

Details of the 6 emails received in response to the consultation document.

Please note, personal information has been removed from these e-mails.

E-mail 1:

Questions with regards to the proposed expansion of Osbaldwick Primary School and the closure of Derwent.

1. Please be honest. Is this genuinely a consultation or is it already a done deal? The view from many parents is that you are simply going through the legal motions before moving forward with your preferred option.
2. **Year Groups:** The arrangements for classes as explained in the document now mean that from September 2013 my two children will no longer be at the same school site until they reach secondary school (one in Year 3 currently and one in reception) This is our biggest concern and whilst both ourselves and our children are currently extremely happy at OPS, we are considering alternatives for September 2013. My two children are already anxious about all of this and I am curious to know what you have told the children about this so far. How will you ensure the two sites run as one, other than they have the same name?
3. **Two form entry:** My children have very good friends in their classes and have been asking if they will still be in the same class as their friends. How are you going to determine who will be with who? By DOB, ability, pot luck?
4. **Before/after school provision:** We currently rely on the excellent before and after school care currently provided on your site. I am extremely anxious to know if my children will be at different sites for this extended provision. Dropping of at 2 different sites for breakfast club and afterschool club would be very difficult. Do you intend to operate 1 site or 2?
5. **Staffing:** A) Is there a policy on how many years your child can be taught by the same members of staff? Whilst we have always been very satisfied with the standard of teaching at Osbaldwick Primary school, I

am aware of the importance in children experiencing a variety of teaching and learning styles, personalities, etc. With staff perhaps moving around again, after a recent reshuffle, there is the possibility of having the same teacher in 3 different school years. Is this something you will aim to avoid or is it down to the luck of the draw?

6. **Staffing:** B) Because of the nature of the difference in ofsted reports, I suspect many parents with children at OPS will hope their child is taught by a member of staff at OPS. I appreciate that this is unfair and I am sure there are excellent teachers at both sites, however perceptions are often far stronger than reality. How are you going to address this perception and expectation?
7. **Leadership and management:** How is the leadership team's time/responsibilities going to be split?
8. **Behaviour:** A concern that I have heard voiced by many is the issue of behaviour and the influence that poor behaviour can have upon those children who work hard and try their best. Perhaps unfairly and probably based on rumour and hearsay rather than fact, there is a huge concern about poor behaviour at Derwent. How are you going to address this and ensure that standards remain high?
9. **Governance:** How will the two governing bodies be merged? Will it form one large governing body or will it be a few from each. If it is the latter, how will this be decided?

I appreciate that you may be unable to answer all these questions at this stage, however the more information you are able to provide, the more you will put our minds at ease. Unfortunately, so far all we have heard is rumour and speculation which has only heightened our levels of anxiety. Please be aware of this and that we would very much appreciate an open, honest and transparent consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to read these questions.

Kind Regards

E-mail 2:

From:

Sent: 09 January 2013 21:24

To: education@york.gov.uk

Subject: Consultation about the future of the Derwent Schools Federation and Osbaldwick Primary School

Categories: Misc

As a parent of a pupil at Osbaldwick School with the potential for a sibling to go in a couple of years time I wanted to pass on my views about the proposed expansion of Osbaldwick to include Derwent Federation Schools.

In principle I feel that the business behind the expansion is sensible I agree that doing nothing will eventually lead to the deterioration of Osbaldwick. Without the opportunity to expand school numbers and increase funding Osbaldwick School as it presently is will no longer be viable.

I welcome the proposal for smaller class sizes as this can only be seen as a good thing. I am looking forward to seeing the facilities on offer at Derwent and agree with the split of the KS1 and KS2 classes across both sites. As a Year 6 pupil should this proposal go ahead, my daughter can only learn from the lessons that "change is good" and welcome the opportunity it will give to help her with the transition to Archbishops the following year.

My only concern is that the level of discipline/code of conduct currently observed at Osbaldwick is maintained and that disruptive behaviour is dealt with accordingly. It is paramount that a proposal like this keeps at the forefront of it the objective to maintain these standards.

