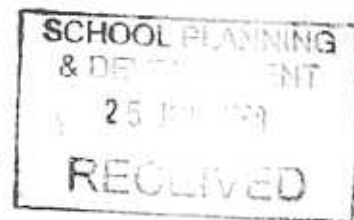


CHELFORD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
OAK ROAD, CHELFORD, CHESHIRE SK11 9AY
TEL: 01625-861351



Ms Trish Burnett
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Cheshire County Council
Children's Services
County Hall
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as from: Oaklands
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23 July 2008

Dear Ms Burnett,

TLC - Holmes Chapel Locality - Chelford (CE) Primary School - Options for Change

I am writing on behalf of the Governors of Chelford (CE) Primary School with our response to the 'emerging options' outlined in Joan Feenan's letter of 25th June. These were for a reduction in the Net Capacity (NC) of the school from 90 to 60; reduction of the Pupil Admission Number (PAN) from 15 to 9 and exploration of the possibilities for Federation among neighbouring, especially CE, schools in the Holmes Chapel area. In addition, in the document entitled "Learning for the 21st century etc", dated June 2008 and handed out at the meeting at Crewe Hall on 25th June, mention is made of "Inter-agency working at premises released at Chelford Primary School". (This document incidentally, contains an error, pointed out at the Crewe Hall meeting, on page 15 where the 'Status' of our school is shown incorrectly as 'VC', when it should read 'CE VC'.)

These options have now been discussed by Governors. Staff at the school have been consulted. Parents have been notified by letter and by an invitation to discuss the issues involved with Governors at an open evening at the school. They have also been reminded of their right to make individual representations either at the drop-in sessions or directly to Children's Services by 5th August. The Parish Council has also been briefed.

The Governors note the proposed reductions in NC and PAN but have the following concerns about the scale of them. They point out that numbers at the school have been rising steadily from a low point of 31 in 2001, to a total of 50 today. They know that the total number of state-sector primary school age children within the Chelford catchment area is approximately 80-90, as was forecast when the school was new-built in 1999, and is evidenced today by the numbers of Chelford-based, maintained sector pupils shown in document DP7 of TLC/Core Schools Dataset. They note the likelihood of the current 'Credit Crunch' influencing the parents of some private sector pupils into sending their children to the state sector at primary school level.

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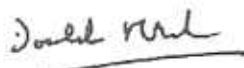
The Governors would find it unacceptable to be compelled to turn away future applicants to Chelford school on the grounds of a permanent NC or PAN number which had been fixed at too low a level. They do not wish to see the school artificially disadvantaged against its nearest rival establishment. They therefore propose a reduction in NC to 77 and a PAN of 11-12, to place us on equal terms with Peover Superior school. They ask what degree of flexibility, both in time and degree, would exist in the future to revise the NC number upwards, and the PAN similarly, as demand for places at Chelford increases.

The Governors are very ready to enter into discussions with any neighbouring schools over the possibility of Federation but are unclear what might be involved in practice. They ask if a representative of the Children's Services could attend a meeting to set this out in detail as they have no experience of Federation on which to make a judgment now.

The Governors recognise the potential advantages of utilising a part of the school premises for inter-agency working but would want to be assured of flexibility over this. If our predictions are correct and the NC and/or the PAN needs to be raised in the medium-term future to accommodate additional pupils living in Chelford whose parents wish them to attend their local primary school, we should wish to be able to recover the use of such leased school premises at short notice in order to accommodate this. There are many practical issues (e.g. the type of agency, number of agency personnel, type and cost of alteration to existing accommodation) which need to be explored. There is also a question over the Chelford Educational Foundation and its relationship with the school, which needs to be clarified if there is a proposal to use the school premises for any other than strictly educational purposes.

The Governors would welcome an opportunity of a meeting with Children's Services to discuss all of the above matters, well before any of the current 'emerging options' are firmed-up.

Yours sincerely,



D R McLeod
Chairman of Governors, Chelford (CE) Primary School.

c.c. George Osborne, MP
C Cllr Paul Findlow
C Cllr Steve Wilkinson
Cllr Carolyn Andrews
Cllr Andrew Knowles
Jeff Turnbull, Diocesan Board of Education
Andrew Norbury, Chairman, Chelford Parish Council
Governors, Chelford (CE) Primary School

} all of whom have been consulted, to a greater or lesser degree.

