

Annex 4: Representation by school staff /governors



HEADTEACHER
Ms Z. d'Archambaud

New Marston Primary School
Copse Lane
Headington
Oxford OX3 0AY
Tel: 01865 761560
Fax: 01865 742944

Email: office.2529@new-marston.oxon.sch.uk
Website: www.new-marston.oxon.sch.uk

26 May 2011

Barbara Chillman
Principal Officer - School Organisation
Commissioning, Performance and Quality Assurance
County Hall
New Road
Oxford OX1 1ND

BY EMAIL

Dear Barbara

Re: New Marston Primary School – Formal proposal on expansion to two-form entry

On 25th May, at a meeting of our full governing body, we discussed your proposal to expand the school to two-form entry. As explained in our letter of 4 March for the initial consultation, we have the following concerns.

1. *Financial implications for the school:* if the expected high numbers of children do not fully materialise, the school will be left with a reduced budget but still having to fund a high level of staff. Although smaller classes will benefit the children, the lack of resources would have serious implications for the school's support services and for resourcing the new classrooms, etc. We would like reassurance that if the school is left with an intake of well below 60 there will be financial assistance to make up the shortfall in funding that is calculated on number of pupils.
2. *Out-of-catchment pupils:* we are concerned that with an intake of 60, a high number of children will be coming from outside the catchment area. This has serious implications for the school. Children are likely to leave the school as soon as a place becomes available in their local school, leading to disruption for the pupils and their class, and demoralisation of their teacher. It exacerbates the

problem we already have of a school population that is more mobile than most because of our situation below the John Radcliffe Hospital. The out-of-catchment children are also more likely to come in taxis, which is far from ideal for the children, but also makes communication with their parents more difficult. With an estimated 40 pupils arriving by taxi from September 11, this raises an issue for the school with staffing these children from 8.30am when the first taxi arrives to around 3.30 when the last taxi leaves. We have also raised several times with the taxi firm about the need for the children to be in booster seats and properly belted in. However we still have concerns over the supervision and safety of these children during their journey.

3. *Safety:* With the increase in children having to be driven to school because they are coming from further away, we are very worried about the safety of pupils coming into and leaving school. The entrance to the school is situated on an increasingly busy road, and it is vitally important that you raise the visibility of the school with better signage that will act to slow traffic. We wrote to Steve Howell and Rodney Rose at the end of March, and the letter is attached to this one for your information, as it clearly spells out the concerns that we have.
4. *Building work:* We were very disappointed in the initial timescales being discussed, and saw no reason why all building work could not be completed by September 2012. Your colleagues and Mouchel have worked hard to improve the timescales, and if all work can be completed by Christmas 2012, and no further children have to be taught in the temporary classrooms, we are happier with this position. It is important that Cabinet is aware, when it meets, that the school houses the Mid Oxon Hearing Impaired Base and that we have pupils with profound hearing loss who rely on cochlear implants, hearing aids and radio aid systems to access in the classroom. We also employ a hearing impaired teacher of the deaf who has the same access needs as the children. They cannot work in an environment that is makeshift without the facilities that they need and with a high level of background noise. We are therefore very keen for the option being discussed of two year 2 classrooms being prepared for September 2011 (converting the staffroom and year 3 classroom permanently to key stage 1 classrooms, and moving the staff to the library).
5. *Standards:* With the disruption to learning that the building works will inevitably bring, we have very serious concerns about our drive to raise standards and satisfy the requirements that Ofsted laid out for us in their last inspection. Towards the end of the FS/Year 1 building project the head visited the classrooms several times to find that teachers had to stop teaching due to the building noise. We would like to know what support County will give the school in overcoming this disruption and ensuring that our standards continue to rise, particularly in the light of the large scale cuts to your support services.
6. *Parking:* With the expansion in numbers of staff, we will need additional parking within the school to accommodate them. We already have an issue with parking within the school, where cars have to be parked on pavements, blocking access for pedestrians and putting the safety of pupils and parents at risk. Mouchel are currently looking into this as part of the feasibility study, and very much hope this concern can be accommodated.

