



safer roads for everyone

**Foxtton Primary School, Gallow Field Road,
Market Harborough, Leicestershire**

School Route Safety Assessment

on behalf of David Hickie

TMS reference no: 1790

Date: 2nd September 2022

Foxton Primary School, Gallow Field Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire

School Route Safety Assessment

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Concerns have been raised following the proposals to build a new prison in the vicinity of Foxton Primary School. With expected increase in traffic flows, this could affect the school morning drop off and afternoon pick up, including the safe passage of children attending the school and the general traffic management around the school. TMS Consultancy have therefore been commissioned to undertake an independent Safety Assessment of these concerns.
- 1.2 This report describes a Safety Assessment carried out for the main roads linking to the school, including pedestrian accessibility on local footpaths.
- 1.3 The Safety Assessment was carried out by:

Lee Williams – BSc (Hons), MIHE
Highways England Approved RSA Certificate of Competency
Principal Engineer, TMS Consultancy
- 1.4 Information provided for the assessment is listed in **Appendix A** of this report and an annotated plan of the issues raised is included in **Appendix B**.
- 1.5 There are currently no draft plans or scheme design for the school in relation to the new prison development. This Safety Assessment will look at the existing highway layout for Foxton Primary School and will identify safety problems and potential improvement recommendations which will also include the following issues:
 1. Is there currently a safe walking route to school from Gartree village?
 2. Would an increase in 2-way traffic count from 300 to 400 cars at peak school time have safety implications? This would be an increase of 33%.



Client: David Hickie

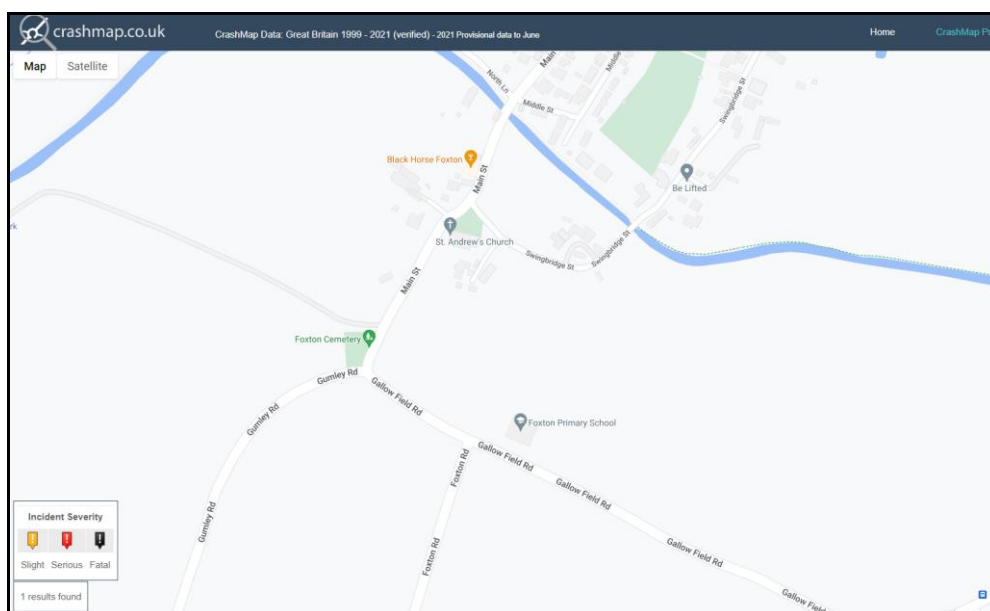
Scheme: Foxton Primary School, Gallow Field Road, Market Harborough, Leics

