

## **Statement to Cabinet 25-Nov-10 by Sue Adams, Head, Southdown Infants School**

Reasons for keeping Culverhay open...

I speak in support of keeping Culverhay open and urge the Cabinet to seriously consider the alternative proposal offered by Culverhay to reorganise as an all through coeducational school:-

- I believe that we need Secondary provision in our immediate local community – a recent needs assessment commissioned by the Local Authority to provide evidence for the Children and Young People’s plan found that our local areas of Southdown, Whiteway and Twerton are areas of multiple deprivation and poverty.
- They rank within the 15 – 20 % most deprived areas in England with the rest of Bath ranking within the top 10% of least deprived areas. Our local wards scored extremely low in the Child Well-being Index for material well being, health & disability, education, crime, housing and children in need.
- Having worked in this community for nearly six years I know this to be true but I also believe that we will not serve this community well by forcing the young people to seek their secondary education elsewhere in different communities.
- Having identified the specific needs of the local families how can we then act by closing Culverhay which is and always has been at the heart of our community – the one aspect that our wards scored highly on was Environment – we have good access to green space, woodland, children living close to schools, leisure and sports provision all of which are provided by Culverhay – the closure of Culverhay would then lower the area’s ranking in this aspect too.
- The LA have a prime opportunity to develop an innovative all through provision by co-locating primary age children onto Culverhay site – this would ensure that our families have continued local choice for education and also provide a different choice for other Bath families.
- Michael Gove wants to develop the next phase of the academies programme – to encourage the best schools to work in partnership with others to raise standards and to promote innovation and diversity in the schools system – surely Culverhay’s proposal does exactly that.

- An all through co ed academy would fulfil the criteria in the White Paper 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools – wider support to improve the outcomes for young people, parenting support programmes, co-located health and social care professionals, high quality local knowledge about the needs of the children, young people and their families – and all of this would be provided within safe walking/cycling distance of their homes.
- Instead of changing schools three times and having to build new friendships and working relationships each time, partnerships would be developed from the moment the children started at nursery and would be built on and continued until the children left the school. Evidence from other all through schools shows that it would eradicate the traditional dip in achievement on transitions.
- Lord Laming’s report recommended integrated multiagency working to meet the needs of communities with vulnerable children and families – he said that ‘nowhere was it more important that the voice of the child is heard’ – who is listening to the voices of the Culverhay students?
- The families and community have worked tirelessly to demonstrate how important it is to keep this school open. It would be a tragedy to close Culverhay - it would be deeply felt and have long lasting repercussions on present and future students; to dismiss the proposal without serious consideration would be to miss the opportunity to develop an innovative setting which could tackle inequalities, close the disadvantage gap – and meet the needs of our families within our own community.