

Consultation Responses

- (a) Comment 1: can I have sight of the impact assessment of these proposed cuts will impact the individual schools. Did each school complete an impact assessment or were these requests following all schools being provided with the forecasting figures and these schools being proactive to ensure that they budget appropriately?
- (b) Comment 2: I noticed that the Policy & Scrutiny Committee Children's Services, Education & Skills resolved in September 2022; "that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills be requested to submit the (tabled) report on school place planning, together with the statements from Isle of Wight Primary Headteachers and Primary Chairs of Governors, to Cabinet for consideration and identification of options regarding the future provision of primary education on the Island."

I can't see that this has been to Cabinet since this September meeting, nor can I see it on the Forward Plan. It appears to have been ignored. It is clear to me piecemeal reductions at a few schools – such as proposed in this consultation – isn't going to solve the problem of the massive over provision of primary school places. There is a clear need for a strategic approach from the Council leadership. Trying to keep all schools open isn't going to work.

- (c) Comment 3 – I would like to see the PAN number at Carisbrooke Primary School reduced. While it is true that the school could do with more space, especially when it comes to their school hall, I believe that reducing the PAN number will be to the detriment of children at the school.

Unlike many smaller primary schools on the Island, children at Carisbrooke Primary benefit from having sports coaches and a dedicated and very talented music teacher (even though he is shared with three other schools). For those children who are more creative than academic, these subjects are vitally important. Having teaching staff with a passion for a subject is vitally important when looking to inspire young people. In many smaller primary schools on the Island there just isn't enough budget to have dedicated sports/arts/music teachers so the quality of the teaching is varied depending on the teacher's individual enthusiasm for the subject. I believe we should be using the model at Carisbrooke as an example of best practice. They have teaching staff who are passionate about non-core subjects and inspire children. We should definitely be raising aspiration among young people on the Island.

If the PAN number is reduced, funding for the school will inevitably reduce and therefore opportunities for the children will also reduce. We all understand the importance of exercise, art and music to an individual's mental health. These subjects need passionate teachers, which requires funding.

In my opinion larger primary schools on the Island, such as Carisbrooke Primary, need to be kept full and need to see investment with improved facilities. I would far rather see smaller failing schools with low budgets and lacking in opportunities for young people close than larger primary schools brought down to a lower standard to spread numbers more evenly. If there's no business case to keep a school open, close it and invest in the ones that are thriving.

- (d) Comment 4 – school numbers will eventually return to trending up. No doubt many housing applications around Godshill and Rookly as an example closing schools because of short term data is a bad decision. Keep Chillerton open we will need it soon!