

The Governors of Cannon Lane Junior School



It's where we shine

Cannon Lane Junior School,
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Pinner,
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Tel: 020 8868 7809

Chair: Mrs Teresa Jones
Vice Chair: Cllr Kam Chana

16th April 2013

Mr Adrian Parker
Head of Education Strategy and School Organisation
Harrow Teacher's Centre
Tudor Road
Wealdstone
Harrow
Middlesex
HA3 5PQ

Dear Adrian

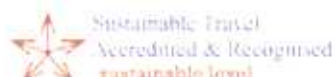
Statutory Proposals to combine Cannon Lane First School (4-7 Years) and Cannon Lane Junior School

Please find attached our representations in respect of the above proposal for reporting to the Cabinet meeting on 9th May 2013.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T Jones'.

Teresa Jones
Chair of Governors
Cannon Lane Junior School



REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE GOVERNING BODY OF CANNON LANE JUNIOR SCHOOL IN RELATION TO THE STATUTORY PROPOSALS TO COMBINE CANNON LANE FIRST SCHOOL (4-7 YEARS) AND CANNON LANE JUNIOR SCHOOL

The following information is submitted by the Governing Body of Cannon Lane Junior School following the publication of the Statutory Proposal on 7th March 2013.

Procedure

The Governing Body of Cannon Lane Junior School wishes to record our concern that the information submitted by the Governing Body in response to the consultation has been totally excluded from the published information and do not view this as a transparent process. The response document (copy attached) has not been published as an integral part of this process to enable all interested parties to have a comprehensive understanding of the context of the proposals on our school. The information submitted by the governing body was based on extensive knowledge and experience of the impact the proposals would have on our school and as all other response information has been included we feel that this questions the objectivity of the whole process.

The governing body has fully co-operated with LA Officers during the process and have adhered to the requirement in the Amalgamation Policy 2008 Annex A Communication. We have not communicated our view during the Consultation period as recommended in the Policy but are now penalised as our view is not to be included in the published response that is included in the Statutory Proposals for interested parties e.g. parents and staff.

Governing Body

The Cannon Lane Junior School Governing Body is constituted with representatives from the different groups within our school community including parents and staff. The parents and staff are elected through a democratic process. We are unclear why the view of the governing body, who are responsible for leading and managing the school in conjunction with the Headteacher and who have the in depth knowledge, is not considered. The elected representatives were chosen by a far greater number of parents than responded to the Consultation yet it seems that this is not a consideration in the published proposals. The governing body have ensured that our children receive the best possible Education and our school is consistently one of the top performing schools in Harrow which we do not want to compromise.

Councillors have previously stated that they value the contribution governors make to the high standards in Harrow Schools but the Amalgamation Policy does not support the view as there appears to be no recognition of the individual school context and knowledge.

We are aware that the other Junior School in Harrow facing the same circumstances also does not wish to amalgamate and therefore it would seem governors do not want to be forced to follow a route that they do not believe to be in the best interest of the children. The policy may have been seen as appropriate in 2008 but in 2013 a lot has changed.

Impact on children

The children are the reason why we are governors and we want the very best for them as demonstrated in our Consultation response document. We are therefore very concerned that by following the Amalgamation Policy the Council will be choosing to allow the removal of **£154,000** per annum from the funding for the combined school. This is due to the new school funding formula that has been implanted by the Government and is ongoing for every year. This is an increase on the amount that was advised when the Consultation process was undertaken and will therefore have a greater impact. This budget cut of such a significant amount of money is a very compelling reason not to proceed with the proposed amalgamation.

Whilst we recognise that there would be some savings from a combined school, the savings will not be at the level of the budget cut. This budget reduction will have serious implication on the quality of Education that can be provided to the children and potentially could result in cuts to staffing which would have most impact on the more vulnerable children who need extra support. Our concern is that the level of funding would remain available for the Cannon Lane children by staying as 2 separate schools as each school would retain its full funding entitlement and why would the Council choose to disadvantage the children when there is no financial benefit to the Council. It is extremely important to retain as much funding as possible within the School Budget in order to face the unclear financial future.

