



BROOKSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher – Mr D Orme BA (Hons) NPQH Deputy Head – Ms J Smith B Ed (Hons) NPQSL
“Happy and Successful in Everything we Do!”

Thursday 7 September 2023

Dear Parents

The Department for Education is asking all Responsible Bodies (local authorities, academy trusts, dioceses, and college groups) to look for Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in their buildings.

RAAC is a lightweight, ‘bubbly’ form of concrete commonly used in construction between the 1950s and mid-1990s. It is predominantly found as precast panels in roofs (commonly flat roofs, sometimes pitched) and occasionally in floors and walls. It is recognised that RAAC panels have material and construction deficiencies, making them less robust than traditional concrete. This increases the risk of structural failure, which can be gradual or sudden with no warning. Sudden failure of RAAC panels in roofs, eaves, floors, walls and cladding systems would be dangerous, and the consequences could be serious.

DfE have stated that the vast majority of schools will be unaffected. There are over 22,000 schools and colleges and less than 1% are known to be affected. At present, Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) are not aware that any of their schools are affected.

Cheshire West and Chester are the responsible body for all community, voluntary controlled, foundation and maintained nurseries which includes Brookside Primary School.

All schools where CWAC hold the responsibility that were constructed within the original timeframe specified by the DfE were assessed through a visual survey in 2022. Since then, CWAC have been periodically commissioning further visual surveys as the DfE guidance regarding the construction timeframe altered and data was shared with the DfE to identify schools for consideration.

To date our school has not been assessed as CWAC and the DfE records show that the school was not constructed or modified in the period stated. DfE altered their guidance last week and although the timeframe for this material being used remains the same, it is less specific in stating which schools should be considered. As such Cheshire West and Chester informed us yesterday that it has decided in the interest of avoiding any possible doubt, that **a visual survey will be conducted on our and other schools.** This does not mean that CWAC believe that there is RAAC in our building.

The DfE guidance provides a guide to identifying RAAC and suggests that someone with responsibility for the estate can use this tool to carry out an assessment, however Cheshire West and Chester have opted to follow a more robust process and have **appointed an external chartered surveyor** to carry out these visual assessments.

CWAC’s delivery partner QWEST have been instructed to commission these visual surveys and will be utilising Pearson Surveyors. CWAC are aiming for these surveys to be completed by the end of October, earlier if possible. We will accordingly be contacted directly to arrange the visit.

I will give you further details as and when they become available.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D Orme
Headteacher

