

Rumboldswyke C of E Infant School Consultation Analysis Summary report

1. Summary Data

Question 1	How do you think the closure of Rumboldswyke C of E Infant School will impact on the local community?
High	147
Medium	28
Low	17
Total responses to each question	192

Question 2	In your opinion why are so few children from the local community attending Rumboldswyke C of E Infant School:
Perceived poor education standards	26
Alternatives that enable a better work/life balance (commute to work, etc)	21
Private education	2
Home schooling	3
Other	140
Total responses to each question	192

Question 3	Do you agree with the proposal to close Rumboldswyke C of E Infant School?
Agree	13
Disagree	179
Total responses to each question	192

2. Commentary

- 2.1 Written responses to the on-line and paper consultation exercise were overwhelmingly in support of maintaining the school open. However, within this, the rationale and impact on the possible closure of the school were mixed in their responses. Although many considered that the school's closure would negatively impact on the local community, few responses were able to articulate how and why. Several responses

indicated that the school is not active in organising and supporting local events but that impact was seen more in the relationships between local residents and families that currently use the school. As several local residents said:

'Whilst I am not aware that the school holds many community events, the relationships built between different parents and pupils are important as young families in the area can feel quite isolated because of the prevalence of older and retired residents.'

'The school could have easily been used for the local community but previous headteachers were not interested in doing this.'

'I have lived in this area for 40 years and as far as I know Rumboldswyke School has never been used for any community activities or events!'

'Many people who live in this road either went to Rumboldswyke or sent their children there. It has a long and happy history locally and would be missed by many residents.'

- 2.2 The greatest impact on the community was seen to be a perception that increased house building in the area would put pressure on community infrastructure with a general view that such house building would require a school. This therefore challenged the rationale behind closing a school and questioned whether this was the right thing to do. However, throughout the consultation process, questions, statements and discussion at the public meeting have raised this issue and the responses have been clear and consistent in relation to how place planning operates and that there is no need for the school in the short and medium term.
- 2.3 The issue of Climate Emergency was raised by some respondents with the school being seen to be within easy walking distances for local families. The suggestion was made that closing the school would lead to increased traffic. However, not everyone agreed with this. One resident stated:

'A large percentage of children who attend Rumboldswyke are driven to and from school every day, many because they are outside Chichester. Surely it makes sense for children to attend a school that is within walking distance.'

A Traffic Survey confirmed a number of pupils arriving by car each morning and also a number of local families with young children walking past the school to attend a nearby primary school. All schools with current surplus places in Chichester are within easy walking distance from Rumboldswyke within the national guidance on travel times for children of primary school age.

- 2.4 A question was asked as to why respondents felt so few children from the local community were attending the school and why enrolment had declined over time. Although a few made comment about the open of Chichester Free School having an impact, the overwhelming perception was linked with the previous difficulties experienced in the receiving Junior School. The school had been in special measures for some time and many pointed to this and the reputation over that period which they perceived to be the key reason for the declining enrolment at Rumboldswyke. A few were optimistic that this would change:

'When Central went into special measures parents had a knee jerk reaction and pulled kids away from Rumboldswyke and went to other schools. Now Central are rated good, Rumboldswyke's attendance will improve.'

- 2.5 Thirteen percent of respondents indicated a perception of poor education standards and quality at Rumboldswyke to be the key reason for the decline in enrolment over time. A very few cited the consultation and uncertainty surrounding the school as a reason for the declining enrolment.
- 2.6 Many personal statements were made in relation to why individuals disagreed with closure. These ranged from projected increasing demand locally due to building development, the unique ethos of the school and also the motives behind the proposed closure. The comments below are representative of many comments made:

'There are simply not enough spaces in the Whyke area of Chichester'

'There are no other small and nurturing schools in the City'

'If the school is underperforming then address the situation and provide more training or employ new teachers.'

'I believe that this is a political not educational decision which will leave numerous families with much further to transport their children to school.'

'Please don't close it, it doesn't make sense to close it when it can become an amazing school again with the help of some people.'

- 2.7 No comments were raised in relation to the loss of key stage 1 church school places should the school be closed and indeed comments on links with the church were very few.
- 2.8 Several made mention of the possibility of academizing with Bishop Luffa Secondary School Trust but recognised that this would require the Infant School to become an all through 4-11 primary school, a proposal which has been discounted due to the already high number of surplus key stage 2 places in Chichester.