School Size

At all stages of the Consultation and also in the Statutory Proposals it has been stated by the LA Officers that the size of the combined school would remain the same size as the 2 separate schools and this information was provided to our school community. It is now of concern that the schools have been contacted as the Council wishes to include us in a bid for permanent expansion to four form entry. This will potentially lead to a combined school of 840 pupils which we are opposed to and believe many parents would view the amalgamation very differently if this information had been published as part of current Statutory Proposals and in the original Consultation.

Conclusion

We do not consider that the Statutory Proposals are in the best interest of the children at Cannon Lane Junior School and hope that the all of the information that we have submitted to support this view will be fully considered. The rationale included in an outdated Policy need to be considered in the current changing Educational Landscape and Governing Bodies are very well placed through their knowledge, commitment and experience to know what will be best for their individual school. We are very concerned that the additional issue of school expansion is now being progressed and question why this information was withheld in the original Consultation.

Teresa Jones
Chair of Governors
Cannon Lane Junior School



Recommendation from the Governing Body of Cannon Lane Junior School

February 2013

Background

Cannon Lane Junior School is a thriving 3 form entry school providing places for 360 pupils in years 3- 6 aged 7-11. It is located in Pinner and shares a site with Cannon Lane First School (4-7 years) and is situated on the upper floor of the building. The school is highly successful and provides all of its pupils with an extensive range of opportunities enabling them to become independent and self confident.

Our Vision

Our school is committed to excellence. It is a school where academic achievement is promoted alongside the development of the whole personality. It is a school where all children's talents are celebrated, including those from the broader curriculum of sport, music and the arts.

We aim to continuously develop the quality of teaching and learning, encouraging every child to improve and progress in a broad and balanced curriculum. We also strive to develop the qualities of responsibility, self-confidence and care for others.

Cannon Lane Junior School aims to...

Educate children in a happy, safe and caring environment.
Provide an active curriculum which includes National Curriculum objectives.
Develop the children's independence, confidence and sense of self-worth.
Value every child equally whatever their ability, ethnicity or background.
Encourage every child to reach his/her full potential.
Provide an effective and flexible learning environment in which children, staff, governors and parents work together in partnership.
Develop values and attitudes in accordance with a pluralist society.
Develop self-discipline and set boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
Encourage tolerance, respect and empathy with others.
Foster links with the local community and other schools.

Governing Body

The Governing Body has considered all of the information available and is making its recommendation following the Governing Body Meeting held on Thursday 14th February 2013 which was attended by all governors. The decision is based on what we consider best meets the needs of the current and future children using the experience and knowledge that we have of our School, gained over a period of time. Our decision is based on educational rationale focusing on the boundaries set in the Consultation exercise and with due recourse to the responses submitted from both First and Junior schools. The following issues were considered:-

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Size of the School | 6. Transition |
| 2. Financial Implications | 7. Premises |
| 3. Staffing | 8. Opportunities for children |
| 4. Attainment | 9. Consultation Responses |
| 5. Leadership | 10. Current Educational Landscape |

1. Size of the School

The Junior School has 360 children (30 per class) over 4 year groups. We are therefore classified by the Department of Education as a large school as is Cannon Lane First School (4-7 years). There is concern from parents, pupils and staff of the impact on the children of potentially being in a school of almost 700 pupils. There is no evidence to support children's educational experience being enhanced in such a large school. We believe that the current arrangements facilitate the personal relationship between the Headteacher, staff and all of the pupils and parents which would be lost due to the scale of such a large school. It is evident, from the consultation responses, that our parents welcome the personal contact with the Headteacher which would not be possible in a larger school. Children are concerned about such a wide age range of children being together with different needs when the current provision is age specific and provides very positive results. There will be a loss of the 'community feel' of the schools if such a large single school structure is implemented

