

## **CHINEHAM PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EDUCATION POLICY IN BASINGSTOKE**

Objection to the proposed closure of the school, with supporting evidence.

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### **1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

1.1 This paper has been produced in response to Hampshire County Council's proposed closure of Chineham Park Primary school.

This paper draws on

- information obtained from the Local Authority (LA) and Government papers
- information obtained from the school and the community

This paper will show that

- key evidence in respect of rising places and standards was ignored without adequate explanation
- new evidence has since come to light which has a bearing on the original decision
- the decision of December 17 to proceed with closure has been made without adequate scrutiny
- many of the problems faced by Chineham Park are common with other schools in Basingstoke
  - these have not been adequately addressed by the LA's existing education policy.
- radical changes are needed in light of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

1.2 The scope of this paper extends beyond educational provision in Chineham Park to address common demographic issues seen across Basingstoke.

This paper suggests solutions based around the continued operation of a school at Chineham Park working in conjunction with a co-sited Sure Start Children's Centre as the best possible solution to impact on children's life chances in Northern Basingstoke, which can ultimately be reflected in the Indices of Deprivation and National Indicators identified in the Local Area Agreement.

## 2. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

### DEMOGRAPHICS

2.1 Chineham Park lies in a relatively deprived part of a relatively rich town in a relatively rich county. Most of the information used by the LA to base its decisions on Chineham Park was obtained from the Census of 2001, with subsequent updates from the Office of National Statistics.

2.2 The data which was initially made available from the 2001 Census was broken down to ward level. Most of the pupils from Chineham Park inhabited two wards at the time of the 2001 census: Norden and Popley. Both are large areas which include pockets of deprivation alongside more affluent streets. Popley was reorganized into two wards (East and West) in 2002, and shows significant differences between its east and west ends.

2.3 Ward level information is not of sufficient resolution to highlight the issues affecting Chineham Park. More detailed information which was broken down into Local Super Output Areas of approximately 300 homes became available in 2004. This showed that 2 LSOA's in East Popley were in the bottom 10% of LSOA's in England and Wales for education.

2.4 Updated LSOA information from 2008 showed one LSOA in Popley East still in the bottom 9% nationally [6]. One LSOA in East Popley had 38% of children living in income-deprived households. This puts the LSOA in the bottom 20% nationally for Income Deprivation Affecting Children (IDAC).

2.5 The multiple Indices of Deprivation used by the LA have been skewed in favour of employment, which has been given a double weighting. This has had a detrimental impact on Chineham Park in terms of identifying the school for additional support. The close proximity of Basingstoke to London and Reading means there is a much greater demand for jobs than in other parts of the county. Most if not all of the parents are employed, albeit many of them in low-paid jobs, with long hours. Many work out of town and are away from the home for long periods of time each day.

2.6 One LSOA in East Popley has a high score for Income Deprivation Affecting Children with 38% of children affected. This will have been instrumental in the decision to provide a Full Access Sure Start Childrens Centre on the Chineham Park site.

### SCHOOL HISTORY

2.7 Many of the issues associated with parts of East Popley can be traced back to the levels of education and aspiration prevalent in previous generations.

2.8 Chineham Park Infant and Junior schools were built approximately 40 years ago to provide education for children moving into the new Council estate of Popley, part of the Basingstoke New Town development.

2.9 The incoming population was predominantly London overspill, coming from areas with significant problems of social deprivation such as the East End, Battersea, and Mitcham. This social deprivation included poor housing and low levels of educational attainment and aspiration. The education problems came with the people as they moved into the New Town. **This information is crucial as it informs all future discussion about Chineham Park Primary School.**

2.10 In the late 1960's, a baby boom occurred in Basingstoke and many other new Towns. This was due to the large number of post-war baby boomers reaching adulthood [3], and the optimism of incoming residents who had left behind acute post-war housing problems in London for drastically improved conditions and prospects. This boom led to great pressure on schools in the 1970's and gave rise to the building of temporary huts in Popley schools.

2.11 Basingstoke and Deane are now predicting a large rise in population based on indigenous growth which can be traced back to the second generation baby boom of the 1960's [3].

2.12 From the 1970's through the 1980's, birth rates declined dramatically in Basingstoke [3]. This led to a surplus of school places and gave parents hitherto unavailable choices of school. This combined with local and national education policy at the time to create a situation where schools were pitted against each other, and were at the mercy of (by today's standards) relatively uninformed, often prejudicial choices being made by parents as to where to school their children.

2.13 The exercise of parental choice in turn led to a huge increase in the numbers of children going to schools other than their local school [2] and set in place the conditions for the creation of "sink" schools in the following decade.

