

We, the Governing Body of Penhill Primary School, feel that the elected representatives of Swindon Borough Council have been deliberately misinformed by the information given to them concerning the move of Penhill Primary School to the Swindon Academy.

In an attempt to balance the brief to Cabinet members, Penhill Primary School governing body would like members of the Cabinet to consider the following information which, we feel, puts our side of the argument/case.

One point which must be made is that neither staff nor governors wish Penhill Primary School to leave the Local Authority and therefore want to pursue Trust status and thus stay within the Local Authority.

We have taken the entries from the consultative documents and provided our more balanced view.

Consultative document: “It serves pupils from Pinehurst, Gorse Hill, Seven Fields and Penhill, which is one of the most deserving areas of Swindon.”

Response: Ofsted report ‘The school serves an area of significant economic and social deprivation. Around half the pupils have some learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this is far higher than the national average. Children’s attainment when they start school in the Nursery at age three is very low. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is among the highest in the country.’

The 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation places Penhill Primary School at the top of all schools in Swindon, with a score of 46.9. Consideration of the index (see Appendix 1) clearly shows there is a difference between the Pinehurst and Penhill estates and therefore, we would suggest, a different solution, tailored to the specific needs of the community, is required. The analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation for the Department for Work and Pensions which placed the Penhill ward as the 5th most deprived in the South-west of England, would also support this case.

Consultative document: “The Penhill school building will be extensively refurbished

Response: Actually, the building works will only ‘bring the existing buildings to the minimum current (build) standard.’ More to the point, the majority of the suggested changes were identified by Penhill Primary School nearly 5 years ago and at which time SBC drew up plans. The original plans have merely been subject to minor updates!

Consultative document: “Penhill Primary school is on the DCSF list of 266 ‘hard to shift’ primary schools and has failed to meet the floor target at Key Stage Two in both maths and English for five years, despite receiving considerable additional resource and support from the Local Authority.”

Response: Ofsted report ‘School leaders embraced the intensive support provided by the local authority to help raise standards. As a result, there is clear direction for raising standards and a steady improvement has been secured in pupils’ achievement.’

Response: Ofsted report ‘The school provides a satisfactory standard of education despite the very low standards reached in English, mathematics and science. Standards are low partly because there is a very large group of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory overall from the Foundation Stage to Year 6.’

Consultative document: “It removes a number of transition issues when moving from one school to another”

Response: This would be true if the children from Penhill Primary were placed on the academy campus. As this is not happening, the transition issues will remain. Equally, of course, this will be true for all the other academy feeder schools.

Consultative document: “As well as helping to raise standards, an academy expended to include Penhill Primary School will promote inclusion.....”

Response: Penhill Primary School already practices a policy of inclusion and has yet to permanently exclude any child. The academy however, has already, in its much shorter life put a significant number of pupils on ‘reduced timetables’.

Ofsted report: ‘This is a school that rightly prides itself on the good pastoral care provided for pupils, particularly for those who are vulnerable.’

Consultative document: “Each student has a carefully prepared individual programme of learning.”

Response: All Penhill Primary School students have a carefully prepared individual programme of learning. Ofsted report: ‘Teachers gather a great deal of information about how well all the pupils are doing.’ Many pupils have Individual Educational Plans.

Consultative document: “The new Penhill site and building.....”

Response: There is no ‘new’ building. This is a misrepresentation and led many members of the Penhill community to believe that the current buildings would be demolished.

Consultative document: “DJB Consultancy will also:Conduct a series of interviews with.....governors....”

Response: The Chair of Governors was contacted by DJB with one single date for a meeting the week prior. Unfortunately, due to other commitments the Chair was not free on that date. No alternative date was offered nor was an offer made to

interview any other member of the governing body. No interview took place, on an individual basis with the governors!

Consultative document: General - There are many examples which show that this document was produced using cut and paste from the document used to move Pinehurst to the academy.

COUNCIL DOCUMENT

Council document - Objectives of the Proposal

“a. Penhill Primary school is on the DCSF list of 266 ‘hard to shift’ primary schools and has failed to meet the floor target at Key Stage Two in both maths and English for five years, despite receiving considerable additional resource and support from the Local Authority.”

Response: Ofsted report ‘School leaders embraced the intensive support provided by the local authority to help raise standards. As a result, there is clear direction for raising standards and a steady improvement has been secured in pupils’ achievement.’

Response: Ofsted report ‘The school provides a satisfactory standard of education despite the very low standards reached in English, mathematics and science. Standards are low partly because there is a very large group of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory overall from the Foundation Stage to Year 6.’

Council document - Objectives of the Proposal

“a.The Local Authority considers that a structural solution is required to move this school forward.”

Response: The Governing body does not dispute that more needs to be done to speed the continuing improvements at Penhill Primary School and, to that end, have submitted to DCSF an Expression Of Interest to move the school to Trust status.

Ofsted report: ‘Governors are fully involved in checking how well the school is doing and planning for further improvement in partnership with the school management team. This has led to a continued trend of improvement in standards, and in teaching and learning.’

Council document - Objectives of the Proposal

“b. An all-through academy can help pupils with the transition from one school to another.....”

Response: This would be true if the children from Penhill Primary were placed on the academy campus. As this is not happening, the transition issues will remain. Equally, of course, this will be true for all the other academy feeder schools.

Ofsted report: ‘Although pupils leave the school with low standards of basic numeracy and literacy, their ICT skills are adequate and their self-confidence is good so that they are developing appropriate life skills.’

Council document - Objectives of the Proposal

“b. However, the critical issue of school standards in Penhill Primary School needs to be addressed;”

Response: Ofsted Report “The school provides a satisfactory standard of education despite the very low standards reached in English, mathematics and science. Standards are low partly because there is a very large group of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory overall from the Foundation Stage to Year 6.”