2. Financial Implications

Under the arrangements that take effect from April 2013 a new funding formula is being introduced for schools. As a result all separate schools will receive within their budget allocation a lump sum of £142,000. If schools combine there will only be an allocation of one lump sum which will result in a reduction from the total school budget of £142,00 annually. This reduction will have a direct impact on the quality of provision for children from both schools as it is highly likely that the savings that would have to be made would be from the staffing budget, which is the largest element of the school budget. This could result in lesser provision for those children with additional needs as Teaching Assistants may be reduced. Whilst there would be a saving of a Headteachers salary and some service agreement costs this will not equate to the budget reduction. Over a period of just a few years the Cannon Lane Schools would lose over £1,000,000 which would make a significant difference to the quality of the Education. We do not believe that this can be justified in the current financial climate with ongoing deflationary pressures and serious cuts to budgets. The present and future predicted environments demand that Governing Bodies seek to ensure that we have the maximum funding for the children, we believe this impacts all children in the schools. Whilst the First School has previously managed a budget reduction this was accompanied by the reduction of 90 children and associated staff costs when an entire year 3 cohort was moved to the Junior School. There will only be some cost reductions if an amalgamation takes place and so it is the children who would suffer as a result. Staying as separate schools means more money is available to meet the needs of all of our children.

This cut, if the schools were to amalgamate, equates to **10%** of the current Junior School budget. A number of parents and staff voiced concern at such a significant budgetary cut in the public meetings and unfortunately there was no hard data presented which detailed how such cuts could be mitigated whilst preserving the present quality of education.

3. Staffing

The current staffing arrangements in the Junior School provide the children with experienced, committed teaching and non teaching staff who have excellent knowledge of the Key Stage 2 curriculum. They are led by a Senior Management Team with in depth knowledge and experience of the National Curriculum appropriate for the age of the children. The staff are responsible for the everyday experiences for the children and it is due to their commitment that

we have such positive outcomes for the children. The staff have the understanding and expertise of what best meets the needs of the children in their classes and the overwhelming view expressed at the Consultation Meetings and in the responses to the Consultation is that the Junior School staff do not wish the schools to combine. The staff are doing an excellent job so there is no reason to change something that is working so well for the benefit of the children. As one parent voiced, "If it ain't broke, why fix it" – the concern being that alternative arrangements to amalgamation are possible which would preserve the high quality education and the finances required to maintain it.

The Junior School staff have been trained and chosen to teach the 7-11 age range so there is a risk that we would lose staff, which again would affect the quality of Education provided to the children. We have experienced no difficulty in attracting high quality staff to our school and retaining them. Our staff have access to a full range of Continued Professional Development offered through HSIP and therefore gain knowledge of the whole primary phase. As part of the Family of Schools project we link with a group of similar schools within Harrow therefore enabling our staff to benefit from this excellent development opportunity.

4. Attainment

Cannon Lane Junior School is a high achieving school as evidenced in the attached Key Stage 2 results table (appendix 1). The children consistently achieve well above the National Average and are consistently amongst the top performing schools in Harrow. The Key Stage 2 results also show that we are often the top performing 3 form entry school in Harrow.

Our children make good progress throughout the School as evidenced by the tracking data and therefore there is no evidence to support the view in the Consultation Document that 'Where primary education is provided in separate key stages, there is generally very little effective curriculum continuity and progression. In such situations the scope for discontinuity is increased'

The Curriculum provided at Cannon Lane Junior School was judged as ' Outstanding ' in the last OFSTED inspection.

Evidence from the Harrow key stage 2 results and from the neighbouring London Borough of Hillingdon indicate that separate Junior Schools do have excellent levels of attainment. The Governors do not feel that a coherent set of evidential data or arguments were presented with respect to present attainment data of the Junior School. Indeed, it was often recognised that the Junior School data is exemplary and the schools results are popular with both parents and our 'link' high schools. After consideration of evidence from other local and national school amalgamations Governors were concerned that the short term turbulence generated by amalgamation could have serious medium and potentially long-term impact upon attainment and achievement at the school e.g. though loss of staff, support arrangements, staffing structures, expertise, specialism's and the like.

5. Leadership

The current Leadership model at Cannon Lane has worked extremely well with benefits for pupils, parents and staff. The Governing Body works with the Senior Management Team to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. This is achievable with 360 pupils and a team dedicated to this number of pupils. It is a concern that the effectiveness of this model will be

diluted and the Headteacher become a more remote Leader if the number of pupils is increased to nearly 700.