My only real disagreement is that the proposal to provide a free school uniform for children transferring from Derwent to Osbaldwick should be changed to provide a free school sweatshirt to every child who is registered with the expanded Osbaldwick School in September 2013.

This then ensures a fair and equitable start to everyone involved and in no way shows any prejudice or favouritism.

Many thanks for allowing me to express my views.

E-mail 3:

From:

Sent: 11 January 2013 16:03

To: education@york.gov.uk

Subject: School Consultation

Categories:Osaldwick Derwent Consultation

Dear Sir/Madam

Further to the schools consultation about the future of the Derwent Schools Federation and Osaldwick Primary School, I would like to make

the following comments to the points highlighted in the document.

I fully agree with the proposal 1, to close Derwent School and extend Osaldwick School to create a two form of entry school using both of the existing sites.

The proposal for the location of the year groups seems eminently sensible and keeps the students who are in the transition phase from KS1 to KS2 together on one site, which I fully support.

I would hope that the formulation of the two classes per year group could be split on a mixed ability basis, ie avoiding one class of high achievers

and one class of low achievers. I believe that mixed ability classes are fairer. I would also like to see the children having some input (or the parents of the children) to enable them to identify a friend that they are able to stay with within their class group.

I am concerned that as full time working parents that we are able to retain our daughter's place at the before and after school club and that the provision for this is not affected by this plan.

I would also like to suggest that a parental focus/steering group should be set up to enable parents to input to the decision making process and to ensure that their comments are taken into account through this process. Some of the parents on this should be full time working parents.

Yours

E-mail 4:

From:

Sent: 18 January 2013 11:00

To: education@york.gov.uk

Subject: Response to Osbaldwick Derwent consultation

Categories: Osbaldwick Derwent Consultation

18th January 2013

Dear Sirs,

I would like to register my personal response to the proposed changes at both Osbaldwick and Derwent primary schools. I am a parent of x children who currently attend Osbaldwick Primary.

Before addressing the points made in the consultation document I want to take the opportunity to tell you that I believe the standard of education and care that my children receive under the current arrangements at Osbaldwick School are of the highest quality. The Staff, governors and children can take a great amount of pride in their achievements.

My family moved to York xxxxxxxxxxxx and we chose (after carefully considering 4 other primary schools in the east and centre of York) to send our children to Osbaldwick school because it was obvious from a short visit that the attainment at the school was helped by the strong sense of community that the head and teachers had built together. The buildings weren't the biggest or most modern but we felt our children would fit best at Osbaldwick because of the ethos of the school.

The consultation document provides no evidence that the current educational standards are likely to be sustained under the proposed new structure when clearly this might have been achieved by looking toward the performance of similarly structured (and split) schools amongst available league table data. I believe that dividing the school over two sites would cause irreparable damage to its community and undermine the results and quality of education the school provides to the children in the future. My opinion is also formed through my experience as someone who was educated at a school based over two separated sites.

I was interested in reading about the challenges faced by both Derwent and Osbaldwick schools highlighted in the consultation document (page 5) and would appreciate feedback on some questions I have around these challenges.

- It is interesting to find out that 80% of parents in the Derwent catchment select other schools as their first preference. Could I therefore ask if the other schools in the locality (Tang Hall Primary, Saint Aelreds, Badger Hill) are similarly oversubscribed like Osbaldwick?

If not, why is Osbaldwick the exception?

Are other schools locally finding themselves in a similar situation to Derwent with regard to low Pupil numbers and might therefore be more logical candidates for merger?

Merger of two schools simply because of their proximity would seem a poor decision when the risk to the quality of education provided is considered.

It would also be useful to understand how many children there are currently in the Derwent catchment area and if it is realistic to expect to fill a school of its size? This is particularly important with respect to the 80% preference data quoted in the consultation document as this doesn't give any indication of the true or yield of Derwent School in recruiting pupils from its catchment.

