



Cowes Primary School

Right to Learn Right to be Safe Right to be Respected

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Dear Parent / Carer or Colleague

SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING

We shared a letter with you this morning regarding the publication of the School Place Planning report due to be published today.

In keeping with this, the Isle of Wight Council has today, the 26 May, published this report. The report sets out the need to significantly reduce the number of primary school places across the Island and proposes that a **consultation** is started regarding the closure of a number of identified primary schools including Cowes Primary School.

The content of this report will be discussed on the 8 June by the Isle of Wight Council at its Cabinet meeting.

It is important to understand that at this time **no decisions** have been taken over the future of our school, and the report seeks authority to consult only. Further reports and decisions would have to be taken in order for any school to be closed. It is also important to note that no closures are proposed to complete before September 2024 at the earliest.

As Headteacher I am very conscious of the huge impact of this report and how unsettling its content will be for all parents, pupils, staff and wider school community. It is therefore important to understand the background to this report and why it is needed. This was shared in this morning's letter, and key paragraphs are added below also.

Over the last year headteachers and governors from across the Island including the Headteachers' Executive group have been talking to council officers and elected members about the many impacts of significant surplus places in our schools. The focus of these discussions has been about how collectively, we as schools, and the council as the responsible body for education on the Island, manage this very challenging situation.

Longer term pupil trends show the national decline in births having a direct impact upon the number of children arriving into the primary education phase. The numbers of primary pupils on the Island are forecast to decrease from c.9,200 in 2017 to c.8,000 by 2025. Secondary forecasts indicate pupil numbers are currently increasing from c.6,000 in 2017 to



Cowes Choristers



Eco-Schools



COWES
Crew Club
PRIMARY SCHOOL



Let's teach every child to read with
Letters and Sounds
REVISED 2018
A complete OFsted approved
reading programme for children



SCHOOL GAMES
GOLD
2021/22



THE FIVE STAR
SCHOOL
LARDENING SCHOOL



Ofsted
Good rating

6,400 in 2025. However, this growth will not be maintained longer-term, and consideration will need to be given to how future surplus capacity is managed in the secondary sector.

Having a small level of surplus places across our schools provides flexibility. It allows for movement onto the Island and helps meet parental preference. However, the consequences of having too many surplus places can be severe. The main impact on schools of surplus places due to falling rolls is the resulting reduction in individual school finances which, brings many significant challenges for governors and headteachers to try and manage. In addition to this, in a time of increasing teacher shortage, it makes it less likely that schools will be able to employ enough high-quality teachers to ensure that each child receives the best possible education.

Pending discussions and decisions taken at the Council's Cabinet meeting on the 8 June, further information on next steps will be shared.

Please do rest assured that we will work with you all, and with Council officers, to prioritise the wellbeing and continued excellent education of our young people throughout this time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S J Praetig', written in a cursive style.

Mrs S J Praetig