

## Admissions Consultation January 2008

**This is a joint response from the Headteachers and Chairmen of Governors of Dormansland Primary School, Godstone Village School, Lingfield Primary School and Oxted School.**

- We do not agree with the proposed new catchment area for Oxted School.
- The way in which such a large secondary school can maintain its character and ethos is by drawing from its traditional family of schools, thus preserving a community ethos, however spread out that community might be. This is inevitable in a rural area. The loss of access to what is seen locally as the local secondary school will have a huge and very harmful impact in the villages identified. Examples of this include break up of friendship groups, family changes where three generations have gone to Oxted School and the movement of people out of the villages seeking housing closer to the secondary school of their choice.
- The adjudicator's view is that the catchment area as currently drawn is too large. In the Tandridge area there are many independent schools and we estimate that approximately 30% of the local families elect to send their children to the independent sector or to the grammar schools in neighbouring Kent. This has a considerable impact which reduces the number of children from within the area that are competing for places.
- We also feel the adjudicator's view for the children in Lingfield and Dormansland has been ignored (paragraph 28) and we wish this to be as the adjudicator said "tackled more directly". We also believe the adjudicator states that families living in rural areas should be protected; we regard this as applying also to children from Godstone School.
- Home / school travel is an important consideration and the families in the southernmost part of Tandridge Confederation are advantaged by an excellent rail link. This rail link gives access also to Warlingham School, another popular school within the borough. There are excellent bus links supporting Godstone Village School to Oxted along the A25. The current proposals seem ignore the School Admissions Code (paragraph 2.31) that authorities '**should** take account of the time it will take to travel to school, and the availability of public transport in establishing their oversubscription criteria'.
- Given that, last year, the vast majority of applicants in the area were satisfied with their placements by the end of the process, including appeals, this suggests that the adjudicator's comments (paragraph 31) that the current model is capable of 'further refinement' are being ignored in favour of radical change.
- Recent county and national initiatives have encouraged schools to work closely together, these proposals undermine our current close links which have brought about considerable curriculum and professional developments and improvements. The setting up of the Tandridge Confederation is a key example of this where our schools now meet regularly and participate in a

number of joint projects.

**PROPOSED NEW CRITERIA INVOLVING PARTNER PRIMARY AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS AND A CATCHMENT AREA USED CONJOINTLY FOR ADMISSION TO OXTED SCHOOL FROM SEPTEMBER 2009**

**For admission to Oxted School**

*(Children with Special Educational Needs)*

1. Looked After Children
2. Exceptional Circumstances
3. Siblings of older children attending the school who also live within the designated catchment area (all siblings of children admitted before 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 will be admitted)
4. Children who **both** live within the 2008 catchment area **and attend** any one of the following local schools – Dormansland, Godstone, Holland, Lingfield, St Catherine's, St John's, St Mary's, St Stephen's, Tatsfield, Woodlea.
5. Any other applicant.

In the event of over subscription in any of the above categories the tiebreaker should be by distance to nearest alternative school.