

**Queens Park School**

**School Governors**

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Chair Mr Tony Gray  
Vice Chair- Mr Andy Bennett



Mr P Duxbury  
Director of Children's Services,  
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County Offices  
Newland  
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5 July 2011

Dear Mr Duxbury

**Queens Park School, South Park, Lincoln**

I am writing to you in connection with the proposals for the future provision of special school education as set out in a report that was recently considered by the County Council's Executive on 3 May 2011. In summary, these proposals involve closing Queens Park School in the autumn of 2013 and placing our children in either St. Francis or St. Christopher schools, that decision to be taken on the basis of the needs of the children and the wishes of the parents.

As you would expect, in considering this proposal, the governing body has tried, as far as possible to learn the views of stakeholders and to understand the impact that the implementation of these proposals would have on the children, their parents and carers, the staff at the school and the wider community.

I have to tell you that the response that we have received to these proposals has been overwhelmingly hostile. Parents are shocked and dismayed at the prospect of losing the school that, in their view, has provided a superb standard of education and care for their children and was assessed as being outstanding at its last Ofsted inspection. They are extremely concerned about the impact that the move to another school would have on the wellbeing and happiness of their children.

Staff are, understandably, worried about the end result of the implementation of these proposals on their jobs, the uncertainty that this will generate against a background of unprecedented cuts in public spending and the fact that, of all the staff working at the three schools involved in this proposal, they will be the only ones who will have to apply for posts. This would seem to run counter to natural justice.



There has been an expression of genuine outrage and anger in the local community at this proposal. This school is highly valued by the people living in the community around it and our children are well loved by them. The prospect of losing this important community asset has provoked expressions of concern on the part of people who have no stake in the school other than it being a part of their local community.

The City of Lincoln councillors have expressed to the governing body a feeling of disenfranchisement from the process of the generation and evaluation of options. They have made the powerful point that, had they been involved at an earlier stage in that process, there may have been opportunities to generate a wider range of more imaginative and innovative options that would not have had the unacceptable impacts associated with the option that your Executive will consider later this month.

Staying with that issue of alternative options, it has become clear during this period of consultation that there are alternative options available that were not considered prior to the generation of the County's preferred option, largely on the assumption that no additional funding would be available. Over recent weeks it has emerged that funding up to £2.1m can be found to fund the implementation of the proposal that is out to consultation. Consultees expressed a view, and the governing body agrees with that view, that some or all of that funding could be used to improve the school on its existing site, thus saving the school and avoiding the terrible impacts set out above. Another alternative that has been put forward is that the school apply for Academy status, and access central government funding to ensure its long term future although taking this step would, of course, take the school from out of the control of the Local Education Authority

The principle that governors have tried to be guided by in considering our response to this proposal is that we wish to support whatever proposal will promote and protect the best interests of our children in terms of their education, wellbeing and happiness. Applying that guiding principle and having regard to the almost universal opposition to the proposal to close the school, the governing body have concluded that they can no longer support it. That is the view of all of the governors.

We do have a recommendation that we request the Executive Committee to consider. Our recommendation is that you do not make a final decision at this meeting, as set out in the original timetable. We recommend that, rather than doing that, you reopen the whole issue of the future provision of special education in Lincoln, commission the development of costed detailed business cases for proposals that will allow the school to remain open and ensure that the wider community, including District Council elected members are consulted on these.

Yours sincerely

Tony Gray  
Chair of Governors