2.14 In the mid-1980's, Chineham Park still enjoyed a relatively good reputation. This is borne out by speaking to Popley residents whose children went to Chineham Park Infants and Juniors and at least one member of staff who taught there at the time. Some of these alumni then went on to obtain university degrees and company directorships in the UK and overseas.

2.15 Problems with prejudiced perceptions of Popley and its the schools throughout the 90's led to a further decline in numbers on roll in Popley schools, with Chineham Park Infants and Juniors and John Hunt of Everest Secondary school particularly badly affected. The budget constraints mentioned in 2.6 and perceptions of the schools impacted on their ability to recruit and retain quality staff.

2.16 This decrease in pupil numbers reached the point where the Infants and Junior schools faced closure. By this time there were serious problems with the educational provision at the infants school. This was due in no small part to funding constraints brought about by Government Policy and falling numbers on roll.

2.17 Staff employed at the Junior school between 1985 and the mid-90's merger recalled a marked decline in morale as a result of external pressures around the time of the merger. The then Head teacher was Mr Williams, who went on to be head of the primary school.

2.18 All the problems since the mid 90's merger can be viewed against a backdrop of tight budgets and high staff turnover. There have been three head teachers in the period from 1994-2009, and the entire teaching staff has changed on average every three years. The school has been in a vicious cycle where  
(i) it is difficult to retain staff in a small school with significant problems (attendance, behaviour, very high levels of SEN) and insufficient resources to tackle these problems.  
(ii) funding and perception issues have impacted on the ability to recruit replacement staff.

2.19 The one common thread in the school's recent history has been the LA. The issues experienced in Chineham Park in a deprived urban setting are at the limit range of the collective experience of the LA, whose one-size-fits-all education policy has been developed to serve middle class schools in a predominantly rural environment. **At no time did the LA seek the help of the DFES or neighbouring authorities in the Thames Valley or London, where similar primary schools exist in greater numbers and where the demographics are similar.** Any actions by the LA in relation to Chineham Park have been ineffective and inadequate, as evidenced by the decision to close.

2.20 Similar problems affected the pupils at John Hunt of Everest secondary school, to which Chineham Park is a feeder. But here the story has been different, due to the significantly greater amount of resources made available to help the school. Help and funding was sought from the DFES. Staff were brought in, including an Executive Head. A new school building costing £26.8m has been built, funded in the main by developers buying land off the LA to build 2000 new homes.

### 3. PUPIL NUMBERS AND SURPLUS PLACES

3.1 The LA has conducted an analysis of surplus places and has found 52% surplus places at Chineham Park. Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) has been cited as a justification for considering closure in this context.

School	Number in catchment area	Number on roll from catchment area	Percentage on roll from catchment area	Catchment area children at other schools	Percentage at other schools
Chineham Park Pri	320	51	16	269	84
Marnel Inf	138	77	56	61	44
Marnel Jnr	188	110	59	78	41
Merton Inf	122	55	45	67	55
Merton Jnr	181	103	57	78	43
South View Inf	244	127	52	117	48
South View Jnr	300	161	54	139	46
Oakridge Inf	96	65	68	31	32
Oakridge Jnr	131	89	68	42	32
Great Binfields Pri	290	99	34	191	66

3.2 By the County Council's own figures, surplus places are predicted to disappear at two of the four nearest schools: South View Infants and Marnel Infants, in 2011 and 2012 respectively.

3.3 The latest predictions for numbers on roll are based on an assessment of house building being affected by the recession [2].

3.4. An analysis of each construction site in Popley shows the recession has slowed development by a maximum of 12 months:

(i) Building on the site of Longfellow Parade (regeneration) has led to the temporary loss of 50 flats, but 99 houses and flats are due to be completed in 2010. This scheme has been unaffected by the recession as the money was secured from the Housing Corporation in 2008.

(ii) Building was temporarily slowed on the John Hunt site, where Phase 1 (125 homes) is complete. Work has now resumed on the remaining phases (275 homes) with a slip of about 12 months due to the recession.

(iii) The regeneration of Faroe Close and Maldive Road has led to the loss of 120 homes, but the scheme is on schedule to deliver 237 new homes in 2010/11, with Homes and Community Agency funding secured in 2009.

#### **3.5 The impact of the recession on house building and pupil numbers is considerably less than that assumed by the LA.**

3.6 Head teachers have not been consulted on the predictions for pupil numbers.

3.7 Up to 2000 additional new homes are now being discussed for five key sites in Norden ward. These are the Freemantle/Taverner Close regeneration scheme, the Network Rail car park (former Great Western goods yard), the Vyne Meadow car park, the Lyford Road open space, and Kingsclere Road (Eli Lilly). At least one of these sites is expected to be completed in the next 5 years.

