

My name is Jamie Luck. I am Creative Associate at the RSC, and as an ex Culverhay student I'm here today to reason against the closure of the school, and I don't do this for nostalgia's sake. I do this because I don't think those who propose the closure actually understand its value – whether it be the value it offers its current students, or the many that could benefit if the Council are capable of realising its long proposed ambitions for a mixed school on the site.

My time as a student at Culverhay was a rude awakening. After the relative shelter of Newbridge Junior School, this wasn't the Bath I had known. So I grew up, I toughened. I had inspiring teachers, and less inspiring teachers. And great teachers certainly aren't unique to Culverhay.

But my education at Culverhay was a time spent in a part of Bath that many tourists and politicians will never visit - a school that deals in the social diversity of this city. And with diversity comes diverse learning needs. Amongst many other things, Culverhay is a master of the art of keeping boys engaged in mainstream education who'd be permanently excluded by many schools. That was the case in my day, and remains the case now. And your figures can't tell this story for you, because many of those boys that would be on fixed term exclusions at other schools, wouldn't find themselves out of lessons at Culverhay.

I know this. I spent 7 years in those classrooms as a student, and another 7 working with young people "at risk" across Bath's secondary schools.

This brilliance of Culverhay's is not a simple thing to explain in an education system that values exam results over more intelligent measures of success, and that very specific "inclusivity" won't come up on your calculator when you're making decisions led by admissions figures.

However, in a few years time, I think you'll realise you have done your sums wrong. When numbers of male exclusions from secondary schools begin to increase, it is the young males that could have been cherished at Culverhay that will suffer from your bad maths. And those expedient financial decisions suddenly won't seem so fruitful; dealing with students once they're excluded isn't a cheap business.

I believe your high-academic school achievers will always be fine wherever they're sent, as I was, and your middle classes will always be able to afford a bus-ride to a secondary school across town, as I could. But is our education system in Bath really about the needs of the able many, against the more specific needs of the few.

When the Avon Council of 80s was placed in a similar situation by the actions of Beechen Cliff, the council pursued the matter to the high courts, such was their commitment to a mixed school on the Rush Hill site. Decades later, in its place we have a Council that has been bullied out of its best laid plans by Oldfield School, and will now pick on one of our smallest school as a quick fix. These are actions of the bullied, now bullying. It is not the actions of a Council that understands the heartbeat, spirit and complexities of its people.

So it ultimately comes down to have you made the right call. And you haven't. Culverhay closing might be the best thing for your budgets, and an easy way out of a confrontation with secondary schools that don't play fair, but this is not the best thing for the city.