

Cheapside C. of E. Primary School

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Headteacher
Mrs Kate Searle

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Dear Parents

Save our School

We're writing to ask you to **help us save Cheapside CE Primary School**. You may have heard that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is currently undertaking a consultation to work out how best to create much needed additional school places in Ascot. You might not be aware that we would love to be the top choice when the consultation ends; in fact, the school's future depends on it.

Cheapside CE Primary School, as you may know, takes in 16 pupils per year, combining year groups into four classrooms in total - a school size of 112. The budget given to any school is based primarily on headcount, so the smaller the school, the smaller the annual budget. In recent years balancing our school budget has become increasingly difficult and this year, despite extensive cost-saving exercises, we are currently experiencing a large shortfall, threatening the long-term viability of the school.

Those of you who attended the PTA committee meeting at the beginning of the school year will have heard that in addition to supplementing the school budget, providing extra funds for special activities or resources for the children, the funds raised by the PTA, have actually been helping the school survive.

For many years our board of governors and Mrs Searle have been investigating options that could (1) increase the money coming into the school, such as through fundraising initiatives, donations from local charitable organisations and gifts from local companies; or (2) decrease the running costs of the school through efficiency savings reductions in staffing and the possibility of becoming part of a multi-academy trust. This last option could lead to the loss of our head teacher, our business manager and changes to the ethos of the school that could threaten the heart of what it offers to pupils, their parents and to the community. Without one of these options, in time, increasing financial difficulties could lead to the closure of the school and the re-use or sale of the land - the outcome of which we can't know. For this reason, we welcomed the news that this consultation process was taking place and that Cheapside CE Primary School might be considered for

expansion - we truly believe this is an amazing opportunity for the school and one that we very much hope you will support us in.

The expansion of Cheapside CE Primary School could benefit the school in so many positive ways:

1. **Increased budget** - Single form entry of 30 children per year, increasing the school's capacity to 210, would give us a crucial increase in annual budget. This would allow us to ensure that every year group continues to have the resources they need to give the children the best learning opportunities at school. It would also allow the money raised by the PTA each year to be spent on experiences that enrich the children's learning.
2. **Whole year teaching** - The introduction of the new national curriculum in 2014 has presented significant challenges to teach in mixed year group classes. If the expansion goes ahead each year group will have its own teacher(s), its own classroom and children will benefit enormously from being taught solely among their peer group. Schools that offer single year group teaching generally find it easier to recruit.
3. **Maintaining the essence of Cheapside CE Primary School** - Lastly but far from being the least important point, is that Cheapside CE Primary School is a very special school. The head teacher, and the staff, knows each child by name, they know their personalities and their stories; and the children are treasured, taught and looked after in a way that we very much want to preserve. We will remain a small school in size; 210 children would still make us a comparable size to the other schools in the Ascot Cluster, but we will also remain a small school in culture and essence, holding onto all that is great about the school, something that other options, simply won't allow us to do.

You have all received a consultation form that can also be filled out online. This must be done by 15th July 2016 in order for your views to be included in the consultation. Please can you ensure that you, and any other adults in your household, as well as family and friends, fill in the form and select Cheapside CE Primary School as option 1. Our school's future really does depend on it.

Copies of the consultation form can be downloaded from the school's website, and we will have copies of the forms in the School Office, allowing you to fill them in and have the school take care of delivery.

If you have any questions at all and want to speak to someone in more detail about the expansion plans, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

Amelia Robinson
Chair of Governors
Cheapside CE Primary School