3.8 Should any one of these schemes go ahead, both sets of primary schools in Norden will be overfull, with new pupils expected to go to Winklebury schools 2 miles away, even with Chineham Park open.

3.9 Eleven other primary schools have been listed within a 1 mile radius. Of these, evidence was submitted which cast doubts as to the suitability of Great Binfields Primary school as an alternative school for Chineham Park pupils. Great Binfields is only accessible by car due to the barrier presented by the A33, which can only be crossed at grade with no marked crossing.

The A33 has over 40,000 vehicles a day using it, with approximately 4,000 of these in the morning peak rush hour between 8am and 9am. The road has a 50mph limit. The 50% survival speed for child pedestrian accidents is 30mph. Pupils as young as 4 and a half would have to cross the A33 at grade without a crossing.

For this school to be included the LA should be prepared to provide a footbridge at a cost estimated at £1m in order to allow children as young as 4 and a half a safe crossing. At-grade pedestrian crossings introduce risk in that vehicles will not stop and places a great onus on parents supervising children crossing the road. It is questionable whether Health and Safety regulations would permit a lollipop crossing on the A33.

**The LA ignored this submission and was wrong to do this, as there are serious safety implications.**

3.10 Other schools outside Popley were considered as they were within a 1-mile radius "as the crow flies". But these schools were separated from Popley by the A33 or the Ring Road. The on-foot distances to these schools is well over a mile due to the detours required to cross these busy roads by underpass or footbridge.

**It is unreasonable to expect children under 7 to walk such distances to school.**

3.11. The likely outcome of closing Chineham Park school is that pupils who do not get into the two nearest schools will have to travel to school by car. Yet the LA's Climate Change impact assessment states "*no impact has been identified*"[1][2]. **This is palpable nonsense.** No supportive evidence has been supplied to support such a spurious claim.

3.12 In December 2009 Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council published a report which cast further doubt on the LA's predictions of pupil places [3]. **It is likely that this paper and its contents were unknown to the writers of the Decision Report and as such this is new evidence which must be considered before proceeding with closure of the school.**

*"Successive mid-year estimates from 1991 to 2008 show that live births registered in the borough averaged approximately 2,000 per annum; over the same period, deaths registered in the borough averaged fewer than 1,200 per annum. The resultant natural change averaged more than 800 per annum, increasing the overall population of the borough by nearly 14,000 additional people over the 17 year period (1991-2008) and accounted for nearly 85% of the borough's population growth".*

What this means is that areas such as Popley which have a very high percentage of young people (20% under 16) are likely to grow in population and the residents are likely to stay in the same area.

3.13 The LA also conducted an analysis of the number of children living in the catchment area of each school and the percentage attending each school within a 1-mile radius of Chineham Park (Appendix 2). The conclusions from the analysis are deeply flawed: while 84% of Chineham Park's catchment area attend other schools, so do 66% of those in the Great Binfields catchment area, and many other schools have 40-50% of children in their catchment area not attending. The reasons for this are set out in § 2.13. No statistical significance testing or proof thereof is offered for Chineham Park

**3.14 If the LA states there is such a compelling case to close Chineham Park based on surplus places, why was the expansion of Marnel Infants and Juniors allowed to go ahead at the cost of several million pounds? This must surely be a more important CPA consideration than closing Chineham Park now that the LA has contributed to the problem by creating extra surplus places.**

**3.15 Chineham Park should be kept open in view of the above facts.**

## 4. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

### SAT RESULTS AND RAISE ONLINE DATA

4.1. Since the publication of SAT results, Chineham Park has shown an underlying trend of improvements although this trend is slow and inconsistent (see below). The 2009 SATs were the second best on record and were better than at least one other school in the North Basingstoke division. The Contextual Value Added score of 100 is the best on record, and is indicative of a school meeting expectations in delivering the required levels of improvement to children's education when measured against other schools.

The following table shows KS2 SATs with percentages achieving Level 4 or higher:

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>English</b>	55	35	26	38	26	62	42	19	71	79	22	62
<b>Maths</b>	40	40	13	46	22	31	32	29	50	71	57	62
<b>Science</b>	55	65	30	58	48	71	50	48	50	64	71	85
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>208</b>
3 yr trend	150*	145*	119	117	102	134	128	128	130	160	178	191
5 yr trend	150*	145*	119*	125*	119	122	119	124	130	154	151	168
Contextual VA							96.7	98.7	99.2	99.2	97.9	100.0

The 2009 results show the best ever Contextual Value Added.

The Trend figures are combined SATs averaged over the preceding 3 or 5 years (or all preceding years if insufficient data is available – these scores are denoted with an asterisk).

