



**Isle of Wight
Council**

School Place Planning

Summary of Consultation Feedback

Planned Proposal: Closure of Cowes Primary School

This document provides all comments received through the consultation process which commenced on the 3rd January 2025 and closed on the 3rd February 2025.

These comments have not been adjusted or reduced and are a true representation of what was received.

A separate analysis of this feedback will be provided, sharing common themes or concerns raised.

Responses received via: Online Correspondence

Comments made by:	Comment:
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	<p>Whilst it is accepted that schools must be reduced due to falling pupil intake - in line with the new proposed bill, Academies should also be considered and a merger looked at. As a local resident, parent and member of staff closing Cowes Primary School would be ripping the very heart out of a local community, closely affiliated to St Mary's Church and with the majority of children within walking distance I urge the Council to reconsider their decision in the best educational interests of our children.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>I have concerns about the proposal to accommodate Cowes Primary pupils at Gurnard Primary School. It is my understanding that as the only other LA-run school in the area Gurnard must provide provision for these students (although I acknowledge that some families may opt for either Lanesend or Northwood Primary Schools).</p> <p>Gurnard has a new building which was designed to accommodate a two-form entry intake for each year group of 60 pupils. The communal spaces in the school - school hall and studio are designed for those numbers and not an additional xx places in each year group. This will impact assemblies, lunch times, afterschool clubs and school-offered childcare.</p> <p>Will year groups become three-form entry with potentially lower numbers in each class, or try to expand the existing class size? Will new staff be recruited or existing staff expected to manage the greater numbers?</p> <p>I understand that until the formal agreement has been made it is difficult to say what will happen but there has definitely been a lack of information about how schools are expected to/may cope/adapt to the influx of pupils.</p> <p>Under the new headship of Clemma Yardley the school has adopted the OPAL (Outside Play and Learning) scheme and a huge emphasis has been put on the outside space and the importance of outside play and learning, which mainly uses the space closest to the school building. It would be very unfortunate if this was disrupted due to portable classrooms being installed.</p> <p>I also have concerns around road safety. There is already a shortage of parking around the school, no crossing patrol and there have been a number of 'near-miss' incidences. I expect a number of children who attend Cowes Primary School will opt to travel to school via car as the distance to walk will be significantly longer, depending on where they live in Cowes. This will put further pressure on parking and road safety.</p>

Grandparent	It is highly unfair that Northwood Primary and Lanesend were not considered for closure due to their being academies. Their academic performances are far lower than Cowes Primary. It is also unfair for Gurnard Primary to be burdened with the majority of children from Cowes Primary. The school is presently virtually full and to add up to 100 extra children to the roll would be a huge disadvantage to the Gurnard pupils and staff. Adding new children who haven't learnt phonics etc in the same way to each classroom will be difficult for the Cowes pupils, and hold up the progress of the Gurnard pupils while they wait for their peers to catch up. It is manageable when a new pupil joins the school to integrate them to new teaching methods, but not with significant numbers all joining at the same time. Even if the Cowes teachers move with the pupils, they too will have to learn new teaching methods etc. The council claims the IOW children should have a "world class" education and I totally understand the rationale behind closing schools, but there doesn't seem to have been any thought given as to where to place the Cowes Primary children when their school closes. Expecting Gurnard to take the majority of the children will have a massive impact on the future aspirations of the children as they endure a major change to their day to day school life. No matter how excellent the staff are at Gurnard there is no way this cannot impact negatively on the whole school community.
Resident	Disgraceful. This school should not be closed. This will displace too many children. These children have already been affected enough from covid.
Parent/guardian	It makes financial sense for the school to be closed or it will run into further debt. It's unsustainable with such low numbers.
Parent/guardian	It would be terrible for this school to close. My son who used to attend would never have progressed as he did with Cowes he now attends St Georges. My ■ daughters also attended and thrived
Parent/guardian	My two children go to Cowes primary school, they are thriving there and are so supported by all the staff. The staff go above and beyond, not only for pupils but parents/guardians too, I really feel it would be a waste to close this school. The school is achieving greatly and other schools in Cowes aren't achieving to a high level, it is such a shame it has come to this. Silly decision
Parent/guardian	The entire community came back to the Council with detailed description of flaws in the proposal of Cowes Primary closure. Data and language used suggests manipulation and hundreds of people have lost their trust in the council. This is a bad decision.