It is clear that based on our experience the outcomes for children have been very positive and we can see no reason to change a very successful Leadership structure.

6. Transition

At Cannon Lane Junior School we believe that our transition arrangements for pupils are highly successful. The feedback from the parental survey in 2012 (appendix 2) records a 93% satisfaction rate. This is also supported by the feedback from the staff and pupils. We continue to review the arrangements to ensure that the needs of all children are met. We believe that after making the successful transition to Year 3 this provides the children with the confidence to move to High School at the end of Year 6. The feedback from High Schools and parents is that our former pupils find transition an easy process.

Once children move to the Junior School they adapt quickly to the key stage 2 curriculum and the data shows they make good progress. The continuity is ensured through dialogue between the staff of both schools .Whilst we do not have a high number of children with Statements of Special Educational Needs, we ensure that those children with special educational needs have their needs met and this has not been an issue at Cannon Lane Junior School. The personal development and well-being of our pupils and the pastoral care of pupils was judged as 'Outstanding' in the last OFSTED Report.

We do not have any evidence that by making one change at age 7 that the transition to Cannon Lane Junior School has any negative impact on the children and cannot see why this system that has worked successfully over a number of years should be cited; it is our opinion that this statement is unsubstantiated.

7. Premises

The two schools share one site but are based on separate floors of the building. Due to the design of the premises there is no opportunity for more than the current number of pupils to join together for e.g. assemblies. The Junior School values the time that the whole school meets together as it promotes the sense of belonging and being part of the School. Whole school assemblies are a substantial feature of all schools and certainly they are a critical element of the ethos and success of the Junior School as was often expressed by students, parents and staff of the Junior School. Despite queries and concerns raised at the public meetings there is currently no funding allocated to make changes to the building and it is a concern that as the school would continue to operate on the two separate floors that there is no reason not to continue with the current proven arrangements with the celebrated success achieved by the each of the schools..

The physical separation would also be evident as there is limited space for a larger staff room and again no funding has been allocated.

There is no funding currently allocated to the schools for building alterations and therefore as a combined school would have a reduced budget there would not be finances available to make any changes and in addition a significant 10% annual loss in income.

8. Opportunities for children

The Junior School is committed to promoting the development of the whole child and therefore offers a wide range of opportunities. There is a prefect system, buddy scheme and Sports

Leaders all of which enable the older pupils to experience the responsibility for the younger children and to provide aspirational role models and mentoring support. We have a very effective School Council providing valuable feedback on matters across the whole school. The music provision and other extra curricula activities provided ensure that the children already have access to the full range of opportunities. Governors have carefully considered the opinions expressed by the Junior School children in their consultation responses, especially older children at the school, who have experienced both schools.

9. Consultation Responses

The governing body has read the comments provided by the respondents to the Consultation and have the following observations. The response rate from parents across the two schools is approximately 15%. Chris Melly noted that this was a higher than usual level of engagement. The response rate from the Junior School staff and Junior School children is significantly higher. The staff and children wish to remain as separate schools. In the breakdown of the children's responses it was noted that the Year 6 children, who have the benefit of experiencing both schools for the longest period of time expressed significant preference to remain as separate schools.

It was also noted in the comments on a significant number of parental responses that the focus had been on personalities rather than on the issue of whether the two schools should combine. The clear focus of the Consultation was on whether the schools should combine or remain separate and whilst the responses have produced a range of information it has been the role of the governing body to focus on the subject of the Consultation and hence our recommendations are derived from the response to this exercise.

10. Current Educational Landscape

It has been recognised by the Governing Body that the Harrow Council Amalgamation Policy was issued in 2008 when there was a very different Education Landscape in Harrow and nationally. We are aware that the Policy was under review from the draft document provided to us dated October 2012 but nevertheless we recognise the 2008 Policy is still in place and this has been followed. We are concerned that as the changes and reforms being introduced nationally are implemented the role of the Local Authority has changed and this was detailed at the recent Harrow Conference 'Shaping the Future Direction for Harrow Primary Schools' on 1st February 2013. . We feel it is essential that Cannon Lane Junior School Governing Body is given the opportunity to make the decision as to how they embrace the changes and take forward the School to meet the challenges ahead.