“Almost half the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this has a considerable impact on the standards reached in each key stage, as many pupils struggle to reach the expected levels for their age. There is appropriate support for all these pupils so that they make satisfactory progress despite the very low standards they attain. Over the past four years the school has achieved a steady increase in pupils’ progress in Key Stage 2, and more recently in Key Stage 1.”

In a league table reflecting Contextual Value Added, Penhill Primary is never at the bottom. The DCSF’s technical guide to contextual value added (2007 model) states that “....CVA gives a much fairer statistical measure of the effectiveness of a school and provides a solid basis for comparisons”. The bottom 200 school nationally, have CVAs ranging from 96.4 to 97.9.

Council document - Objectives of the Proposal

“c. During the consultation phase for the academy, it became clear that members of Penhill felt that their children might miss out on the academy development.”

Response: In actual fact, the governor’s view is that the Penhill Community did not wish to be part of the academy; rather the community was concerned that their school would miss out on the money being spent elsewhere!

Council document - Objectives of the Proposal

“d. The developing educational plans for an all-through academy.....”

Response: This complete bullet point is conjecture, nothing is proven as yet!

Indices of Multiple Deprivation: Swindon Schools 2007				
Dfes No.	School Name	Indices of Deprivation for Super Output Areas, IMD Score	Indices of Deprivation for Super Output Areas, Rank of IMD Score	Rank out of Secondary/ Primary Schools in LA
LEA		18.00	18742.13	
Secondary				
4087	Headlands	34.02	8539.50	1
4065	Churchfields	31.27	10413.07	2
4060	Dorcan	21.00	16529.58	3
5409	St Josephs	18.74	17872.31	4
4084	Hreod Parkway	17.91	18418.48	5
5410	Commonweal	15.37	19585.69	6
5407	Kingsdown	13.61	21440.81	7
4086	Greendown	12.73	22158.34	8
5417	Ridgeway	12.23	22065.78	9
4074	Warneford	10.01	24607.76	10
Primary				
2007	Penhill	46.89	3902.54	1
2003	Mountford Manor	46.35	3429.42	2
2005	Oaktree	40.17	5280.66	3
2151	Seven Fields	39.94	5897.66	4
2212	Goddard Park	38.55	5854.31	5
2115	Pinehurst Junior	34.55	7142.95	6
2116	Pinehurst Infant	34.23	7463.62	7
2123	Lainesmead	31.58	10486.27	8
3001	Holy Family	29.19	11943.98	9
2109	Gorse Hill Infant	26.06	11508.99	10
2002	Drove	25.44	12096.68	11
2204	Rodbourne Cheney	25.19	11569.68	12
2108	Gorse Hill Junior	24.80	12309.48	13
3461	Moredon	24.79	13273.32	14
2009	Eldene	21.41	14629.99	15
2105	Ferndale Junior	19.08	16400.13	16
2106	Ferndale Infant	19.04	16299.67	17
3458	Oliver Tomkins Infant	19.04	15915.21	17
2203	Toothill	18.94	16232.82	19
2095	Beechcroft Infant	18.60	17667.47	20
2211	Robert Le Kyng	18.59	16482.94	21
3439	St Catherines	18.51	18813.60	22
3455	Oliver Tomkins Junior	18.34	16581.83	23
2094	Ruskin Junior	18.30	18081.88	24
2147	Lawn	17.97	20481.52	25
5211	Holy Rood Junior	17.55	18168.25	26
3175	King William Street	17.40	17079.20	27

Upper
Quartile

Appendix 5

3426	Holy Rood Infant	17.20	18098.77	28	
5220	St Marys	16.87	18903.71	29	
2161	Nythe	16.08	20363.89	30	
2004	Liden	16.02	19187.01	31	
2205	Freshbrook	15.73	19011.41	32	
2103	Even Swindon	15.36	18908.03	33	Median
3000	Lethbridge	13.47	20689.68	34	
2143	Wroughton Infant	12.49	21452.91	35	
2026	Chiseldon	12.37	21143.60	36	
2156	Wroughton Junior	12.27	21634.43	37	
2036	Covingham Park Junior	12.17	23101.66	38	
2050	Haydon Wick	11.80	23057.55	39	
2093	Grange Infant	11.46	23003.23	40	
2092	Grange Junior	11.36	22854.35	41	
2164	Greenmeadow	11.15	23921.43	42	
2217	Windmill Hill	11.14	23387.74	43	
2035	Covingham Park Infant	11.04	23654.04	44	
2194	Colebrook Infant	10.64	24398.91	45	
2166	Colebrook Junior	10.58	24159.66	46	
5221	St Andrews	10.56	23598.23	47	
2219	Tregoze	9.98	24266.91	48	
3165	South Marston	9.93	24398.67	49	
2209	Westlea	9.90	24599.23	50	Lower Quartile
2200	Eastrop Infant	9.62	24564.65	51	
2051	Southfield Junior	9.50	24908.28	52	
2167	Westrop	9.18	25169.30	53	
2206	Northview	8.55	25741.93	54	
2133	Wanborough	8.51	25884.55	55	
3009	Bishopstone	7.97	26683.91	56	
2001	Peatmoor	7.69	26874.86	57	
2210	Shaw Ridge	7.63	27159.11	58	
2229	Haydonleigh	7.37	27578.30	59	
2214	Brook Field	7.12	27681.19	60	
2011	Bridlewood	6.66	28091.62	61	
3463	Orchid Vale	6.64	28251.32	62	
3460	St Francis	6.32	28559.69	63	
2000	Abbey Meads	6.23	28835.53	64	
3462	Red Oaks	5.91	29024.02	65	
2008	Catherine Wayte	5.28	29696.62	66	

