

Corporate Scrutiny Committee – 6 June 2023

Written question from Simon Coombes of Ryde to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

In St Mary Primary School's most recent OSTED report, it was said that "*the newly appointed senior leaders have a clear vision for the school. They understand the strengths of the school and are taking effective action to improve outcomes for pupils*". This is after they had been in post for less than a term. In your press release, Councillor Debbie Andre talks of "providing excellent education for our children." How then has the council selected St Mary's as a candidate for possible closure, a school that is on such a strong upward trajectory, led by "effective leaders" with a "clear vision"?

Response

Thank you for your recent question submitted to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee about the primary school place planning paper that was due to be discussed at the Isle of Wight Cabinet on Thursday 8 June 2023.

The Isle of Wight Council's Children's Services Management Team were asked to draft this paper following a discussion on forecast pupil numbers at the September 2022 Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills.

However, as the Cabinet has decided that the paper will no longer be presented and therefore the recommendations will not be taken forward for public consultation, a response to your questions is no longer appropriate.

It is important to note that the questions submitted are exactly the type of queries we would have been seeking during the consultation, had the decision been made on 8 June for the consultation to begin. It was intended that officers would have attended public meetings to explore these issues in full. After the consultation the views of all those contributing to the debate would have been shared with Cabinet and fully considered before any final proposals were made for further consultation.

It is our experience that such consultations have been meaningful and have often led to better decision making with proposals being refined before further statutory consultation.

Should Cabinet decide to undertake a consultation in the future I would urge you to contribute with queries such as these to the discussions at that time.