

STEDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher
Mrs Sally Dreckmann

Thursday 16th November 2017

Midhurst and Petworth Observer Article

Dear Parents, Carers and members of the wider community,

I am writing to you in response to the article today in the Midhurst and Petworth Observer. Although the article is about the proposal to expand Easebourne Primary School from a one to a two form entry school, Jenny Moulard, the journalist who has written the article, has written what can only be described as a sensationalist headline, designed to sell papers, which unfortunately mentions Stedham Primary School.

Parents of the school will already be aware of the consultation from the email I sent on Monday this week. As I outlined in that email, there are several concerns over the proposal itself but I also have concerns around the way in which the consultation has been launched and conducted; Midhurst Primary School are also voicing these concerns to their school community and the Local Authority.

Ultimately, a parent chooses where their child is schooled. Over the last few years, Stedham Primary School has increasingly become a school of choice. People value our family ethos, our small class sizes, our good child to adult ration, our excellent Special Educational Needs support and early intervention programme and our engaging and enriching curriculum which enables good outcomes.

Educational policies and the National Funding Formula increasingly mean that it is getting more challenging for small schools – all small schools, not just Stedham Primary. I wanted to reassure you today that there are no plans for Stedham Primary to close. For us, it is business as usual. Headlines such as the one in today's paper could potentially be damaging and cause misinformation. I am a strong advocate of small, rural schools; I have spent the entirety of my 21 year teaching career working in them. They play an invaluable role in the local community. They give parents a wider range of choice for their children. I am passionate about keeping a school in the village, not just because I am the Headteacher but because I am Midhurst born and bred, I spent a significant chunk of my childhood standing on the side line of Stedham's football pitch and members of my own family attended this school.

We are a strong community. We need to unite and make our voices heard regarding this consultation. If you have not already responded to the consultation I would urge you to do so by the current deadline of 28th November (we are hoping the LA will extend this deadline following our



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complaints regarding their conduct over this consultation). The consultation can be found at <https://haveyoursay.westsussex.gov.uk/strategic-planning-and-place/schoolexpansions19/>

Please remember, the newspaper headline was designed to sell papers and is not an accurate reflection of either the main content of the article it sits over or the actual situation. Our District Councillors Gordon McAra and Steve Morley are happy to speak to anyone if they have questions or comments regarding this situation or the comments they made to the newspaper, to give them more context and explanation than the article gives. Their contact details can be found on the Midhurst Town Council website at <http://www.midhurst-tc.gov.uk/article/27902/Your-councillors>

I thank you in advance for your support at this time. If you have questions, please come and talk to me and get the facts so that we can stop the spread of misinformation. The Governing Body is also considering our position on the issue and will write separately to parents shortly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally Dreckmann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sally Dreckmann
Headteacher