Conclusion

After considering all of the information, and based on our knowledge and experience of our school, we recommend that the schools stay separate. We hope you will value the views of the governors in reaching this decision, fully consider all of the reasons outlined in this document and allow us to continue to provide the high quality education the children deserve. We are very seriously concerned about the major impact of the funding reduction and believe that this will have a considerable detrimental effect on the children. This combined with all of the issues included above lead us to believe that there are compelling and over-riding educational reasons for the Schools to remain separate. Cannon Lane Junior School is providing an

excellent education for all of its pupils and by remaining separate will continue to do so for the children in the future.

The Governing Body's considered view, in light of the Consultation and its responses, our knowledge of the impact of the amalgamation (both known and unknown e.g. financial and staffing) and the exemplary attainment data and evidence derived from our many years of experience of the Junior School has led us to the conclusion that we do not wish to amalgamate.

Appendices

1. Cannon Lane Junior School Key Stage 2 Results table
2. Cannon Lane Junior School Parental Questionnaire 2011-12

Appendix 1

KS2 SATS RESULTS 2009 – 2012

| | LEVEL 4 | LEVEL 5 | Level 6 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| | | | |
| 2009 | | | |
| English | 94 | 48 | |
| Maths | 92 | 50 | |
| Science | 98 | 74 | |
| | | | |
| 2010 | | | |
| English | 93 | 54 | |
| Maths | 93 | 62 | |
| Science | 97 | 72 | |
| | | | |
| 2011 | | | |
| English | 92 | 41 | |
| Maths | 89 | 58 | |
| Science | 91 | 41 | |
| | | | |
| 2012 | | | |
| English | 94 | 57 | |
| Maths | 90 | 56 | 22 |
| Science | 97 | 64 | |

Appendix 2

CANNON LANE JUNIOR SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS 2011-12

Please take the trouble to fill in this questionnaire. Your answers will help the children, staff and governors create a better school. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of learning and school life by ticking the appropriate boxes. Please add any additional comments overleaf. Only complete one questionnaire.

TO BE RETURNED TO SCHOOL BY **THURSDAY 22nd MARCH**. THANK YOU.

We/ I have children in the following year group(s):

| Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 30% | 28% | 20% | 25% |

| Aspects of learning & School Life | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Not Very Satisfied | Not at all Satisfied | Unsure or unable to answer |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| The overall education provided for the children | 52% | 45% | 1% | 0% | 2% |
| Helping children with learning difficulties | 14% | 33% | 0% | 0% | 52% |
| Equal opportunities for boys & girls | 48% | 44% | 0% | 0% | 8% |
| Equal opportunities for children from all cultural backgrounds | 49% | 45% | 2% | 0% | 4% |
| Pupil behaviour | 38% | 59% | 0% | 1% | 2% |
| The prefect, house captain & certificate system | 34% | 38% | 1% | 0% | 27% |
| Discipline procedures | 42% | 46% | 4% | 1% | 7% |
| Opportunities to discuss your child's progress | 42% | 55% | 2% | 1% | 0% |
| Out of school hours clubs | 34% | 43% | 7% | 2% | 14% |
| Information provided about the curriculum | 32% | 62% | 5% | 1% | 0% |
| Newsletters | 41% | 58% | 1% | 0% | 0% |
| Transition arrangements from the First School | 45% | 48% | 2% | 1% | 4% |
| Home / School link book | 41% | 55% | 4% | 0% | 0% |
| The school website | 36% | 54% | 9% | 1% | 0% |
| Frontier information | 39% | 52% | 5% | 2% | 2% |
| The helpfulness of staff | 58% | 39% | 2% | 0% | 1% |
| Opportunities to help in school | 34% | 39% | 2% | 1% | 24% |
| The extent to which the school listens to parents' views | 29% | 60% | 1% | 2% | 8% |

Please ring one of the options below

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Homework - amount | Too much 10% | Too little 13% | About right 77% |
|-------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|