



HOTWELLS & CLIFTONWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Dear Lucy

Re: Proposed Merger Hotwells Primary School and Cathedral Primary School

I'm writing to express our grave dissatisfaction with the Cathedral Schools Trust's proposal to merge these two schools. We do not consider that the trust has given appropriate consideration to alternative solutions, has failed to consider the ethos of Hotwells Primary School, and the impact that their proposal will have on parents and the local environment. Additionally, the Trust has not fully answered questions regarding the management of Hotwells Primary School finances over the period since it has managed the school.

Hotwells Primary School has a long and proud history as a secular school rooted in its community. From the many neighbours whose children have attended Hotwells over the years, I know the school has nurtured a caring, independent, spirited and curious approach to education. While Cathedral Primary School is also highly valued by its parents and pupils, it has a different ethos. Losing a school such as Hotwells Primary which offers a strongly community minded and secular educational environment to the city would leave Bristol poorer.

Regarding the finances, we are aware that when Cathedral Schools Trusts took over Hotwells Primary School that it took on a significant deficit. Since then the Trust's Accounts show this shortfall has increased. At public meetings the senior management team were asked to explain this approach and failed to adequately explain why they allowed this situation to continue, other than "optimism" for future income streams.

Their proposal to solve this financial problem is the merger of the two schools under the Cathedral Primary School banner. While we can see that this solves the business problem for them, it creates major problems for parents, transporting siblings of different ages to different sites. The walking distance between the two schools is not insignificant, particularly for young children. We believe that the split site approach will lead to an increase in car usage, resulting in increased air pollution and congestion. For families who do not live or work locally to either school, this problem will be even worse.

We consider that by leaving it to this late stage to find a business solution, the Trust has scuppered the opportunity for other options that would actually benefit the community of Hotwells and Cliftonwood in the long term. The Trust has failed to engage properly with alternative proposals and the community to find a solution that is mutually agreeable. In summary, we feel that their stance has been somewhat arrogant and dismissive of the local community. This is an issue that they have been facing for the past four years and they have failed to communicate and engage with the wider community in a timely manner to find a mutually agreeable solution. We strongly urge you to reject this proposal to merge Hotwells Primary and

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Cathedral Primary School and work with our local communities to find a better solution that is fit for purpose for the long term.

With All Best Wishes

Rachel McNally
Chair of HCCA