- The second point notes that the surplus space at the school are largely as a result of parent preference. Where again this issue cannot be fully understood in the absence information regarding the numbers of children locally and the number places provided by each school.

This point is also salient in understanding the objective of the current proposals to remove surplus excess places by merger. However, in the absence of further information it is unclear if the proposals are realistic in this objective, or excess places will simply be move them elsewhere to other schools in the locality.

- The consultation document makes several references to an increasing birth rate putting increasing pressure to find future school places locally. However, York currently has a birth rate lower than the national average (Office of national statistics, 2010) and neglects to account for the local influence of university expansion leading to a

reduced (and well publicised) number of homes occupied by families throughout the Osbaldwick and Tang Hall areas.

- The document also makes reference to overcrowding at Osbaldwick School although maximum class size is not exceeded and upon inspection this has never been previously mentioned by OFSTED.

As requested in the consultation document, I would also like to comment around the favoured proposal for closure of Derwent and expansion of Osbaldwick School.

1. Close Derwent School and extend Osbaldwick to create a two form of entry school using both of the existing sites.

This option provides an opportunity to offer high quality primary education and early year's provision across the locality. This proposal ensures strong, effective leadership and governance, removes excessive surplus places and enables both school sites to be fully used.

- As noted previously the aspiration of the new structure providing high quality education isn't backed up by any evidence that the proposed structure is capable of achieving this objective. Do similarly split and structured schools attain top 10% places in national assessments currently? Is there any data to support this assumption?
- As highlighted previously, a surplus of places will likely be maintained under the proposal, in the provision of primary education places in the locality (Osbaldwick and Tang Hall). Although it is possible these places may be dispersed to other nearby schools rather than being retained at the expanded Osbaldwick primary.

In Addition, under the proposals outlined for two form classes per year an additional teacher is required in the expanded Osbaldwick primary. The net outcome being number of excess places in primary education in the locality would increase under the proposal.

- The proposal doesn't consider the impact of the change on the local infrastructure, and in particular Osbaldwick lane. An increase in catchment size will increase the requirement for parents living further from the school sites to really upon cars rather than public transport or walking to bring children into school. Can each site cope with this increase in number? Would staggered starts cause additional problems on Osbaldwick lane that is currently used by heavy vehicles at the Derwenthorpe development and serviced by the number 6 bus route?

2. *The proposed organisation of year groups across the two school sites.*

- The split of the school across two sites is impractical and potentially unsafe given the main route between sites is the busy Osbaldwick lane and in particular the junction with Hambelton avenue at peak times. Movement of groups or single children between sites is impractical on a regular or daily basis should facilities or timetable (e.g. higher set learning) be required and a potentially large drain on the time of school staff and children to supervise and take part in these movements.
- The split will cause the erosion of community and togetherness nurtured at the current Osbaldwick primary.
- It would be preferable for a "lower" school (reception, 1, 2, 3) to remain at the current Osbaldwick site and an "Upper" school to

be based at the Derwent site to minimise movement between sites and make best use of available facilities.

3. *The proposal to provide free school uniforms for children transferring from the Derwent to Osbaldwick Primary.*

- No Preference, although this should be on a means tested basis.

4. *The proposed catchment area for the expanded Osbaldwick Primary School.*

- The new catchment area includes the new Derwenthorpe development. Under the current arrangements this development would fall inside the Derwent catchment. This development is likely to contain around 540 new houses and require approximately 130 places in primary education.

The consultation document estimates that class sizes under the proposal will be between 22-26 during 2013, leaving at least 56 excess places in Osbaldwick School.

How does the school propose to cope with the requirement for an additional 130 places on completion of the Derwenthorpe development?

Will the current excess places at Derwent School not be used by the development at Derwenthorpe? Could appropriate budgeting at Derwent be used in the mean time to make the school more cost effective?

5. *The proposed changes to catchment area of Tang Hall Primary School.*

Will the increased catchment area reduce oversubscription at Osbaldwick School so that a merged would be less cost effective?

