



Windmill Primary School

Margaret Road
Headington
Oxford
OX3 8NG

Headteacher: Mrs Lynn Knapp

email: headteacher.2527@windmill.oxon.sch.uk
Tel: 01865 762509 Fax: 01865 742614

Achievement through Creativity, Community and Challenge

Dear Parents and Carers

Below is a copy of the letter that we have submitted to the consultation process. We hope that you support the key messages in this letter,

Yours sincerely

Lynn Knapp

2nd February 2013

Dear Diane

Despite not opposing in principal the expansion of Windmill Primary School we, Windmill Primary School's Governing Body and Senior Management Team, are writing to you in order to formally register our opposition to the proposed expansion of Windmill Primary School from 2-form to 3-form entry. Our reasons for opposing the proposed expansion are outlined below.

Budget

The OCC has at present indicated a budget for the expansion of £1.9m, a figure that compares unfavourably to the cost of a similar school expansion in New Marston, where £2.7m has been allocated to accommodate an additional full form.

Increasing the size of Windmill School's student body from 480 to 630, as is proposed, would require significant and sustained financial commitment on the part of OCC. However, of immediate concern to us is the current proposed budget; were the expansion to go ahead, this estimated budget would not enable the substantial investment that would be needed to develop the school's infrastructure appropriately and effectively. In a previous letter concerning the proposed expansion, we outlined the minimum requirements the Head Teacher and the Governing Body felt the school would need to make the expansion a success. They are as follows:-

- 5 additional classrooms
- A hall big enough to hold a full school assembly
- A kitchen able to cater for 630 children
- Expansion of the After School Club
- The appropriate number of rooms for small group work
- A playing field of suitable size
- Retaining the school's frontage

The estimated budget suggests these minimum requirements would not be met were the proposal to go ahead, and at the Cabinet Meeting of 27 November 2012, it was indeed indicated that not all of these requirements would be satisfied. However, as yet we have not been given any information on which one/ones would be excluded.

Plans

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We were led to believe by Barbara Chillman, OCC Principal Officer for School Organisation, and Roy Leach, School Organisation and Planning Manager, that stakeholders could expect to see a completed feasibility study and architectural plans by this stage of the consultation, however these have not materialized. The OCC appointed architect Jenny Seddon to create a feasibility plan of the expansion. We

felt she had a good knowledge of Windmill School, having been involved in its conversion from Headington Middle School to Windmill Primary School, and we shared a good working relationship with her during the process. Throughout it, our intention was to facilitate a well-designed, well-resourced expansion. We are however concerned that the feasibility planning she undertook has not as yet resulted in plans being shared with stakeholders as we had been led to believe it would. These plans are of critical importance, as Windmill would be the county's largest primary school if the expansion goes ahead.

Working parents are acutely concerned about the provision of an After School Club facility for the expanded school body and both staff and parents are worried about the lack of adequate space that currently exists in the school. Since its two bulge classes were taken, children have been forced to receive reading support in busy corridors and stairwells and small group work occurs in resource cupboards for lack of alternative space. Parents are, therefore, deeply concerned about the school's further expansion. Had we received draft or final plans for review, as we were led to believe we would, we would be in a much better position to make an informed decision on the suitability of the proposed changes.

Traffic

At the Cabinet Meeting on 27th November Council Leader Ian Hudspeth asked Councilor for Traffic, Rodney Rose, to commission a full traffic survey of the surrounding area to understand the impact of hospital expansion, housing developments and university growth on the traffic in the Headington area, as this has already had a considerable impact on traffic near Windmill School and will continue to do so. To our knowledge this has not as yet been carried out. This remains an acute concern for staff, parents and residents as local traffic has increased significantly over recent years and an expanded school will have a further impact on road safety and usability.

In summary, Windmill Primary School is a popular local school and its pupils deserve the same chance of success as those in any other school in the county irrespective of size. To ensure that, any expansion would need to be supported by appropriate strategic planning and investment. The Head Teacher and Governors have engaged positively with the OCC's team from the beginning of the proposal, to ensure that were the expansion to go ahead it would be properly planned and resourced.

Given that we have not received confirmation of the budget for expansion, seen draft or final plans, nor the outcome of the traffic survey, we have no choice but to object to the school's expansion. We would like to take this opportunity to voice our grave disappointment in the consultation process to date. We do not feel that there has been sufficient transparency on the part of the LA to enable us to make an informed decision on the proposed expansion.

Yours sincerely



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Lynn Knapp
Headteacher

Mayte Siswick
Chair of Governors