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3. Is dropping children off in Swingbridge Street a suitable mitigation plan? This would include a widened footpath of an existing public rights of way which links near to the schools on Gallow Field Road. Parents could park north of the school on a minor road and walk for approximately 10 minutes.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 TMS staff are all experienced and qualified to carry out road safety audits, risk assessments and transport-related safety assessments.
- 2.2 The assessment has been carried out using engineering judgement based on the assessor's experience in risk assessment and collisions analysis.
- 2.3 The site was visited by Lee Williams on Thursday 1st September 2022 between 8:30am and 9:30am. This was to observe the main morning school drop off. The weather was sunny and dry. Pedestrian flows were high. Traffic flows were moderate to high in the vicinity of the school. Cycle flows were low, where no children / parents were observed cycling to school.
- 2.4 Site observations and notes of the geometry of the roads were taken and the surrounding area was photographed. Note, for privacy reasons, the photos were taken when children were no longer present and had entered the school. Following the site survey, the information available has been reviewed with recommendations to improve road safety, focussing on safety issues.
- 2.5 From Crashmap UK, there have been no recorded injury collisions within proximity of the school in a 5-year period September 2017 to 2022, as illustrated below:



2.6 Reference has also been made to the following documents:

- Assessment of Walked Routes to School, Road Safety GB
- Designing for walking, cycling and horse-riding, Design Manual for Roads and Bridges; CD143 Rev 2
- Manual for Streets, DfT and Communities and Local Government
- Manual for Streets 2, CIHT
- Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot, IHT
- Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20)
- Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 -Setting Local Speed Limits
- The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016

3. Description of Site/ Route

3.1 The school

Foxton Primary is a small KS1 and KS2 school, servicing the village of Foxton along with a larger catchment area covering the settlements of Gartree, Gumley and Greenacres travellers' site. Numbers go up and down each year, but of the 90 or so children at the school, approximately 30 live in Foxton. Most of the others live in surrounding villages but a few come from further away.

School hours are 8.55am to 3.20pm. There's a breakfast club and an after-school club; the extended times are 8am to 5.15pm.

The school is on the top of a hill beyond the southern edge of Foxton village located on a single carriageway road. There were two dropped crossing points either side of the school entrance with footway sections on both the north and south sides.

There is one entrance to the school onto Gallow Field Road. There are three ways of accessing the school:

- Parking directly outside the school on the main road
- Via a footpath from Swingbridge Street in Foxton that leads directly to the school. The footpath is a public right of way (known as A22)
- Via a footway on Gallow Field Road that leads from the school heading east to the village of Gartree (approximately 0.5miles distance). The footway is on the south side of the carriageway with a verge separation, so parents and children need to cross the road to access the school.

From the site visit, the following items were noted:

3.2 Traffic volume and composition

The traffic along Gallow Field Road was moderate to high as expected for the peak morning school drop off. One bus utilised the route during the school run and a small number of HGV's were observed turning at the priority junction near the school from Foxton Road. A number of children and parents were observed walking the route from both the east and west sides of the school.

3.3 Traffic movements and trends

The majority of parents dropping off their children at the school parked their vehicles on the north side of Gallow Field Road either side of the main school entrance with some contravening the school zig-zag markings and others parking across white painted H-bar markings at the east side dropped crossing point. This created a continuous block of parked vehicles effectively narrowing Gallow Fields Road to a single lane carriageway for over a 100metre length. Through traffic therefore had to give and take for opposing traffic flows.



Parked cars outside school narrowing carriageway to one lane

There was also a parking area on the wide verge extents on Foxton Road where some parents also chose to park.

3.4 **Speed limit**

The speed limits for Gallow Fields Lane and Foxton Road were national speed limit (60mph). An informal temporary 20mph zone (not legally enforceable) was also signed on each approach to the school and along Foxton Road. Flashing amber warning lights were also present on Gallow Fields Lane but not on Foxton Road. Only the eastern sign was in operation during the school drop off period.

Vehicle speeds were observed to be low but in excess of the informal 20mph zone. It was noted that no speed reducing / traffic calming features were present in the vicinity of the school.

3.5 **Availability of street lighting**

The school site and surrounding roads were all unlit.

