



ST DUNSTAN C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Headteacher : Mary E Pope

24.2.2013

Dear Mr Grundy,

Following the consultation on the proposal to close the Maintained Nursery at St Dunstan Primary School, I enclose the report together with minutes of the public meeting and a summary of the responses received both on paper, and via the Wiltshire website. The proposal to close the Nursery was a strategic decision which was not made lightly; the governors and I have worked closely with the Local Authority throughout the process taking advice at every stage of the process.

Historically the Nursery at St Dunstan was funded for 54 places regardless of the number of children in it. This enabled the school to employ a fulltime teacher and Teaching Assistant. The Nursery was one of the very few pre – school providers in Calne; it was highly regarded and known for the long standing teacher who has now retired. There are now a growing number of pre schools in the town, including Sunbeams which is on the school site. Funding is now allocated according to the number of children who attend and from this income must be paid a qualified teacher's salary, as well as at least one Teaching Assistant's salary, maintenance, cleaning and lighting etc...

In response to declining numbers, the governors closed the Nursery in the afternoons in 2009. At my request, a formal meeting was held in November 2011 with the LA Child Development Officer and the Child Care Manager to look at the sustainability of the Nursery. Phil Cooch advised that the school should not be subsidizing the Nursery as it was doing. Redundancy procedures were implemented in 2011, in order to address the deficit budget.

The governors and I decided to endeavour to increase Nursery numbers through advertising and to make a final decision in September 2012 about a proposal to close. Despite advertising via the Town Crier, school newsletter, displaying posters in shops, distributing leaflets to toddler groups and churches, and putting school brochures in show - homes in the new housing estates on Sandpit Lane, numbers did not increase significantly.

In view of the uncertainty about the future of the Nursery, and in consultation with Sarah Clover, we put a limit of 13 on the number of children taken in September 2012 as an interim measure; there are currently 10 pupils no roll.

The governors and I are very concerned to ensure that there is good provision for children in the school's catchment. We have been assured by Sarah Clover (Child Care Manager) that there are sufficient places in pre - schools in the town to accommodate projected number of children. The voluntary pre - school on site has been judged good by Ofsted (May 2011) it has the capacity to expand and is eager to develop closer links with the school.

Although some of the comments reflect strongly held opinions, the number of responses made to the consultation is too small to be statistically significant and does not change the fact that the Nursery is financially unsustainable.

I trust that given this background, you will accept the proposal to close the Nursery. Anne Davey and I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the matter further if required.

Yours sincerely,

Head

