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WELLDON PARK SCHOOLS GOVERNING BODIES JOINT SUBMISSION REGARDING AMALGAMATION

Dear Johanna,

The following is the text of the submission agreed by the Governing Bodies of both Welldon Park Schools for inclusion in the Cabinet Agenda on 19th February 2015:

"Cabinet Members need to be made fully aware that the Welldon Park Infant and Junior Schools are absolutely unique in Harrow (as well as in London and elsewhere) by being on separate sites. They also need to be reminded that just five years ago, at a meeting on 12th November 2009, Cabinet agreed with the joint submission by the Governing Bodies that this was a very sound reason for deciding not to make them amalgamate, although it was Harrow Council Policy at that time.

It was believed nothing had changed since 2009 but both Governing Bodies agreed to comply with the Council's consultation procedure involving parents/carers, staff and governors even though their Chairmen had initially been told by Council Officers that, irrespective of the result, Council Policy would apply and Item 11 on page 4 of the Amalgamation Policy July 2013 would be ignored.

It was agreed to set up a Joint Governing Bodies' Working Group (between August and December 2014), engage the services of an experienced and neutral adviser, funded by both schools, and hold meetings with staff, parents/carers and residents that would be addressed by Council Officers. The outcome from all stakeholders was a significant "no" to amalgamation. This was mainly due to Council Officers being unable to explain what differed from the situation in 2009 as well as responding to questions regarding amalgamation by referring solely to the 24 Harrow Primary Schools, every single one of which share the same site, and repeatedly ignoring the situation of our two schools being physically separated. It was very much felt that this separation of sites would not allow us to benefit from any of the financial advantages amalgamation might bring when schools are on the same sites.

With Cabinet having decided (without discussion) on 11th December 2014 for the amalgamation process to go ahead we now feel obliged to require them to take into consideration the various reasons why we are still most concerned that amalgamation could have severe adverse results for our schools and thus for them to take responsibility for the outcome. The outcome has created a belief that the Council's consultation was meaningless, costly and time-wasting with the result being a foregone conclusion, causing further loss of faith by the public.

It must be stressed that both Governing Bodies are not opposed to educational amalgamation as such but are seriously concerned about the effect of physical

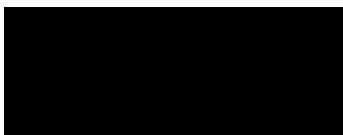
amalgamation on the schools' ability to provide the high standard of education which is their joint aim, especially in the transitional period.

So far as the pupils and parents are concerned there would remain two separate schools between pupils up to year 2 and those from year 3 upwards – a big difference with the 24 schools on one site across the Borough that have amalgamated. We have various concerns regarding the buildings, one school being 103 years old and the other built in the mid-70s. For example, what will happen to staffrooms, administration offices, reception, site security, entrances, meeting places, branding, telephones, computer and staff car parking? How will two separate buildings facilitate closer working of staff and pupils? Who will finance the necessary changes? Where are the budget savings to compensate for a joint reduction likely to exceed £150,000? None of the cost efficiencies, that the traditional two-school-on-one-site model might have realised elsewhere in the Borough, would be realised here. In our discussions with the Council Officers it was clear that they could not give both Governing Bodies definitive answers regarding any additional funding due to loss of school budget, help regarding change of infrastructure, IT and branding should the two schools become one.

There was also a lack of understanding of timescales regarding the advertisement and recruitment of a new Headteacher should the schools combine. Thus there are anxieties about the effect on staffing, particularly how to secure the services of someone with the necessary experience and talent to manage two schools combined in this way. We know that finding someone with this ability is likely to be very challenging, and both Governing Bodies fear that time would be far too short after February 2015 to advertise, interview and appoint in sufficient time before the start of the next scholastic year in September 2015. We have been recommended to suggest that any decision to introduce amalgamation should be subject to it not happening unless and until someone suitable is recruited to the role of Executive Headteacher.

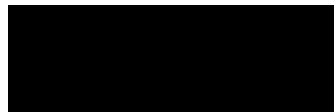
As things stand, the future for both Welldon Park Schools seems very uncertain which is of great concern to both governing bodies. Bearing in mind that our duty is to provide secure and effective facilities for the benefit of our pupils it is essential that all the doubt and uncertainty resulting from the current situation is resolved before a step into the unknown is taken. The decision rests with the Cabinet and therein is the responsibility."

Yours sincerely,



John Nickolay
Chairman of WPJS
Governing Body

30/01/2015



Rev. Brian Bishop
Chairman of WPIS
Governing Body

30.01.15