#### **4.2 The 2009 SATs and Value Added are key pieces of evidence in assessing the position of the school, and appear to have been ignored by the LA in recommending closure [1].**

When this evidence was presented by a ward councillor as part of the consultation, it was dismissed [2] as *“the author's perception that the school is improving.”*

**No adequate explanation has ever been given for this, no opportunity has been given to scrutinize this as part of the decision making process, and there has been no opportunity to cross-examine the writers of the report in order to provide justification.**

4.3 Sustained improvement has eluded Chineham Park. Over the past 12 years, any improvements have lasted less than three years before a reversal. Closer analysis of these peaks and troughs shows a close correlation with key staff leaving. For example, the 2007 SAT results were the best on record. These were achieved with two very good teachers in charge of the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes. These two key members of staff then left (there was a total change of staff that year).

4.4 Sustained improvement can only be achieved at a school like Chineham Park through a strong staff structure brought about through improved staff retention. The school is a small school – any single member of staff leaving has a significant impact.

4.5 Little or no consideration has been given to the difficulties of staff recruitment and retention, and the high amount of inexperienced staff being recruited as a result of limited choices brought about by low numbers of applicants, budget constraints, and lack of external resources and support being made available for what was obviously a school in need of help.

4.6 Despite ongoing problems associated with staff turnover, the underlying trend in attainment over the last 4 years is upward (Appendix 1).

4.7 The LA contends that it has given significant support for the school, any improvements evaporated when this "support" was removed. On closer inspection this turns out to be a number of days of visits as follows:

- (i) 42 days November 2006-November 2007,
- (ii) 22 days the following year, and
- (iii) 34 days the year after that.

The nature of this support has not been explained but is understood to be inspections and a limited number of days spent in school by Advanced Skills Teachers (AST's).

4.8 No evidence has been provided as to the effectiveness of the AST support, why it was withdrawn, why it was not reinstated when it was determined it was still needed, or why it was not provided for longer periods.

**4.9 No evidence exists of any effort by the LA to provide more substantive support such as bringing in extra staff on a more permanent basis in order to improve standards, as was the case with John Hunt Secondary School. An experienced Deputy Head was needed to help share the workload running the school.**

## OFSTED HISTORY

4.10 Chineham Park is the only school in Hampshire to have been placed in Special Measures twice. The first time was in 2000. There were a number of reasons for this, but most of these can be traced to difficulties associated with the Infants-Junior merger, resource constraints and underlying demographic factors – the areas next to the school either side of the ring road were the most deprived areas of Basingstoke at the time.

4.11 Educational attainment was exceptionally poor in 2000 (Table 1). Considerable pressure was applied to improve standards during the period 2000-2002. The then Head teacher was Anne Beresford. Chineham Park was eventually lifted out of Special Measures in 2002. At about that time, Gwen Clifford became Head Teacher.

4.12 An Ofsted Inspection in October 2006 resulted in Chineham Park being served with a Notice to Improve. This was the best grade that could be given after the disastrous 2005 SAT scores, the second worst on record. According to the LA, *"significant support was provided"*. Two additional LA governors were appointed, and a number of inspection and monitoring visits were made. **The effectiveness of this support has not been demonstrated or the subject of any analysis or review.**

4.13 A follow-up inspection in November 2007 resulted in Chineham Park's Notice to Improve being lifted. A significant factor in this will have been the July 2007 SAT's and Value Added (Appendix 1). The LA thus describes the events of those 13 months [1]:

*"Improvements were made and the school was judged by Ofsted to be satisfactory in November 2007, although the standards achieved by children and school attendance were both judged to be inadequate. Improvement was required in relation to the standards in English, Mathematics and Science, inconsistencies in teaching, and attendance levels".*

**Much of the improvement can be credited to the school. The "significant support" the LA provided in § 4.11 has been shown by their own admission in §4.12 to be ineffective.**

4.14 A subsequent HMI monitoring visit was made in December 2008 highlighted serious issues in the school following on from the exit of nearly all the staff in July 2008. These issues were behavioural and related to lack of adequate supervision.

4.15 As a direct consequence of the December 2008 visit, another visit took place in January 2009 which placed the school in Special Measures for a second time.

4.16 The LA's Response to the Ofsted Inspection was to produce an Action Plan and appoint two additional Governors to the Board. The Action Plan, while a matter of public interest, has been kept secret by the LA even though very little of the content could be considered confidential. **This is crucial as it hinders public scrutiny of the decision to consult on closure.** With other schools (e.g. Bramley) the Action Plan for a school placed in the category of "Notice to Improve" was sent home to all of the parents.