3.6 **Road, footway, footpath geometry and condition**

Gallow Field Road and Foxton Road carriageways were standard rural roads approximately 5.5m wide with a priority junction at Foxton Road. Gallow Fields Road narrowed as it leads into Foxton Village along Main Street. A Footway section was located on the north side (approximately 1.8m wide) which covered the extents of the school. This terminated at the west and linked to footpath A22 at the east. There are dropped crossings on both sides, which link to south side footways, one leading all the way into Gartree village, with a verge strip separating pedestrians away from the carriageway. The footway was heavily overgrown for this section.

The condition of the carriageway was generally good with some minor defects/ join points. Road markings were worn, but visible. The footway was in a moderate condition, but the footpath (A22) was in poor condition with undulations, and it dropped off steeply to the east side with badger holes.

3.7 Visibility and sight lines

Forward visibility was good in both directions outside of the school along Gallow Field Road but did eventually become obscured by the parked cars from parents dropping off their children. At the junction with Foxton Road visibility was restricted to the right by a boundary hedgerow.



Visibility splay restricted to the right at Foxton Road

Pedestrians crossing from the footway on the north side (school side) of Gallow Field Road had a restricted visibility splay to both the right and the left due to parents' parked cars.



Restricted visibility at crossing point (both directions)

3.8 Parking restrictions

Zigzag lines were present at the school gates along with temporary parking restriction signs. A 'H-bar' marking was present for the east side dropped crossing point.

4. Safety items raised in this Assessment

4.1 PROBLEM

Location – Gallow Field Road/ Foxton Road

Summary: Risk of head-on collisions and shunt collisions at Foxton Road junction

With the potential increased traffic flow as a result of the new prison development, the issue from the narrowed single lane carriageway from parked cars for the school drop off / pick up could be further exacerbated. Drivers might become impatient and take more risks to manoeuvre around the parked vehicles increasing the risk of head-on collisions with oncoming traffic. Traffic giving way might also queue further back into the junction with Foxton Road increasing the risk of shunt collisions, where drivers turning might not be expecting stationary traffic.

RECOMMENDATION

The parking should be reviewed to reduce the number of vehicles parking on Gallow Field Road outside the school, such as providing parking within the school grounds with a pickup / drop off area or formalised off carriageway parking bays installed.

4.2 PROBLEM

Location – Footpath (A22) Linking Gallow Field Road and Swingbridge Street

Summary: Pedestrian trip, slip and fall hazards

From the proposals to reduce parking from outside the school and provide alternative parking on Swingbridge Street, footpath (A22) linking this to the school is not a suitable route for pedestrians to use, (even if this is widened). The surface is uneven with a number of potential trip hazards from badger holes and is of a steep gradient presenting a fall hazard for mobility impaired pedestrians. The alternative parking area is also a long distance away from the school with no pedestrian facilities. This unlit footpath is unlikely to be a desirable route for the school drop off / pick up, especially in the winter months when this could be in darkness beyond 4pm.



Footpath with steep gradient and drop offs at the edges

Furthermore, at the footpath entrance on Swingbridge Street there is a stream which runs down the carriageway. This could present a slip hazard to pedestrians which could potentially ice over in the winter months.



Stream at entrance to footpath

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative parking arrangements should be installed closer to the school. If this is not possible then major changes to the footpath would be required, with a reduction in gradient, a route over the stream, such as a culvert and footpath lighting for the winter months to make the route as desirable and safe as possible.

4.3 PROBLEM

Location – Swingbridge Street

Summary: Collisions with parked vehicles and pedestrians exiting/entering vehicles

The parking bays on Swingbridge Street currently consist of a grasscrete surface and are very narrow. Vehicles parked here might overhang the narrow carriageway at this location, which is only approximately 4m wide. There is also a 90degree bend just south of this location restricting forward visibility. This could increase the risk of collisions with parked vehicles and collisions with pedestrians entering / exiting their vehicles who will be in the carriageway as there are no footways present.



RECOMMENDATION

As per problem 4.2, alternative parking should be installed closer to the school and with greater carriageway width available. If this is not possible then the existing parking bays should be widened with a footway link and pedestrian facilities to the footpath.

