

## **Report to the School Organisation regarding Redhouse Primary School.**

### **Context.**

Redhouse Primary School is a 210 place primary school which caters for children from Nursery to the end of Key Stage 2.

Within the last two years and especially within the academic year 2004/2005 the school saw acceleration in its falling rolls issue. Falling rolls are an issue across Walsall and indeed the country, and although numbers are now falling across the board, it has been widely acknowledged by teaching unions, and academic think tanks that closing schools is not a sensible option, as historically numbers of pupils can and do rise.

It has also been sighted that if capacity is severely reduced, this could leave parents with a lack of parental choice, and schools unable to address the changing needs of an ever increasing catchment area, this can become particularly acute should housing policy for areas change or if new housing developments are granted.

Redhouse School admittedly saw an exacerbation of its falling rolls issue, due in part to problems with leadership and management, which meant that parental confidence was damaged. There has now in the main been an almost new governing body, including, a serving deputy Headteacher, a recently retired Headteacher of a large successful primary, and a retired head of maths to name a few.

We have a highly effective acting Headteacher, who is driving the school forward through team work and a creative and diverse curriculum, she has addressed staff training needs and boosted the profile of ICT within School, by purchasing an interactive whiteboard for every class.

This is all showing signs of turning the school around, and restoring confidence, new children are arriving at the school every week, and to date there have been new intake into the school of somewhere in the region of 15 pupils, some are in the nursery, but it is felt by all of us at Redhouse that to exclude nursery from the

discussions surrounding the future of the school would be missing out a vital element of the work that is done in school.

The budget is now in credit, by approximately £16,000 even after consideration has been given to the claw back, which will affect the school.

Staffing is as follows:

Nursery / Reception	1 Teacher 0.5 Teaching Assistant
Year 1 Year 2	1 Teacher 0.5 Teaching Assistant.
Year 3 Year 4	1 Teacher 0.25 Teaching Assistant
Year 5 Year 6	1 Teacher 0.25 Teaching Assistant.

Issues to addressed:

In order to effectively put the case for Redhouse school remaining open, this report shall now seek to address each of the committees questions from our perspective in the order they were asked.

Yours first question was:

*‘The number of children currently residing on the Redhouse estate that could in the next 2 years seek places at the school’.*

Obviously with the limited means as a school we have, we couldn’t find out the numbers of people on the estate, however we have sent out a letter to ask for people who know children who are likely to attend in the next two years, and we had approximately 10 returns for potential children, this is not of course a large amount but given the small number of parents currently at Redhouse this shows a promising start.

*‘The home addresses of the pupils that are currently on roll at the school’.*

This we can answer, please see spreadsheet below:

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Post code	Year Group	Area this is in.
WS9 0DX	Nursery	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DY	Nursery	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0EE	Nursery	Redhouse Estate
WS4 2HB	Nursery	Regina Drive, Walsall
WS9 0DP	Nursery	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0EB	Nursery	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DY	Nursery	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DR	Reception	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DU	Reception	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DY	Reception	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DU	Reception	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DY	Year 1	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DY	Year 1	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DR	Year 1	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DU	Year 1	Redhouse Estate
WS4 1JY	Year 1	Rushall
WS9 0EB	Year 1	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DP	Year 1	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DY	Year 2	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DQ	Year 2	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DS	Year 2	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DR	Year 2	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0EA	Year 2	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DF	Year 2	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DY	Year 3	Redhouse Estate
WS4 1JY	Year 3	Rushall
WS9 0DX	Year 3	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DQ	Year 3	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0BU	Year 4	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DQ	Year 4	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0EB	Year 4	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0BU	Year 4	Redhouse Estate
WS4 1JY	Year 4	Rushall
WS4 1JY	Year 4	Rushall
WS9 0DU	Year 5	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DU	Year 5	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DT	Year 5	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DF	Year 5	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DU	Year 5	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0RN	Year 5	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0BT	Year 5	Redhouse Estate

WS9 0DR	Year 5	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0EB	Year 5	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DT	Year 6	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0EL	Year 6	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DU	Year 6	Redhouse Estate
WS4 1JY	Year 6	Rushall
WS9 0DF	Year 6	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0EB	Year 6	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0DY	Year 6	Redhouse Estate
WS9 0EL	Year 6	Redhouse Estate

The above table clearly shows that a large percentage (88.5%) attends Redhouse School from the local area.

As a percentage those who come to us from outside the area, are 11.5%, which is not a large amount of children who travel to our school, considering all but one of the children from Rushall, belong to the same family.

*‘Information showing the spread across the Aldridge Schools of the places in year groups’.*

Again as an organisation which is not at liberty to know this kind of information we can only speculate, however having the accessed the 2004 – 2009 School Organisation plan, (the most up to date information available to us) the following table shows the position of Aldridge Schools:

School	N.O.R	Amount over/under capacity.
Leighswood	491	1 child over capacity.
Whetstone fields	223	13 children over capacity.
St. Mary's	215	5 children over capacity.
Cooper & Jordan	448	28 children over capacity.
Radleys	201	9 children under capacity.

