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Dear Sir,

Proposed closure of Monkwood Infant School.

I am most concerned to hear from a local meeting that you plan to close our local Infant School, Monkwood Infant School, which will include the closure of the newly built nursery, this is very likely to directly impact my daughter, who is currently 10 months old.

Having looked at local statistics, I feel that this is a backwards move, as it can be seen from the statistics available from the LEA website that school which have previously been 'amalgamated' that performance of the school's suffers.

It is also plain to see that the expansion of buildings on the junior school site to accommodate the infants will have a dramatic impact on the space available for play, also taking into consideration that there will be twice as many pupils to use this space. Even before the infant pupils join with the junior's there will be a decrease in space available to the junior school children whilst the building takes place. I also understand that it is planned that the building works will take place whilst the school is still in session. There are many issues which will affect and disrupt children currently in education particularly distraction, noise and dust, which may also be health issues and will certainly impact on the schools performance.

The current ofstead report for the Infant School shows the school to be 'providing good value for money' and has rated it as 'grade 2' or 'good', whilst this is also true of the most recent inspection report for the juniors, it is worth noting that the report also says that standards have improved recently, but that standards previously were poor due to inconsistency and 'considerable staff turnover'. Obviously staff turnover in the event of an amalgamation of the schools is likely to increase as staff feel less secure in their positions. This will again contribute to a lessening of quality of teaching at the school.

I have read the minutes of the meeting at which you informed the parents of the school children and am surprised that as you were aware of Mrs Cohen's age and your policy to amalgamate separate infant and junior schools, that a substantial amount of money was spent on the construction of the new nursery, this seems at odds with the current financial climate.

As a minimum I would suggest that the amalgamation is put on hold until the outcome of 'the primary review' which is currently being undertaken is known. The current interim

report research 9/1 – The structure of primary education England and other countries, states on page 12 section 3.4

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/pdfs/downloadable/proreport.pdf> ‘The Plowden Report (DES 1967) recommended separate first and middle schools as the most suitable organisation of primary education; although it suggested combined (that is, combined first and middle) schools may be necessary in rural areas and some voluntary schools.

Interestingly, the period since the Plowden Report appears to have seen a reduction in both first and middle schools’. Indeed this recommendation is made in Chapter 13 – The size of primary schools.

I have been able to find no evidence that the amalgamation of infant and junior schools is beneficial to the children.

Yours faithfully,

Carol Spencer (Mrs)