

David Cooper
School Organisation and Strategy Manager
People Directorate
Children and Families Service
Southampton City Council
Civic Centre
Southampton
SO14 7LY

2 February 2015

Consultation on Proposals to Expand Springwell School: Views of Parents at Bassett Green Provision

Dear Mr Cooper,

Similar to the first stage of consultation in respect of the referenced matter, I am writing to you on behalf of the parents whose children attend the Bassett Green Springwell Resourced Provision in response to the full consultation on the proposed expansion of Springwell School. At the parents/teachers/governors meeting held at Springwell on Friday 7 November 2014 (9am), I was selected to collate and present to you the views of the said parents. These views are summarised below. Henceforth, the first person pronoun 'we' (and similar) refers to these parents.

We wholly welcome and fully support the proposal to expand Springwell School. As you will note below, our position on this matter has not changed. If anything, our resolve has been strengthened as we continue to observe the benefits our children are receiving from Springwell balanced against the ever challenging behaviours they continue to exhibit. It is important that they, as well as other similar children with SEN in the City continue to have access to the outstanding specialist education offered by this school within a stable and secure environment both now and in the future.

Comments on options outlined in the proposal

1. Option 1: Modular buildings on the current Springwell School site

Whilst we welcome this option, it is not our preferred **long-term** solution. We feel that it is a quick fix that is needed in place for the year **2015/16** as a starting point since our preferred **Option #2** (below) involves a lot of negotiations and planning.

2. Option 2: Utilisation of land adjacent to Springwell School

This is our most preferred long-term solution. We hasten to add that by long-term we mean at least the school year **2016/17** this should be in place. We feel that it is crucially important for our children to be located within one main Springwell site. It is in the best interest of the children to readily have access to all resources at the main site rather than elsewhere where they could be watered down due to finances. In addition:

- Pupils will benefit from continuity as they will be based at the same site throughout their primary school life.
- We as parents of children with special educational needs have enough to worry about. Knowing that our children are being nurtured and educated by people with real expertise in the SEN area with the right resources in a stable environment is a huge comfort.
- It is well documented that early intervention is vital to help children with special educational needs reach their full potential. An expanded Springwell School would allow more children to reach their full potential.
- Children with special educational needs are among some of the City's most vulnerable and deserve to be made a priority. A mark of a civilised society is how we treat them. They deserve the best. An expanded Springwell School site embodies this.
- We also believe that it boosts the teachers' morale if they worked in one location where they can share resources, collective knowledge and expertise as well as other benefits that arise from working together as a team.

We are of the strong view that Southampton City Council needs to seriously consider this option as the viable, long-term solution for Springwell's future. We urge you to place the needs of all the children at the forefront as you carefully consider this matter. Aware that time is not on our side, we propose that you urgently pursue the matter in order to avoid disruptions to the children's education.

3. Option 3: Addition of resourced provision co-located on a mainstream school elsewhere in the City

We are totally against this option. It is the antithesis of the benefits we outlined in support of **Option #2**. Although we acknowledge that for the year 2014/15 we were the beneficiaries of this arrangement, we do not consider it a long-term solution. It affords no stability to Springwell, is fraught with uncertainty, will confuse and disadvantage the children and will cause mental anguish to the parents and disenfranchise the teachers.

In summary, we urge you to take the bold step and consider **Option #2** as the most stable and viable long-term solution for Springwell school to progress to the next stage of consultations.

Yours sincerely

Dr Francis Otieno
(On behalf of Parents at Bassett Green Springwell Satellite Provision)

Cc:

Angela Allerton, Chair of Governors, Springwell School
 Jackie Partridge, Head Teacher, Springwell School