4.17 Subsequent actions by the LA, such as the decision to form an Interim Executive Board (IEB), were not stated as intended actions in the action plan, nor was a surplus places review and subsequent decision to consult on closure.

## **LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

4.18 The Leadership of the school has been the subject of sustained criticism from the LA. Both the Head Teacher and the Board of Governors have been criticised on numerous occasions dating back at least seven years.

4.19 While evidence exists of training and support being provided for the Governing Body, precious little evidence exists to prove the effectiveness of the training and support provided.

4.20 EXEMPT INFORMATION REMOVED - SEE APPENDIX 8

4.21 The Head has also faced frequent changes in her Governing Body since 2002. A hard core of Governors were present most if not all of the time between 2002 and 2009. Little or no mention has been made as to the difficulties surrounding the recruitment and retention of other Governors, especially Parent Governors, throughout the period 2002 to 2009.

4.22 No mention has been made of the high turnover of School Improvement Managers, Partners, Inspectors and Directors and its effect on the LA's understanding of the situation of the school or its ability to provide continuity of guidance and support. There has been an almost annual change of attached school inspector in the past 7 years and 4 changes in district managers over the same period of time.

4.23 Two additional governors were appointed by the LA after the school was served with a Notice to Improve by Ofsted in October 2006.

4.24 The 2009 Ofsted Inspection Report rated the school overall as "Inadequate" with inadequate areas identified as "Leadership and Management" and "Quality of Teaching and Learning".

Unusually, "Governance" was rated as "Satisfactory" even though the "Leadership and Management" was overall "Inadequate".

4.25 Three additional governors were appointed by the LA in April 2009.

4.26 In May 2009, the LA applied to form an Interim Executive Board [1]:

*"Following the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Chineham Park earlier this year the LA used its powers of intervention to ask the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families for permission to replace the school's Governing Body with an Interim Executive Board (IEB). Permission was granted and an IEB of highly experienced governors is now in place."*

The decision to form an IEB was not part of the LA's Action Plan submitted in March 2009.

4.27 EXEMPT INFORMATION REMOVED - SEE APPENDIX 8

4.28 Closure of the school was seen as a possibility only due to its inclusion as a range of options stipulated by the DFES for schools in Special Measures. This can be seen as the "bottom line" decision to form an IEB, indeed the top priority of the IEB was (and still is) to raise standards to satisfy Ofsted.

4.29 Closure of the school due to surplus places was not considered likely at the time as a surplus places review in Basingstoke was not envisaged until 2011.

4.30 The Instrument of Appointment for this Interim Executive Board has not been released into the public domain, although there is precedence of other Local Authorities publishing IEB Instruments online.

4.31 All appointees to the IEB were chosen by the LA who has powers of summary dismissal over them. This is explicitly stated in the Instrument and may go some way to explaining the LA's decision not to publish the Instrument as it may be seen by the public as proof of their suspicions that the IEB is not fully independent of the LA.

4.32 The LA began consultation on closure after numbers dipped below 90 in September 2009. This was less than one academic term after the IEB was appointed and was clearly insufficient time for them to work on improving the school.

4.33 The IEB has at best been reticent to engage with parents since the consultation on closure was announced in October 2009.

4.34 The IEB submissions to the closure consultation did not comment on the closure of the school but put forward alternative types of school to go on the site, and made mention of the fact that they had been given insufficient time to do their job.

4.35 EXEMPT INFORMATION REMOVED - SEE APPENDIX 8

4.36 EXEMPT INFORMATION REMOVED - SEE APPENDIX 8

4.37 EXEMPT INFORMATION REMOVED - SEE APPENDIX 8

4.38 Public perceptions exist that the IEB is not independent of the LA but is being controlled by it. This is based on their reticence in dealing with parents and their response to the consultation on closure.

## 5. OTHER SCHOOLS IN THE AREA

5.1 Much has been made of the problems at Chineham Park being unique to Chineham Park, but many of the issues with attendance, behaviour, and attainment, form part of recurrent themes running through many schools in the New Town estates of Basingstoke.

5.2 The Ofsted gradings of schools in the North Basingstoke division are tabulated below:

School	Date of Inspection	Overall Ofsted Grade	Achievements and Standards	Personal development and well being	Teaching and Learning	Curriculum and other activities	Care guidance and support	Leadership and Management
Marnel Inf	January 2007	3	3	2	3	2	2	2
Marnel Jun	April 2009	2	2	1	2	1	1	1
Merton Inf	March 2008	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
Merton Jun	October 2008	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
South View Inf	March 2007	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
South View Jun	March 2008	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Oakridge Inf	March 2007	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Oakridge Jun	September 2006	3	3	2	3	3	2	3
St Bede's RC Primary	January 2009	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
Chineham Park Primary	January 2009	4	4	2	4	4	3	4

Grade 1 – outstanding; 2 – good; 3 – satisfactory; 4 – inadequate

5.3 What the table above does not show is the demographic factors behind each school, such as Indices of Deprivation.

5.4 St Bede's is a faith school and draws its pupils from a wide area. Oakridge and South View schools draw their pupils from relatively less deprived parts of the Norden ward. The most deprived area, Oakridge, sends many of its children to Chineham Park.

