

20<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Dear Sir, Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the proposal for the closure of Penhill Primary and the subsequent amalgamation into the Swindon Academy. I attended Penhill when it was an Infant and Junior school and am a regular visitor to the area and so I base my objection on the following points:

Firstly, I believe that Penhill Primary School serves its pupils well. The school has shown that it has a good understanding of the needs of the children and is able to give them the caring environment they need to become learners and achieve towards their full potential. Without such a good level of pastoral care the children would not be able to develop their academic skills. This understanding of the needs of the children, has I feel, always been a strength of the school and has been recognised by outside agencies.

The main point of the argument is that the school is not achieving the floor target of 65% in the Key Stage 2 SATs in English and Maths. I am aware that the school has received support from Swindon Borough Council. The level of support, has helped the school to continue to move forward in increasing the percentage of children who reach Level 4 in Maths and English. The floor target has been reached in Science but I am told that this doesn't matter. This ongoing improvement in percentages shows that the school is continuing to move forward in this respect, but there has been little public recognition of this. The response is the improvement is not quick enough. Ironically, I have been told that the level of support from Swindon Borough Council is being reduced this term because of the improvements evident at the school.

The improvements made by the school are also seen in the CVA scores. There is much made of the fact that Penhill Primary has been at the bottom of the league tables for performance in the Key Stage 2 SATs. However, when ranked in order of CVA, the tables have told a different story. Surely, this is a better guide of how the children are achieving at the school as it demonstrates how much the children have actually progressed, not just achievement during one week in May.

Secondly, I have grave concerns as to how the amalgamation with the Swindon Academy will enable current progress to continue. The children will become part of a much bigger school, theoretically, and it will be less easy for decisions made to be based on the children's needs. It will be difficult to ensure that the children receive the pastoral care they need in order to develop their learning skills. Other much needed activities would also suffer as any sports teams would now be under the 'Academy' label, not Penhill.

Much has been made about the Academy's skills in improving the standards of learning but I have heard little to convince me that the children of Penhill will benefit from the 'state of the art facilities'. There is also little evidence to suggest that the children will perform any better, under the Swindon Academy. In fact figures suggest the opposite. It has been widely reported that the Academy only recently achieved 9%