In consultation with the staff, the following points were raised:

1. The staff are concerned about the guarantee of pupil numbers. A shortfall will mean low class sizes of around 20 to 25 and subsequent lower levels of funding that inevitably will have an impact on resources.
2. Staff are concerned (based on the picture from 2009 and 2010) that an increasing number of pupils will attend New Marston from out of catchment and attend by taxi. This means that communication with parents is significantly restricted and support for the school therefore not as effective as seeing parents on a regular basis when they pick up and drop off their children.
3. Staff have found teaching in the temporary classrooms challenging with insufficient space for storage. They have also felt isolated from the main school facilities, having to go outside to get to the hall for assemblies, lunch and PE. They feel unhappy about future classes being in this situation.
4. Since moving to two-form entry, mobility has been high. Staff have started to build strong and successful relationships with pupils only to see them move back to their catchment schools.

These are our concerns.

Yours sincerely

Zara d'Archambaud
Headteacher

Bryony Thomas
Chair of Governors

Annex 5: Letter to Member for Transport

**COPY OF LETTER SENT TO STEVE HOWELL AND RODNEY ROSE, SETTING
OUT OUR CONCERNS OVER SAFETY AT THE FRONT OF THE SCHOOL**



*HEADTEACHER
Ms Z. d'Archambaud*

New Marston Primary School
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Headington
Oxford OX3 0AY
Tel: 01865 761560
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Email: office.2529@new-marston.oxon.sch.uk

29 March 2011

Steve Howell
Head of Transport
Oxfordshire County Council
Speedwell House
Speedwell Street
Oxford OX1 1NE

Rodney Rose
Cabinet Member for Transport
County Hall
New Road
Oxford OX1 1ND

BY EMAIL

Dear Steve/Rodney

Re: New Marston Primary School

We are writing to you to express our very great concern about the safety of our pupils at the front of the school, and very much hope you will be able to help and advise us.

The school is situated on Copse Lane, on the Northway estate, a road which is being increasingly used as a rat run to Headington. Motorists coming from the London direction into Oxford are avoiding congestion in Headington by turning off London Road near Green Road roundabout to travel via Old Headington village and down Saxon Way to save time. These motorists do not observe the 20 mph speed limits and we believe it will not be long before there is a serious accident on Copse Lane involving pedestrians/children.

A number of our parents and our road crossing patrol officer have reported incidents of near misses and we are concerned that one day these near misses will result in a serious incident. We are sited near a 90° corner and a T junction with a residential road. Our key priorities are to raise the visibility of the school and slow the traffic. We need more signs advertising the presence of the school, and we also wondered whether it would be possible to have the signs that flash "SCHOOL, SLOW DOWN" if cars go over the speed limit. We used to have them but they were removed when the speed limit dropped from 30 to 20. Traffic calming measures would also be a good way of slowing traffic, though we are on a bus route.

Our concerns have become more acute because the Local Authority are looking to double the size of the school. More children will be coming from out of catchment, increasing the number of cars coming onto the estate to the school. Is it possible to make the parking restrictions around the school more flexible to allow for drop off and pick up, reducing the need for parents to park on double yellow lines near the school?

We have an excellent road crossing patrol officer, who we would not wish to lose, but if he is away for any reason it is very dangerous for the children and we desperately need a guarantee of cover if he is absent, or a crossing.

There is also the complication of a current planning application for conversion of the former public house site opposite the main entrance to the school. The proposed development is a residential block with about 20 flats and a convenience goods store at ground floor level which will attract more traffic throughout the day (unlike the former pub which was mostly evening users). The site is on Copse Lane, a busy road and bus route, as outlined above, by the road junction with Eden Drive, near the sweeping curve prior to the school crossing point. The crossing point is 'blind' for motorists coming from the south-west/Headington direction. We have already written in with our concerns about this proposed development, but would like to emphasise how it would be a completely inappropriate use of this site directly opposite a school in a residential area.

At a recent meeting with parents the following concerns were raised about the development above. If the project goes ahead:

- The site should be blocked off completely
- There should be safe access to the pavement for children and pushchairs
- The language of the builders should be moderated bearing in mind their close proximity to the school and children's centre
- The vision of drivers must not be impaired
- Vehicles/deliveries must not enter the site between 8.30 and 9.15 am and between 3.00 and 4.15 pm.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Zara d'Archambaud
Headteacher

Bryony Thomas
Chair of Governors

Claire Armstrong
Parent-Staff Assoc