

Temporary Closure of Oxfangs Primary School - FAQs

Why did it take until 5.15pm on Tuesday to inform parents about the closure when the inspection took place on Monday?

The Council received the survey results on Tuesday afternoon. Although the structural engineer advised that the building could continue to operate safely in normal weather conditions until the works were carried out, discussions took place with senior officers and the decision was then taken to close the school immediately. The Council will not take any risks with health and safety. As soon as this decision was taken parents were informed.

Why is there no contingency plan in place that can be invoked immediately, i.e. starting on the first day of closure?

The information indicating consideration that the school should be closed was only received on the afternoon of Tuesday 15 March. Immediately following that, staff were involved in confirming arrangements for all 503 pupils who attend Oxfangs Primary School, including the nursery pupils. In some instances this includes the need for transport arrangements to be put in place.

In addition, Oxfangs Primary School staff need time to visit their decant locations and set up their new classes and they are carrying out this work today.

What are the contingency arrangements and when will parents hear?

These are currently being confirmed and parents will receive an update by 2pm today (Wednesday 16 March)

Why were parents told the school was safe to return to following the damage in January? Has my child been put at risk?

Detailed, non-intrusive visual surveys were carried out in Oxfangs and all PPP1 schools and there were no signs of any movement in the structures. The specialist technical advice we received was that the buildings were safe but, as a further precaution, miniature-camera investigations into the wall cavities of all major walls should be carried out within a three month period. Both the Council and Edinburgh Schools Partnership have undertaken to carry these out more urgently which started as soon as ESP procured contractors to carry out this work.

What works were carried out following the wall collapse?

The area was cordoned off and the wall stabilised. ESP are currently in discussions with their construction arm to confirm when remedial works will start on site.

What is the issue with the building?

Detailed investigation by ESP's team of the external wall cavity around the whole building has indicated a concern regarding variations in cavity width. This raises a consequential concern with the associated embedment of the wall ties. While the structural engineer indicated the building could continue to operate safely, a more precautionary approach has been taken to close the school to allow remedial works to be undertaken.

Why can't the school remain open while these works take place?

The school could remain open while these works take place however the Council will not take any risks with health and safety. These works will also lead to significant restrictions around the school, be extremely noisy and therefore disruptive to pupils and staff. It would also take significantly longer to complete the works. For these reasons, we believe a closure/decant is the best approach for Oxfords.

Are any other schools in the city being checked?

Initial non-intrusive visual surveys were carried out in all PPP1 schools. More detailed surveys are now being carried out in all and, if any issues are identified, appropriate action will be taken and any remedial works will be carried out.

Will the structural report be published? Can parents receive a copy?

The report was commissioned by Edinburgh Schools Partnership and was provided to the Council on a confidential basis. The Council is not in a position to release this confidential document.