4.4 PROBLEM

Location – General extents of school site -Gallow Field Road/ Foxton Road

Summary: Collisions with pedestrians / pedestrian trip hazards

The dropped crossing points in the vicinity of the school were in a poor condition with high upstands, no tactile paving for visually impaired pedestrians and were not protected by any parking restrictions. This could increase the risk of pedestrians tripping and falling on high upstand kerbs and increase the risk of having to walk between parked cars. Visually impaired pedestrians might also cross at less appropriate locations with the increased risk of being struck by oncoming vehicles. This issue could also be worsened by the potential increased traffic flows as a result of the prison, where uncontrolled crossings might not be sufficient for the traffic volumes and pedestrian footfall.



Example of crossing point

RECOMMENDATION

The dropped crossing points should be improved ensuring they are flush or with a maximum upstand of 6mm and tactile paving installed for visually impaired pedestrians. The crossing points should be reviewed, upgraded and include suitable parking restrictions appropriate for the projected footfalls and traffic flows.

4.5 PROBLEM

Location – Gallow Field Road footway link to Gartree village

Summary: Pedestrian slip hazard

The footway heading east for pedestrians accessing the school from Gartree Village was overgrown, with the footway width narrowed with excess grass verge area. Pedestrians could slip and fall on the grass verge area especially during inclement weather.



RECOMMENDATION

Vegetation from the footpath should be removed, ensuring a clear route for pedestrians to access the school from Gartree Village.

4.6 PROBLEM

Location – Approaches to school site - Gallow Field Road / Foxton Road

Summary: Speed related collisions

Although the village of Foxton is 30mph, this does not extend to the school section, which although has some advisory 20mph zone signs the limit is not legally enforceable. With the high pedestrian footfall at peak school times and the potential increase of traffic from the prison development, this could increase the risk of speed related collisions occurring outside the school, especially as motorists will be encouraged to speed up when they see the national speed limit signs as they leave the village.



National speed limit gateway on approach to school

RECOMMENDATION

The 30mph limit of Foxton village should be extended to include the school as per DFT circular 1/2013 'Setting local speed limits'

4.7 PROBLEM

Location – Approaches to school site -Gallow Field Road/ Foxton Road

Summary: Speed related collisions

Some of the 20mph Zone sign information is of a small text 'x-height', where drivers might not view this and only the east approach flashing amber warning lights were active / present. Drivers might not be as aware of the 20mph recommended limit ahead and not slow down sufficiently, increasing the risk of speed related collisions outside of the school.



Small text size on signs

RECOMMENDATION

The text 'x' height on the 20mph zone signs should be increased suitable for the speed limit of the road. Flashing amber warning lights should be installed on the Foxton Road approach. The flashing amber warning light on the west approach sign should be repaired.

4.8 PROBLEM

Location –Gallow Field Road fingerpost signs opposite Foxton Road

Summary: Junction collisions from sign distractions

There is excess sign clutter for drivers approaching Gallow Field Road from the Foxton Road junction. They might be distracted from trying to read the extensive information (which is also of small text size) and this could increase the risk of junction collisions such as pulling out into oncoming traffic.



RECOMMENDATION

The sign information should be re-designed and consolidated with sufficient text 'x' height suitable for the speed limit of the road.

4.9 PROBLEM

Location – Foxton Road junction with Gallow Field Road

Summary: Pull out type junction collisions

For traffic approaching the school from the Foxton Road approach, the visibility splay was obscured to the right due to a boundary hedgerow. Drivers might not see approaching vehicles and pull out increasing the risk of collisions occurring. The problem could also be exacerbated from the increased traffic flows from the proposed prison development.



RECOMMENDATION

The hedgerow should be cut back ensuring there is a clear visibility splay to the right.

5. CONCLUSION

It is recommended that the above highway improvements should be implemented to both maximise safety for the school run and mitigate for the potential increased traffic flows as a result of the new prison development, especially for the busy morning peak drop off time.

