off/pick-up.
- Submission and implementation of a robust Drop-Off / Pick-Up Management Strategy (including school-bus arrangements and traffic marshalling).

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- Staff supervision of pedestrian and cycle access on Ansleigh Avenue during peak periods.
 - Provision of 14 secure, covered cycle parking spaces, with monitoring of demand through the School Travel Plan and a mechanism to provide additional capacity if required.

These measures directly address the core concerns about queuing on Crumpsall Lane, overspill parking, visibility, pedestrian safety and pressure on the narrow cul-de-sac of Ansleigh Avenue. The low absolute trip generation, combined with the proposed management regime and Traffic Regulation Orders, provides a sound basis for concluding that residual highway impacts can be kept within acceptable limits.

Claims that the school will attract a predominantly car-borne catchment from a wide area are not supported by the existing school's travel data. The support representations from current staff and parents consistently corroborate the survey findings: the majority of families do not own cars, arrivals are staggered, and the operation is calm and well-managed.

Cumulative impact with other local schools is a legitimate consideration. However, the modest scale of this particular proposal and the proposed mitigation mean it is unlikely to tip the local network into unacceptable conditions.

4.3 Noise, Disturbance and Residential Amenity

The introduction of outdoor play and a more intensive pattern of activity into a quiet residential setting is a genuine amenity concern, particularly for properties adjoining the proposed play areas and for residents of Ansleigh Avenue.

Environmental Health have requested conditions controlling opening hours, servicing hours, acoustic insulation, external plant equipment, waste management and electric-vehicle charging. The officer report recommends:

- Restricted hours of operation (the draft condition in the report limits the use to 08:00–18:00 Monday–Thursday, 08:00–13:00 on Fridays and Sundays, and no operation on Saturdays).

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- A Playground Management Plan covering hours of use and a procedure for reporting and resolving complaints.
 - Acoustic insulation of the building to limit noise break-out.
 - Plant noise limits set at 5 dB below typical background levels at the nearest noise-sensitive locations, with verification reporting.
 - A specific noise impact assessment for the rear playground areas, together with any identified mitigation (for example acoustic fencing), again with verification.

These controls, if imposed and enforced, will substantially reduce the potential for unacceptable noise and disturbance. The weekend restriction in particular addresses one of the most frequently raised amenity objections. The maximum pupil number of 120 is also recommended to be secured by condition, providing a further safeguard against intensification.

4.4 Character, Appearance and Boundary Treatment

The proposed 2.4 m weldmesh fencing is functional and necessary for school security. Greater Manchester Police (Design for Security) have raised no objection in principle and consider the perimeter security well thought-out; they recommend Secure by Design standards, comprehensive CCTV covering external spaces and entrances, and a monitored intruder alarm with response and panic facility.

A condition requiring full details of all boundary treatments (including any acoustic fencing and the means of separating No. 67 from the remainder of the site) will allow the Council to ensure the final design is as visually acceptable as possible within the constraints of security requirements. Soft landscaping and replacement tree planting are also secured by condition. The external alterations to the building itself are minor and do not harm the character of the host property or the wider street scene.

4.5 Need and Alternative Sites

Objectors and Ward Members question the need for an additional school given the presence of other schools in the locality and reports that King David Primary is reducing its intake.

Because the proposal is for an independent specialist school that will not contribute to the Council's statutory place planning, the conventional "basic need" test does not apply in the same way. The provider is already operating successfully and is relocating its primary provision from a constrained existing site. The educational benefits of small class sizes and specialised SEN provision are material considerations that attract weight under national policy.

The existence of mainstream or other faith schools nearby does not automatically render this proposal unnecessary or unacceptable. Alternative-site arguments carry limited weight where the chosen site is itself acceptable in planning terms (as the officer assessment concludes it is, subject to conditions).

It should also be noted that in the Belz community who are strictly orthodox, have a different way of educating the children and the syllabus differs from other modern orthodox schools.