5.5. The other schools in Popley have similar demographics. Merton serves a slightly more affluent area. There is much coterminosity between Marnel and Chineham Park.

5.6 There appears to be a close correlation between overall grade and numbers on roll and the percentage full (see below).

School	Date of Inspection	Overall Grade	Pupil Numbers	Percentage Full	Percentage Full After Expansion	LSOA in bottom 10% for education	LSOA with IDAC in bottom 20%	Percentage of children in LSOA affected by IDAC
Marnel Inf	January 2007	<b>3</b>	171	95%	63%			
Marnel Jun	April 2009	<b>2</b>	237	99%	66%			
Merton Inf	March 2008	<b>3</b>	93	52%	-			
Merton Jun	October 2008	<b>3</b>	165	69%	-			
South View Inf	March 2007	<b>2</b>	190	106%	-			
South View Jun	March 2008	<b>2</b>	209	82%	-			
Oakridge Inf	March 2007	<b>1</b>	162	90%	-			
Oakridge Jun	Sept 2006	<b>3</b>	203	85%	-			
St Bede's RC Primary	January 2009	<b>2</b>	282	134%	90%			
Chineham Park	January 2009	<b>4</b>	86	48%		YES	YES	38%

5.7 Marnel Infants and Juniors were expanded in 2008/9 from 2 forms to 3, but at the time of writing (and time of inspection) they still contained the staffing structures of 2-form schools.

5.8 St Bede's school has undergone a similar expansion. This is due to the increasing number of Roman Catholic children in northern Basingstoke, especially those from Polish residents. The school's admissions policy is to give preference to children of practicing Catholics. This should be seen as a separate issue to that of surplus places, but what it does illustrate is that larger schools appear to be more successful.

5.9 Marnel Infants and Juniors take children from very similar areas to Chineham Park. The Junior school especially enjoys a very good reputation and prior to its expansion was having to use its admissions policy to cater for the number of applicants exceeding the number of places.

5.10 The main difference between Marnel and Chineham Park is the staffing structure. Marnel Juniors has a very strong staffing structure, with 18 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teaching staff. This gives continuity of cover and reduces the need for supply teaching, thereby giving a greater degree of stability for its children which is more conducive to learning.

5.11 Chineham Park has had difficulties with staffing, its smaller size and the non-linear nature of staff workload means that more is expected per head of staff than in a larger school. This, coupled with the issues of high SEN, has proved to be a lethal combination when trying to raise standards at the school.

5.12 Many problems at Chineham Park and other Popley schools stem from the issue of "contamination", where highly disruptive pupils need to be removed from class for fear of disrupting the progress of others. In any school, this can mean precious resources being diverted away from educating the well-behaved majority of pupils. Smaller schools are less well placed to cope with such issues and the impact of these issues is proportionately greater.

5.13 Federation or clustering could help with staff being seconded where necessary to deal with issues.

5.14 Closing Chineham Park will mean transferring its problems to other schools. With the same staff having to cater for an influx of pupils, many of whom have significant SEN and EBD issues. There is a serious risk to the achievements and standards in these schools as a result.

5.15 Little evidence has been presented by the LA to support the hypothesis that individual children's life chances will be improved as a result of Chineham Park closing and their being transferred to a neighbouring school. In many cases, the most vulnerable children are more likely to lose their chance of a mainstream education. To this end, the LA could be doing the exact opposite to what it says it intends to achieve by closing Chineham Park: improving children's life chances.

5.16 There is evidence of other schools in the Basingstoke area suffering from similar problems to Chineham Park but which are at a less advanced level. Merton infants and juniors, South View infants and juniors, Winklebury infants and juniors and Manor Field infants and juniors are all schools which are vulnerable to falling numbers on roll and have similar but less pronounced demographic issues such as falling numbers on roll, SEN

5.17 The LA's failure to address the issues at Chineham Park and to throw in the towel by announcing closure does not bode well for these other schools. Education policy needs to change if Basingstoke schools are to have a chance.

