

Cheapside C. of E. Primary School

Watersplash Lane • Cheapside • Ascot • Berkshire • SL5 7QJ

Telephone: (01344) 621112

Fax: (01344) 624035

Website: www.cheapsideschool.org.uk

E-mail: cheapsidecofe@rbwm.org.uk



Headteacher
Mrs Kate Searle

‘Achieving our Best, In Thought,
In Word, In Deed’

1 July 2016

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.

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. (Further details of how we feel expansion will benefit pupils at Cheapside CE Primary school are detailed later in this letter.)

We understand that as neighbours of the school, you may have concerns about the expansion plans; notably the increased traffic and the building works that come with any expansion. Cheapside CE Primary School is a vital part of the village and as

such we take our ties with the community incredibly seriously. We want to assure you that if the expansion was to go ahead we will do everything we can to minimise its disruption.

Traffic

Whatever the outcome of the consultation we have already taken note of your recent concerns. We have for a long time asked parents to refrain from parking on Dorian Drive but from Monday 4th July we will be encouraging this further. We will also encourage any parents wishing to bring their children into school to park on the pavement side of Watersplash Lane. Volunteers from the school's PTA will be manning this initiative for the first couple of days to help direct cars. In addition, in order to minimise large influxes of traffic, we are also investigating holding some of our future, larger events off-site - this year's school play will be hosted at St Mary's School.

As part of the consultation process, as Chair of Governors, I have already visited other schools and seen their 'drop-off' zones in operation. Schemes such a drop-off zone, lollipop people, and other traffic calming measures are being discussed with a traffic planning consultant. The implementation of these options, combined with staggered start and finish times, as well as the walking bus from the Rainbow Breakfast and After-School Club at the Village Hall, will all help to minimise disruption.

Both the school and the borough are committed to delivering a solution that works for both the school and its neighbours.

It should also be noted that if the expansion does go ahead, the school will not be admitting an extra 100 pupils straight away - initial numbers will be far fewer than this, with an increase to full capacity over several years. This allows us to iron out any difficulties that might occur as our numbers grow

Building works

We are exploring options with the borough for access to the project to be up the front school drive and not across the allotments as happened previously. Access via the school gates, would involve a partitioned, safe route for the pupils, staff and visitors to enter the school. There are also options to limit contractor access at the beginning and end of the school day.

We hope that you understand why it is so important for Cheapside CE Primary School to have this opportunity to expand, and survive. Cheapside Village has benefited enormously from having the school at its heart, and we very much hope the school can continue to be part of the village for many years to come.

Yours sincerely

Amelia Robinson

**Chair of Governors
Cheapside CE Primary School**

Additional Information

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.