This should also improve accessibility for all road users, including encouraging sustainable modes of travel such as walking. It is also advised that a school crossing patrol should be requested, and a review carried out by the highway authority to establish the optimum assisted crossing points and desire lines for the school run. This could be looked at further as a potential safer route to school scheme.

6. Safety Assessment Statement

We certify that we have examined the site with the sole purpose of identifying road safety issues for the local primary school. The problems that we have identified have been noted in the report, together with suggestions for improvement, which we recommend should be studied for implementation.

Assessor


Lee Williams – BSc (Hons), MIHE
Highways England Approved RSA Certificate of Competency
Principal Engineer, TMS Consultancy

Signed 

Date 2nd September 2022

Checked by

Harminder Aulak – BSc (Hons), IEng, FIHE, RegRSA (IHE)
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Technical Director – Engineering Services, TMS Consultancy

Signed 

Date 2nd September 2022

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Appendix A

Documents Examined:

- Site location plan

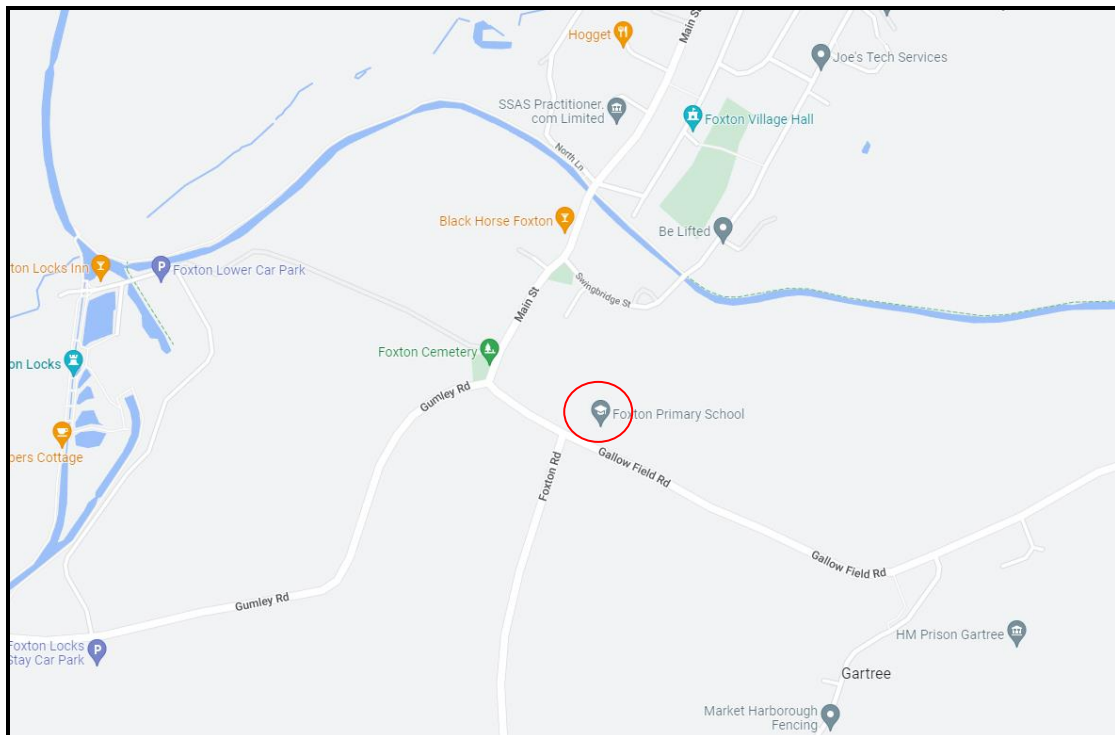
Other Information Provided:

- Brief provided by David Dickie

Appendix B

Please refer to the following page for a plan illustrating the locations of the problems identified as part of this assessment (location numbers refer to paragraph numbers in the report).

The location of the site is shown below:



Client: David Hickie

Scheme: Foxton Primary School, Gallow Field Road, Market Harborough, Leics