5.18 In early 2010 the Director of Children's Services circulated a report to school governors called "Developing Local Children's Partnerships" which stated the need to form local Children's partnerships at district and county level. Basingstoke is too large to have a single partnership so it was proposed that clusters based on secondary and feeder schools be set up. The establishment of such structures was to comply with the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

5.19 Contained within the report were proposals for schools to establish networks and to co-ordinate work to reduce locally-defined issues. Where necessary, expertise could be brought in from outside Hampshire, which in the case of Basingstoke would be particularly valuable in addressing issues such as

- NI 112 under 18 conception,
- NI 117 16-18 year olds Not in Education Employment or Training (NEETs)
- NI 79 achievement of NVQ level 2 qualifications by age 19
- NI 72 achievement of at least 78 points across Early Years Foundation Stage
- NI 73 achievement of 5 or more A\*-C GCSE passes including English and Maths
- NI 93 Progression of 2 levels in English for Key Stages 1 to 2
- NI 94 Progression of 2 levels in Maths for Key Stages 1 to 2
- NI 99 Looked After Children reaching SAT level 4 in English by Key Stage 2
- NI 100 Looked After Children reaching SAT level 4 in Maths by Key Stage 2
- NI 101 Looked After Children achieving 5 or more A\*-C GCSE passes including English and Maths
- NI 102a achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers at Key Stages 2 and 4
- NI 65 children becoming subject of a Child Protection Order for a second or subsequent time.

**5.20 The provision of a school on the Chineham Park site, with a Sure Start Centre on the same site, represents the best possible chance of making the maximum impact on the National Indicators listed in §5.19 above with our most vulnerable children in the North Basingstoke area.**

5.21 There is considerable scope for a Fresh Start at Chineham Park, either as a mainstream secular school, a Church of England school (there are no such schools in North Basingstoke) or as a special school.

## 6. PARENTAL CHOICE

6.1 An analysis of children attending other schools has been conducted for the 11 schools listed within a 1 mile radius, which shows 84% of pupils in the Chineham Park catchment area attend other schools. Two other schools have more than 50% of pupils attending other schools (Merton Infants and Great Binfields Primary). One of these is 66%. A further five schools have over 40% of pupils attending other schools.

6.2 It is difficult to draw a correlation from these figures and Chineham Park relative to other schools, and as such these figures are largely meaningless for this purpose. What they do show is that significant numbers of children do not go to their nearest school, but the choices behind this are not known.

6.3 The reasons why parents choose Chineham Park are well known and understood: the school is within walking distance for most of the children attending, and it provides out of hours facilities such as a breakfast club and after-school clubs which parents find very useful, especially those working long hours in low-paid jobs.

6.4 Breakfast clubs and after-school clubs are not provided at the neighbouring schools although this may change. The idea that a parent has to cut back on their hours when they are already struggling to make ends meet because the LA has closed the local school is utterly reprehensible. **This would have a significant impact on IDAC, where one LSOA in the Chineham Park catchment area already has 38% of children living in deprived households.**

6.5 When questioned, most parents of children at Chineham Park said their expectations were being met in terms of education, personal development and well-being.

6.6 In pressing ahead with the closure of Chineham Park, parents' wishes have NOT been respected by the LA.

6.7 Much of the success attributed to Primary schools in more affluent areas can be attributed to the additional private tuition arranged by parents to help their children achieve better results. Parents in households suffering from ICAD clearly do not have this choice. The extra help has to come from somewhere else, like the LA, irrespective of the schools these children are sent to.

## 7. RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

7.1 The following responses were received from the closure consultation.

Responses	Agree	Disagree	Parent	teaching staff	support staff	pre-school parent	Member of the community	Other
62	7	55	33	6	5	1	10	7
	11%	89%	53%	10%	8%	2%	16%	11%

**7.2 By any metric, the vast majority of respondents (89%) disagreed with closure of the school, including parents.**

**7.3 Parents expectations and choices are being ignored by the LA. This is a cause for extreme concern. The LA is saying it knows what's best for their children in preference to their own choices and expectations.**

7.4 The expectations and values of education is based on an assumed Hampshire norm of middle class aspirations for children to go to school as a springboard to a University education. Many of the parents at Chineham Park do not want their children to go on to University, which is typically seen as a middle class aspiration. While it could be argued that degrees will be crucial to later life chances, Chineham Park parents want simpler goals for their children – for them to be able to get a job and be happy throughout their school and adult life. Who are we to judge whether these aspirations are right or wrong?

**7.5 The details of the consultee submissions have been kept from the public, thereby impeding scrutiny of the decision to proceed with publication of Notices of Closure.**

7.6 The submissions have been selectively filtered when summarized in the Executive Lead Member's report of December 17<sup>th</sup>.

7.7 Many of the points raised in the consultation have been glossed over and ignored by the LA. In particular, for ward councillors' inputs on the impact of school closure to be ignored, based as they are on extensive knowledge of the community and consultation with parents and residents, is reprehensible in the extreme.

