



26 February 2015

Dear Governor

We write on behalf of the Governing Body of Archway School in response to your letter of 15th December.

We would ask that you reconsider the intention to increase your PAN in the light of the effect it will have on the children and other schools in the area. There are a number of schools in the county who are regularly oversubscribed but who do not exceed their PAN. At Archway we occasionally could go over PAN, this year being an example, but are bound quite rightly by the admissions code.

I would draw to your attention:

- numbers provided by the local authority at the time when we were collectively opposing the establishment of a Free School in the area indicated that the intake for Archway (typically between 190 and 215 – the school's PAN) would drop to 160 in 2016
- plans to increase your PAN by 30 alongside Marling School's increase of 30 would further significantly reduce that number
- you make the point about students coming not just from central Stroud, but current practice suggests that at least half of them will
- there are increases in student numbers in the Cheltenham and Gloucester areas, this is not the case in Stroud – the basis of our opposition to the Free School.

This is not solely about numbers. It is about the nature of the changes you will cause in the non-selective schools. Reducing the intake to a school simply makes it smaller, removing the intake by ability results in significant changes to the intake profiles and therefore the ethos of the remaining non-selective schools.

We understand that operating a school with 850 students will become increasingly difficult. Catering for children with increasingly complex special educational and mental health needs for whom there is diminishing special school provision or maintaining a small sixth form pose equally difficult financial problems. All schools face difficulties in the current funding regime.

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It is disappointing, given your acknowledgement of the difficulties of operating with 850 students, that you would proceed given the threat that your increase will prove to those secondary schools in the area with 416 and 460 students on roll: their very existence is at stake.

We hope that you will be able to look more widely at the effect that your increased PAN would have on the educational provision for children in the area and the nature of the difficulties that you will cause to other local schools both in terms of their changed ethos and reduced numbers. Given the proximity of your sites and your shared provision in a number of areas we are sure that you could achieve economies of scale in other ways. A single 8 form entry institution would bring the sustainability you seek and is a model that has worked successfully in Cheltenham for many years.

Yours faithfully



Colin Belford
Headteacher



Pam Swindell
Chair of Governors