



The Federation of the Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth Achieving Together for a Brighter Future

The purpose of the Federation of the Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth is to educate children in an atmosphere of Christian love where all achieve the very best they can, now and throughout their lives

Headteacher Shalfleet and Yarmouth: Mrs Elizabeth Grainger BEd English (Hons)

A University of Chichester
ITT Partner School



Federation of the Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth Submission to the Local Authority Consultation regarding School Places in the West Wight – 3 June 2019

Dear Cllr. Brading,

Further to the current consultation by the Isle of Wight Education Authority regarding a surplus of school places in the West Wight, the governing body of the Federation of the Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth recognise that all schools in the area, the children, their families and the community are deeply affected by this process.

We would like to reiterate that as a governing body, when presented with the additional proposed option by the Local Authority, we felt a decision of this magnitude could not solely be taken by us and that our stakeholders should have an opportunity to have their say. Our chosen approach has been to let others express their opinions through public and private meetings, questionnaires (including our own) and individual responses to the school. We have reviewed relevant documents and considered statistical school information. We are a professional and highly effective group of governors, who have been thorough in examining the views expressed to us. We are now able to present our measured response that effectively addresses the issues based on evidence and experience instead of emotional reflex.

According to the DFE's published figures, the outcomes at All Saints C of E Primary School for the 2018 Year 6 cohort, show that 50% of the pupils were working at Age Related Expectations (ARE), none were recognised as higher attainers (GD). The school's three-year trend of combined ARE is 42%. Whilst the former provides us with a picture of the 2018 Year 6 cohort, the three year trend strongly indicates the need for the children to receive additional support throughout their primary school experience should this information be representative of whole school data.

The same data indicates that 16% of children require SEN support, 2% have an Education, Health and Care Plan and 28% of children are eligible for Free School Meals at any time during the past 6 years. This group of pupils would require significant additional targeted support and although there are provisions for some additional funding determined by allocated hours of support and the Pupil Premium, nationally it is recognised that these funds do not match the cost of the support the children need to make progress.

Under Hampshire guidelines best practice for any pupil with SEN would be to transfer with a Transition Partnership Agreement (TPA). This is in line with the Children's and Family Act 2014 advocating a person centered approach. There is an evidence base that shows this type of agreement ensures smooth transition



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and improved outcomes. It is effective yet staff intense and requires focused breakout support and regular review meetings. No additional funding or wider resourcing has been identified to support this process of effective transition for a significant cohort of children.

The information given to us is that in transitionary period there would be additional support from the Local Authority LLP (Leadership & Learning Partner) which is leadership support. No additional funds have been identified to facilitate additional classroom support whether staff and/or other resources.

Looking at the Planned Admission Numbers (PAN) for the schools in the area and the Local Authority's proposals, there appears to be no logical sense, in the context of managing a surplus of school places, to increase the number of spaces in the area by increasing the PAN at Yarmouth to 30, other than to build/refurbish a one form entry primary school on the Freshwater site because the government have identified money for it in their Priority Schools Building Programme.

Taking the longer term view we must recognise that the Local Authority forecast of pupil numbers in Year R is declining and drops to 63 by 2021. The current preferred option as well the previous preferred option creates significant disruption for large cohorts of children, both at All Saints and at the receiving schools. In the latest proposal there is not 1 but 2 transition points for the All Saints children and some Yarmouth children too who have joined from other schools. There is a strong evidence base that demonstrates pupils regress at points of transition, the proposals will therefore affect all children in both pupil cohorts with many children now needing or continuing to need additional support to address attainment gaps following school moves.

If the decision is taken for All Saints CE Primary School to close, the data presented above strongly advocates the option of dispersing the children among all local schools. Whilst there is recognised pressure of pupil numbers in one year group currently, it must also be said that there is no guarantee that all children currently at All Saints will transfer to schools in West Wight as some parents/carers may choose to go elsewhere or elect home education, although this is not an option we would advocate.

Current proposals to accommodate additional children at Yarmouth or St Saviour's will involve significant premises development on sites which are less than ideal and would cause disruption to children's education. The Local Authority advise that an increase in PAN would be required to facilitate the children at either school identified. There is a question for the necessity to increase any PAN especially when there are two schools in the area which have appropriate premises, are operating as one form entry primary schools (Brighstone and Shalfleet) and can also accommodate additional children without the need to destabilise the educational provision for so many children in the West Wight.

Attached with this submission are the outcomes of our consultations, which were undertaken over the last two weeks. It is clear that our main stakeholders and local community are substantially against the proposal. A



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significant number of our parents/carers, staff and community members of Yarmouth CE Primary School were strongly against the proposal. We also administered the questionnaire to the similar groups associated with Shalfleet CE primary School; the pattern of results was virtually identical with real concerns voiced over the impact on the Federation. We noted the broad feedback from stakeholders who see 'West Wight' as one area rather than distinct individual localities. As a highly effective and strong performing Federation of schools we have a clear message from our stakeholders and community. That view has contributed to the formulation of our position.

As governors our primary concern is the welfare, progress and outcomes of the pupils we currently have on roll. We have, in the relatively recent past, accommodated the transition of a significant number of pupils into our Federation, many of whom required a substantial amount of additional support to make the progress they required to achieve the expected outcomes. Through the diligence and expertise of our exceptional staff, led by an excellent Headteacher and her Senior Leadership Team we have had significant effect on the progress and outcomes for all children. We know we can continue to deliver high quality education although the resourcing implications are significant. We would have to balance a huge range of needs against a background of insufficient funding and the most challenging financial climate for schools in years.

Whilst this consultation has been about primary school age children, the governing body also has responsibility for our highly regarded and popular preschool and the young children in our care. Little Stars is an integral part of our school as a 2-11 provider offering children the best start in life and a seamless provision into their primary school life. We recognise the exceptional contribution made by our staff and consider that this consultation does not adequately address Little Stars' place in our school community now and into the future.

In summary and after due consideration, we cannot support the Local Authority's latest preferred option of Yarmouth CE Primary School relocating to Freshwater in due course and increasing its PAN. The proposal does not address the increasing crises of a surplus of school places in the West Wight, places significant financial strain on one school, creates a practically impossible situation for the duration of the transition period, and most significantly pays no attention to the educational outcomes of the current pupils at the heart of the issue.

Should the decision be taken for All Saints CE Primary School to close, our preferred option remains that pupils be dispersed amongst the other West Wight Primary Schools for reasons listed above. The educational attainment, social needs and well-being of all pupils impacted by these proposals would be better served by their distribution to a variety of schools, whilst also sharing the financial challenges and creating more opportunity for person centered approaches in order to meet individual needs of children and families.

We recognise this option may effect an increase in transport cost for the Local Authority, it is also clear that with the pupil numbers forecast this would appear to be of a short term nature.



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Although this is not what the Freshwater community wish for, should the house building programme continue as is proposed, under various arrangements a new school could be built in Freshwater at the appropriate time when pupil numbers are able to sustain a further school rather than instigating seismic change in the West Wight area with children's education becoming the casualty.

Moving forward in the best interest of providing good education for all children and especially those who may attend new schools, we would welcome the opportunity to work alongside colleagues in the West Wight and the Local Authority in conjunction with external support agencies to put together a transition plan that supports young people, their educational outcomes and their families.

Yours sincerely,

Carla Bradshaw
Co-Chair of Governors

Mark Webber
Co-Chair of Governors



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