This table though it may be slightly out of date, clearly shows the position of Aldridge Primary Schools is one of over subscription, Radleys primary school has been included as a local school, however even looking at those numbers, the school could not without going over subscribed be able to accommodate an acceptable number of Redhouse Pupils.

From personal experience, of talking to parents, it is common for pupils to be able to obtain a place (sometimes) in a Junior class where class size regulation are not in force then to have their sibling turned down for an infant place due to the class size regulations.

It is surely not the wish of any Education Authority for parents to be placed in the position of having two children at different schools.

(It is understood that this information may not be completely up to date, however, it is hard to imagine a large change in these pupil numbers, especially when you consider that since closure has been announced for Redhouse those who were worried regarding a place for their child have taken up what places were left in those schools).

*'Information on Serco's Situation if the committee requested that the school continue, and would need to be licensed with a negative deficit budget'*

This issue has been explored in many meeting with representatives from education Walsall, at the beginning it was agreed a recovery plan should be put into place in order for the school to apply for a deficit budget. This was then seen as not being an option, governors were then told, that, a licensed deficit would be given to take us through which ever option was decided during consultation, the then chair of governors (Mr Bob Bunday) formally sent a letter to Education Walsall in order to ask for this and we received no reply.

However we understand that licensing a deficit, is a very big decision as it is using public funds. It is however our understanding that a deficit is licensed if there is a plan in place for recovery, should the committee decide to continue with the school, this would allow us to put in place an effective recovery plan, as already mentioned, despite the threat of closure hanging over the

school, the school has taken on around 15 new pupils, 2 of which started only a week after the date of the last meeting of the School Organisation Committee, this clearly shows an element of recovery already despite the grave situation we are in.

It is my understanding that Cllr Bird, has been contacted by ex parents, discussing the future of the school and expressing an interest in returning, this of course would only seek to boost finances and help us to effect a recovery.

*'In the event of this committee, supporting closure, what arrangements could be made for the transport for people seeking alternative schools in Aldridge'?*

We cannot comment upon this, apart from to say that as expressed by Education Walsall during countless meetings, including in your presence, they insist that it is not unreasonable for pupils to have to walk so far, and is within government guidelines, we ask would Education Walsall be able to find the money to fund transport that is not outside the government guidelines, and with the current issues within Walsall of the need to rebuild schools, (May we add there is no structural issue at Redhouse with the fabric of the building) how long would they be able to maintain this funding even if it were to be found during the next academic year.

It is our understanding that funding from central government is pass ported out straight into schools budgets, if this is the case, the burden of providing transport is most likely to fall onto the receiving schools, is it within the remit, of Education Walsall, to direct a governing body to ring fence part of its budget in this way?

A scenario we find most disturbing is this:

*A mother has a child in year 1, year 6 and nursery, after walking her children from redhouse estate, to for example leighswood, in the morning, to arrive by approximately 8:50 am, she would then have to walk home and prepare to arrive back at school for approximately 11:30 am, for her nursery child, after walking all the way home again with a tired nursery child, she then has to prepare to pick up her other two children who are in the main school, at approximately 3:15 pm, before walking home for her final journey of the day.*

This amounts to 6 trips to school, of about 30 minutes each that is a total walking time of 3 hours, a day, this is 15 hours a week, during heavy rain or inclement weather this trip would be even harder.

We put it to committee that it is highly likely even if the mother is desperate for her children to attend school, attendance at school will suffer, especially the nursery child, this will without doubt impact upon educational standards.

*‘That the governors have emergency talks with the schools in Aldridge, including the comprehensive school, on the possibility of federation’.*

A meeting was arranged with a report attached for the Aldridge Science College during the period of consultation, however on the evening of the governors meeting it was found out that the issue was to be put back to a later cabinet meeting, no one at this meeting knew why, and so the meeting was adjourned, it since transpired that it was to give us more time, however it was the view of Aldridge Science Colleges governors that they needed a clear answer as to whether this would be actually allowed by cabinet, they sent a letter expressing this to Education Walsall and to the Cabinet, to which there was no reply, it was then assumed by all parties that the schools would not be allowed to come together under a federation, and indeed correspondence with the Managing Director of Education Walsall, showed that they did not view federation as an option, and we are where we are now find ourselves.

However it is worth noting that Aldridge Science College was very interested to the point where they discussed the pitfalls and privileges associated with this with another federated school in Walsall.

Due to the short timescale involved, we have been unable to arrange a meeting with Aldridge Science Colleges governors.

### Conclusion.

It is essential we feel, that Redhouse Primary School should continue to provide a high quality of education for its pupils, there have many beneficial changes within the school and this is

showing with the new pupils who have recently been taken onto the school roll. We hope this viewpoint is mirrored by all of those that are in the position of making decisions regarding the school.

Thank you for reading our report.