



Oxclose Community Nursery School
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To whoever this may concern

I am writing on behalf of the Governing Board of Oxclose Community Nursery School in response to the open consultation for the proposed closure of Hetton-le-Hole Maintained Nursery School. From the information shared the proposal states the primary reason for the closure is financial, and the secondary reason being to safeguard the wider sufficiency in the area.

Sunderland City Council have stated a decreasing birth rate in the Hetton ward has led to the falling roll at Hetton le Hole Nursery School. However, it does not make sense that it has been agreed to open a 55 full time place nursery class in Hetton Primary School. Surely developing another provision on such a large scale in an area with a falling birth rate contradicts Sunderland City Councils decision making for the Hetton Ward.

Consultation information indicates if the Nursery School closes there will be a gap in the sufficiency for early years place in the Hetton Ward. Hence the development of a nursery class in the Hetton Primary School. It is unethical to deliberately close one school for the benefit of another.

Feedback from the consultation has indicated there is a preference in the area for maintained nursery school education over other early years providers. *The Well-being Future Generations Bill which makes provision for public bodies to act in the pursuit of the United Kingdom's environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing by meeting wellbeing objects. states under point 7:*

Wellbeing duty on public bodies: ways of working

In full filling its wellbeing duty under section 5(2), a public body must take account of the following.

- (a) The importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long-term needs, especially where things done to meet short term needs may have a detrimental long-term effect;*
- (c) The importance of deploying resources to undertake long –term planning.*



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There were 541 responses to the consultation from which 92% disagreed with the closure of the nursery school. This indicates a high number of residents in the Hetton ward value the impact the nursery school has on its community and its cultural background. There is a wellbeing duty on public bodies to safeguard the social and cultural wellbeing of its citizens. It appears there has been a disregard for the views of Hetton community.

Finance has been given as a reason for closing the Nursery School. The proposal states, 'despite additional financial support'. This point needs to be explained in more detail as it is misleading to those who will be making the decision of the future of the nursery. I am assuming the statement refers to the Lump Sum awarded to all maintained nursery schools from central government. This fund essentially supports the operational statutory duties placed on all maintained schools. The wording in the proposal infers this particular nursery school has received something extra and not their entitlement as part of the early years funding.

Using finance as a reason for closure goes against the advice of the DFE, Nursery Schools 'should not be closed purely on financial ground or deficit budget, if there is a need for places. Funding for Maintained Nursery School remains in a consultation period with Central Government, but it has been acknowledged there is the intention to fund in line with other maintained school formulas linked to the operational costs incurred by a maintained school. It is premature make a decision on the future of this nursery when not all of the facts have been gathered about the future funding.

Nursery schools have traditionally supported communities with a high level of services that have a significant impact on the outcomes for children. Alongside this they have a culture of social and community inclusion, that families embrace. The performance of this particular nursery school has to be commended, it has managed to maintain high levels of support, care and education despite significant long term under funding.

On behalf of



Oxclose Community Nursery School Governing Board



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