Since there is already a surplus of primary places in the east of York and the surplus is set to increase under the proposed merger, the catchment of Tang Hall primary is of little consequence to the effective provision of

primary education in the area. By providing further places at the proposed school Tang Hall, school might become as under subscribed as Derwent currently is.

In summary

Given that merger of the two sites is likely to move the problem of under subscription and increase cost per pupil to other schools in the locality it seems illogical to burden the combined Derwent/Osbaldwick school with operating from two sites to achieve a short term fix. This approach would simply move the current problems elsewhere in the east of York primary sector.

Because of the large development taking place at Derwenthorpe and the future closure of the primary school at Burnholme, it would seem that the current excess in places would likely be used by pupils attending the current Derwent school from this new development in its catchment. **Under these circumstances it would seem sensible to suggest the maintenance of two schools operating from their own individual sites would be more preferable than the current proposal.** In the interim period, both Osbaldwick and Derwent school could be run under a single head and governing body. Cost during this period would also need to be addressed to make Derwent school more cost effective during this interim period.

Yours sincerely,

E-mail 5:

From:

Sent: 11 February 2013 19:49

To: education@york.gov.uk

Subject: Response to consultation on Osbaldwick School

Categories: Osbaldwick Derwent Consultation

To whom it may concern

I am responding as a parent of a child at Osbaldwick School on the planned closure of Derwent School, and expansion of Osbaldwick School. I understand that our responses need to be received by yourselves on this matter by 16th February 2013.

In XXXX we moved to Osbaldwick, in part due to the fact we wanted our daughter to attend Osbaldwick School. We wanted our daughter to attend a small school with only one intake per year of 30 children, as we feel this suits the needs of our daughter best. At the time of applying for a school, had we been aware of the changes now planned, we would have very likely applied for a space in a different school.

We have reservations about the school being over two sites, the safety of children moving between the sites and the practicalities in the future of having two children on different sites. I appreciate that timings are being staggered for start and finishes, but this would definitely have again discouraged us from applying for a space.

In view of this, I would ask that if this is approved, consideration is given to building additional classrooms on one site to accommodate the entire school.

In addition to these points, I wish to raise the issue of yet another school on the east side of York being shut, at the same time as a huge housing development is being built in Derwenthorpe. Where are all these children going to attend primary and secondary school?

We are disappointed with the planned proposal, and in the likely event that this goes ahead we hope that the high standards of Osbaldwick School can be maintained.

Kind regards

E-mail 6:

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Re: The proposed catchment area for the expanded Osbaldwick Primary School and the proposed changes to catchment area of Tang Hall Primary School.

I support those changes as they will improve numbers allocated to Tang Hall.

Re: The proposed organisation of year groups across the two school sites;

I support the proposal as being an innovative way of minimising the effect of the Infant to Junior dip in attainment. Even though it raises issues for me as a parent with 2 years between each of my children I still see that this is a good way of organising the two schools.

Re: The proposal to close the Derwent Schools Federation and to expand the Osbaldwick Primary School;

I wholeheartedly support this proposal. It will benefit the Osbaldwick children to have a larger school with better facilities possible and likewise will benefit the failing Derwent school to have some good leadership and raised attainment. The current executive head is excellent, has the full trust of most parents and has shown herself to be more than capable of helping to transform failing schools. I would expect to see a considerable amount of financial support to enable her and the leadership team to provide the best and smoothest transition to two sites possible.

Re: The proposal to provide free school uniforms for children transferring from the Derwent Federation to Osbaldwick Primary

As long as the money is not expected to come from either the current Osbaldwick or Derwent budgets I support this. It seems logical that the children who come from a more deprived background should be helped out in this way. It certainly isn't tenable to expect all the parents to BUY new school uniforms and all the children should be expected to wear the Osbaldwick uniform as from September. I wonder if a PTA organised old uniform sale for cheap would also be a good idea in the long term. I will suggest this at governor level.