11/11/14

Re: Neroche Community Primary School Catchment Consultation

To whom it may concern,

May we first of all thank you for taking time to read our consultation regarding extending Neroche Community Primary School's Catchment Area into the west side of Ilminster.

We thought it would be useful to outline our rationale behind this consultation.

Since Neroche Community Primary School was built in 1973, a significant proportion of our pupils (our roll averages 150) have always come from Ilminster.

The proportion of pupils from Ilminster at our school has historically fluctuated between 20% and 40% of our total school roll for the past 40 years. We currently have over 40 children from Ilminster on roll.

Children, from mainly the west of Ilminster, traditionally join our school either in their Reception Year or in Year 5. This is down to parental choice for varying reasons, but mainly consists of a choice between different primary school settings or because parents are looking at the type of secondary education system they wish their child to proceed to.

Neroche Community Primary School gained an “Outstanding” rating from OFSTED in March 2013. This, coupled with our significantly above average results in statutory testing at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, has seen our pupil numbers grow significantly, with our current roll standing at 172 pupils.

We are concerned that the families of children in Ilminster, who for the past 40 years, have exercised their choice to attend our school, may have future difficulty in obtaining a place at Neroche if our popularity of the past three years continues to rise at current rates, and so
we are consulting about this extension to our catchment area in order to protect the current “unofficial status quo” that has existed since our school was built 40 years ago.

Our aim is to essentially protect the rights of parents from the west of Ilminster to exercise the choice of where to have their children educated.

The parents, who currently elect to join Neroche Community Primary School, and those in the future, from the west side of Ilminster, will gain confidence that they are applying to our school from within our defined catchment area. Many parents, especially those with older siblings in the school will benefit most should our catchment be extended. This is our main target group that has informed our decision to commission this consultation.

There will be no changes to current transport arrangements should the catchment change occur. No transport or contribution to transport costs will be made by Somerset County Council as is the case now.

There will be no changes to secondary school catchments either as a result of this consultation. As is the case now, parents living in Ilminster who choose to transfer their children to the secondary system after Year 6, will continue to be “Out of catchment” for our local secondary school, as they are now.

Our school’s Planned Admission Number will remain at 30 per year group as it is now. The extension of our catchment, giving parents on the west of Ilminster a choice of two schools, will have little to no impact upon our neighbouring schools pupil numbers, as we are consulting upon maintaining the existing “Unofficial Status Quo.”

We hope this brief outline of our proposal and our clear rationale behind our consultation is helpful to you and your organisation in being informed to respond to our consultation.

If you have any queries or further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at the address above.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Connel Boyle  
Headteacher  
Neroche Primary School

Mr David Pugh  
Chair of Governors  
on behalf of the Governing Body