4.6 Consultation Process

The volume of later comments asserting inadequate notification is notable. The formal consultation process followed the Council's standard procedures. The original 10 responses and the Ward Member comments were received and reported. The subsequent surge of representations (many of them template-based) demonstrates that the community has in practice had extensive opportunity to comment. The deferral of the committee date further ensures that all views can be taken into account.

While early and thorough neighbour notification is always desirable, procedural shortcomings (if any) do not in themselves constitute a reason for refusal on planning merits once the substantive issues have been fully aired and assessed.

Also, the nature of objections do not seem to have material planning consideration further than what is noted in the officers report.

Policy Assessment

The proposal has been assessed against the following key policies:

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- Manchester Core Strategy: SP1 (Spatial Principles), DM1 (Development Management), EC1 (Employment and Economic Growth), T1 and T2 (Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need), EN8 (Adaptation to Climate Change), EN9 (Green Infrastructure), EN14 (Flood Risk), EN16 (Air Quality), EN19 (Waste).
 - Saved Unitary Development Plan Policy DC26 (Development and Noise).
 - Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan: JP-S1 (Sustainable Development), JP-P1 (Sustainable Places) and related transport and place-making policies.

The development re-uses previously developed land, is highly accessible by public transport (Metrolink station directly opposite), promotes sustainable travel modes, and can be made acceptable in amenity and highway terms through the recommended conditions. It therefore accords with the development plan when read as a whole.

Recommended Conditions and Further Safeguards

The officer report already contains a comprehensive suite of conditions that address the majority of the concerns raised. The key conditions cover:

- Restricted hours of operation.
- Traffic Management Plan for drop-off and collection (including school-bus arrangements and marshalling), with monitoring and review.
- Car Park Management Plan.
- Highway works scheme (TRO with double-yellow lines, review of existing TROs, extension of 20 mph limit, dropped kerb and tactile paving).
- Swept-path analysis confirming safe access and manoeuvring.
- Travel Plan (initial and revised within six months based on actual travel patterns), with cycle-parking monitoring.
- Staff car parking laid out and retained for exclusive use.
- Playground Management Plan.
- Acoustic insulation of the building, plant noise limits, and specific playground noise assessment plus mitigation.
- Maximum of 120 pupils.

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- Boundary treatment details (including any acoustic fencing).
 - Security measures (CCTV etc.).
 - Waste management, lighting, landscaping/trees, biodiversity net gain, electric-vehicle charging, and other standard requirements.

These conditions, if imposed and properly enforced, provide a robust framework for controlling residual impacts. Additional refinements that the Committee may wish to consider include:

- Explicit requirement for staggered arrival and departure windows to be maintained.
- Prohibition on parent drop-off via Ansleigh Avenue (forcing all vehicular drop-off through the managed Crumpsall Lane facility).
- Post-occupation independent monitoring of traffic and noise, with a trigger mechanism for further mitigation if thresholds are exceeded.
- Enhanced specification for acoustic fencing along residential boundaries.

Overall Planning Balance and Conclusion

The proposal involves the re-use of a vacant previously developed site for a modest-scale independent specialist primary school. The educational benefits, the sustainable travel profile demonstrated by the existing school, and the high accessibility of the location attract significant weight.

The concerns raised by residents and Ward Members regarding traffic, parking, noise and character are legitimate and must be taken seriously. However, the evidence base (particularly the accepted travel survey and the low absolute trip generation) and the comprehensive suite of conditions recommended by officers demonstrate that residual impacts can be kept within acceptable limits.

The later surge of public comments has ensured that all material issues have been fully aired. The deferral of the committee date is appropriate.

On balance, and subject to the imposition of the recommended conditions (with any refinements the Committee considers necessary), the proposal is considered acceptable in planning terms. There is no overriding reason for refusal.

I therefore recommend that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out in the officer report and any additional safeguards identified above.