

New sixth form site for Westminster school gets go-ahead

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Where Francis Holland's new sixth form school will stand in Linhope Street - Credit: LDRS

A Regent's Park school will build a new site for 180 students which its headteacher says will address problems of overcrowding.

Francis Holland School was granted planning permission to build a new sixth form building for 180 girls in Linhope Street by Westminster Council on Tuesday (September 14).

The school's sixth formers are currently having to be taught in hired office spaces, in a converted shop and a church crypt due to an overspill of demand.

Francis Holland headteacher Charles Fillingham said he had written to every Linhope Street resident and met face-to-face with objectors to hear their concerns about a new school being built.

"Francis Holland School is a wonderful community of learners, teachers and support staff," Mr Fillingham said.

“We have a good name in the local area. The reputation of the school is that we are academic and kind.

“Our current sixth form building was developed for 60-80 girls. This year we have 165 girls in that same space.”

Francis Holland, which costs £7,380 to attend, currently has 535 girls studying – the most in its history.

The school hopes to host 140 students at the former business school site in Linhope Street by 2024 along with 31 members of staff. It aims to increase this number to 180 sixth formers by 2030.



A map of the area reveals where the new Francis Holland sixth form will be based - Credit: LDRS

However residents of Linhope Street, where houses sell for £1,800,000, have raised concerns about the impact of having 180 pupils arriving and leaving the area each day.

One neighbour on the quiet side street near Regent’s Park claimed the school is aiming to make a profit at the expense of residents, saying the introduction of 180 students will have a big impact on an area that is usually "pin-drop quiet".

Westminster Council’s planning committee granted permission for the building following a consultation on travel options to prevent congestion at rush hour.