

Please contact: Teri Hemmings (direct line 01634 332104)

Your ref:

Our ref:

Date: 24 November 2009

To all Members of the Children and
Adults Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

Democratic Services
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Kent ME4 4TR

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Dear Member,

ADDITIONAL APPENDIX AND CLARIFICATIONS TO REPORT 4E (ALL FAITHS AND ST NICHOLAS INFANT SCHOOLS) – 26 NOVEMBER 2009

I have been asked to forward you the attached letter from the Headteacher of All Faiths Children's Community School, which should have been included as an additional appendix to report 4E, regarding the future of that school and St Nicholas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School, which is being considered at the special meeting of Children and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee at 5pm on Thursday 26 November 2009 at The St George's Centre.

The Director of Children and Adults has also asked me to inform you of some errors within the report. They are as follows:

- Paragraph 1.1 on page 137 should refer to All Faiths' Children's Community School, and not All Faiths Junior School.
- Paragraph 4.6 on page 145 incorrectly summarises the position of the governing body of St Nicholas Infant School as wishing to see the proposed amalgamation and building work completed by an earlier date. The governing body have made it clear in their response to the consultation, which is shown in full in appendix F, that "For the sake of stability and clarity and to ensure future buildings fit for purpose we see it as essential that the original proposed date of 2012/13 be adhered to, should the proposal go ahead".
- Paragraph 4.26 on page 150 should present 3 alternative proposals instead of just 2. The additional alternative proposal, which is put forward by the Headteacher of All Faiths' Community Children's School in the attached letter, which should also be included as an appendix to the main report, is as follows: To provide a new school building, or a state of the art renovation of the All Faiths' building, but for the new school to have a Community School Status.

These points will also be clarified by officers at the meeting. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Yours sincerely

Teri Hemmings
Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator

HT/KH

2 November 2009

Councillor L Wicks
Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
Kent ME4 4TR

Dear Councillor Wicks

Proposal to amalgamate All Faiths' Children's Community School with St Nicholas'
C.E.V.C. Infants

I am writing to formally object to the Council's proposal, in its current form, to close these two schools and open a new Primary school on the All Faiths' site.

I wholeheartedly agree that the children of Strood would benefit enormously from either, a new school building, or a state of the art renovation of the All Faiths' building. An all through Primary School with provision for an integrated Foundation Stage, Children's Centre, Nurture Group, specialist provision for the deaf and outdoor education would undoubtedly demonstrate the esteem in which both communities are held, raising aspirations, standards and opportunities for the children and families in this part of Strood.

However, I do not believe that a Church of England school would provide adequately for the diverse community which All Faiths' is proud to serve.

All Faiths' received a judgement of outstanding from Ofsted in November 2008 for community cohesion, promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination. Ofsted commented that the school "is at the heart of the community it serves". I hope, therefore, that the Council will recognise that the school knows its community well. So well, in fact that the Council will be persuaded that any new school should have a Community school status, designed to meet the needs of both communities.

Any school which can select its pupils is bound to be exclusive. Most Church of England schools do not select their pupils – when places are available. However, if only one place was available, the family displaying outward signs of Christian religious observance (for there is no way to measure faith as such) would be entitled to the place. My belief is that exclusivity has no place in the school of faith which Jesus established.

Parents, carers, children and educationalists want good local schools. Community schools can and do provide a caring, moral ethos with a broad rich curriculum where all children can thrive and achieve great things.

Please consider this as an alternative proposal.

Yours sincerely

H.G.Taylor
Headteacher

C.C. Cllr J Chitty
Rose Collinson
Cllr J Etheridge
Cllr S Hubbard
Derek Morrison