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Director for Children & Education
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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you with regard to the proposed closure of Grafton Primary school.

My wife and I and our 1 year old son will be moving to East Grafton in the near future. We may in future have more children too. We are therefore very interested in the school and the facilities it provides.

Having read the various documents associated with the proposed closure of Grafton Primary school, I do not believe that there has been a robust enough analysis of why the numbers attending the school are low, the future growth in school numbers or what the impact will be with the possible loss of the school building for the very popular pre-school group.

It would appear that one of the main reasons for the school having a lower intake is that it is not currently a feeder school for the well respected St John's school in Marlborough.

Given that the Great Bedwyn Primary school is a feeder school to St John's, it is of no surprise that parents would like to send their children there instead. The proposed closure of Grafton Primary school appears to also involve modifying the catchment area of Great Bedwyn Primary school, so pupils displaced by the closure of Grafton Primary school will get places at Great Bedwyn. Given that this will effectively mean that the new catchment area would lead to a feeder into St John's at Marlborough for pupils currently residing in the catchment area for Grafton Primary school, it is obvious to me that the first thing to try to improve numbers at the Grafton Primary school would be to make it into a feeder school too. This must be possible given how this closure is proposed to be carried out.

It is criminal to close a school just because people would appear to have effectively lost interest in running it, and have resigned themselves to closure. Discipline in small schools is no doubt easier to maintain and there are many positive things about small schools which appear to get forgotten.

The birth rates in recent times have been rising and the population of the UK is increasing. These facts do not appear to have been properly considered, as a large emphasis has been placed on the reduction of pupil numbers in years gone by, with the assumption that this reduction would continue.

I fully believe the school would be successful at attracting more pupils if instead of closure it became a feeder school for St John's in Marlborough and the uncertainty of closure was removed.

It also appears that there has been insufficient consideration of what will happen to the pre-school if the Grafton Primary school is closed. The pre-school may not be the responsibility of those who run the

primary school, but it is significant for the development of children and it needs to be fully considered. The site and future for the pre-school should be fully determined before and proposed closure of the primary school ever goes ahead.

It is for the reasons stated above that I believe that more can still be done to turn the school around and the closure is at least premature, and at most a waste of a potentially good school.

Last of all, I would be more than happy to dedicate some time to working with anyone who wishes to try and keep the school open.

Yours Faithfully,

Mikael Armstrong