7.8 It is doubtful whether the LA could demonstrate it has superior knowledge of the local issues and the impact of closure of the school. The writers of the report are based in Winchester, 17 miles away, and have little or no knowledge of the Basingstoke area. LA staff have only visited the school at best a handful of times. Most have little or no knowledge of the problems with the outlying estate, nor of the significant levels of investment being provided by the Borough council and its partners for regeneration, nor of the necessity of regeneration to provide solutions for some of the deep-seated social problems in the estate.

7.9 A similar level of investment is required by the LA in primary education as has been provided for secondary education in Popley. Massive investment by the Borough council and its partners in regeneration needs to be matched in some form by the LA in primary education provision for a complete solution to the ongoing problems of deprivation and if partners are to have a significant impact.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Chineham Park should not be closed as it will be needed to provide education provision when demand for places exceeds supply in the North Basingstoke area in the next 2 years:
  - (i) Popley has seen 800 new homes built and will see another 1350 new homes built in the next 2 years. The impact of the recession is considerably less than that assumed by the LA.
  - (ii) Additional housing is now being planned for the Norden ward, some of it close to Chineham Park School. This could mean up to 2000 new homes providing great pressure on school provision within 1 mile of Chineham Park School.
  - (iii) Much of the new housing will be needed to provide for projected demand from within Basingstoke. This is new evidence which the LA has not considered as part of its surplus places analysis.
2. The LA has ignored submissions citing road safety concerns when considering Great Binfields school as an alternative school for primary school age children to walk to. Is the LA seriously expecting children as young as 4 and a half to cross at grade a busy 50mph road with 40,000 vehicles a day?
3. The conclusions of zero impact on climate change are incorrect, as they refuse to take into account the probability of extra car journeys when the neighbouring schools such as Marnel and South View reach capacity in the next 2 years.
4. The Local Authority contributed to surplus places by building the extensions to Marnel Infants and Junior Schools at a time when it must have known there was a significant risk of surplus places.
5. Evidence of improvement, particularly the 2009 SAT and Value Added scores, have been ignored when the LA is forming its conclusion as to the overall improvement of the school.
6. EXEMPT INFORMATION REMOVED - SEE APPENDIX 8
7. The long-term effectiveness of any "support" provided by the LA has not been demonstrated.
8. More substantive support could and should have been provided, such as bringing in extra staff on a more permanent basis, as was the case with John Hunt of Everest secondary school. This dichotomy between the amount of support offered at primary and secondary stage has never been explained.
9. The LA is throwing in the towel with Chineham Park school.
10. There has been no opportunity to scrutinize the decision to close Chineham Park school.
  - (i) The LA's Ofsted Action Plan (or even a de-sensitised version) has not been made available.
  - (ii) The Instrument of Governance for the IEB has not been made public, no information has been made public as to who is on the IEB.
  - (iii) No opportunity has been given to ask questions of officers proposing closure at a council meeting.
11. Responses to the public consultation were kept from the public.
12. The LA has not demonstrated how it would address the issue of IDAC in the Chineham Park catchment area, with 38% of children in one LSOA living in households suffering from IDAC.
13. Federation or clustering could help more effectively address the problems at Chineham Park and similar schools in Basingstoke.
14. The formation of clusters and comprehensive restructuring in response to the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, is an indication of the failure of LA's education policy to address common issues in Basingstoke to date.

15. The co-siting of Sure Start childrens centre and a school catering for our most vulnerable children presents the best chance to improve the life chances of our most vulnerable children against a range of National Indicators.
16. Dissipating the problems seen at Chineham Park to other schools risks the future success of other schools through issues of contamination, and in cases where these other schools can not help the children, their life chances will be adversely affected if they drop out of mainstream education.
17. There is scope for a Fresh Start at Chineham Park Primary School, either as a mainstream secular school, a faith school, or a special school.

## References

1. Hampshire County Council Decision Report, Executive Lead member for Children's Services, 17 December 2009, Decision Reference 996.
2. Hampshire County Council Decision Report, Executive Lead member for Children's Services, 15 October 2009, Decision Reference 996.
3. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Report: Assessment Of Locally Generated Housing Need In Relation To Future Demographic, Economic And Labour Market Changes. 17 December 2009, Item 13.
4. Education and Inspections Act 2006
5. Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.
6. Hampshire Action Team for Basingstoke And Deane, Planning Meeting, 15 February 2010.
7. Hampshire Children's Trust: Developing Local Children's Partnerships  
Report to Governing Bodies of Hampshire Schools and Colleges By The Director of Children's Services