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Resident, parent and ex staff member	The school is a very important part of the community with excellent staff. You need to wait for the child welfare act to be passed and to get access to close academies too before moving forward. I cannot understand how you improve education on the island by leaving the 2 academies which are achieving below average result's open and closing a good school. It makes no sense
Parent/guardian	Unfair to disrupt the education of children that have already had disruption due to Covid closures. More negative impact, unrest and stress for the children. Why not wait until these effected children leave the school at the end of the natural time (yr6) .Do not take on any further admissions and close the school then.
Parent/guardian	This is going to be a major disruption to the children of the cowes community. These children thrive in this school and taking that away and making them start school all over again is just outrageous. These children thrive and teachers are amazing at this school and our children are the only ones you are going to damaged by this. School is so important to children and all you are doing is ruining their education
Parent/guardian	This has not been planned well at all. It is also ludicrous that as Gurnard and Lanesend are academies they can't be considered for closure, no matter how they are performing
Parent/guardian	Only 'good' school in the area with great reading and phonic results unlike Northwood
Parent/guardian	This is going to cause severe disruption to my child's education
Parent/guardian	You're ruining children's lives.
Parent/guardian	We need answers as to where our children will be placed. We also need assurance that the children with extra needs will be supported way before the closure within the new school setting.
Parent/guardian	this is a joke. this is a school to which we have a 7 min walk, to Gurnard we have 25 min and to the next even further. our school is very friendly, children are looked after and have high results
Resident	Cowes school is one of the best in Cowes and this has not been taken into account.
grandparent	Current deficit makes for an unviable school.
Parent/guardian	Travel has not been taken into account especially for those suffering disabilities and mental health. The well being of our children has not been taken into account, with the apparent schools for them to now attend have worse grades all round and do not have enough room to comfortably take on our children. Lanes end for one having a very high rate of sickness and hair lice. Gurnard is too far a walk for children to have the

	independence of walking alone, and for busy working parents/ill/disabled to walk twice a day!
Parent/guardian	If Cowes Primary has to close I strongly feel that it should remain open one more year. That way the largest class (current yr 5) can complete their year 6 without that extra strain on Gurnard. That way Gurnard has one year to prepare to add the smaller Cowes classes and that Cowes is closed to new entrants in the 25/26 school year.
Parent/guardian	This is a devastating proposal for the community. The academy schools have unfortunately been given an unfair advantage and they are not necessarily the best schools in the area.
Former primary school teacher and parent	As a former teacher here, I don't believe closing schools will necessarily improve standards, what is more important is having a teaching training and resource centre here on the island and effective cpd support for teaching staff. The increasing need for sen provision should also be seen from the perspective of whether current teaching methods and curriculum are fundamentally part of the problem, not the children. A culture of Ofsted driven statistics and data analysis, and over testing of children at primary age does not promote healthy child development and pedagogy. As a parent and teacher who went through the last round of school closures and reorganisation I believe the disruption this did to my children's education was damaging to their progress. They certainly did not experience any benefits as their new schools remained short of money and qualified teaching staff.
Resident	I think closing these schools are a short term measure to save money, but will prove to be a big mistake in the relatively near future. If the government is determined to force through their house building agenda, this will undoubtedly create an increase in the Island's population, and a further demand for school places. In the meantime, surely a reduction in the ratio of teachers to pupils would be highly beneficial and may improve standards in the currently failing state of Island education.
Parent/guardian	How dare you close a high achieving, well run community school using your false data and terrible 'planning' to hide behind. How does closing a high achieving school benefit the Isle of Wight children's education in any way? And to ignore the fact that you will be able to dictate PAN etc to academies in the foreseeable future removes your argument completely.
Parent/guardian	Fantastic school ,centre of the community, will hugely damage Cowes as a town, diverse school too which is brilliant, clear indication too that if academies could be considered Cowes wouldn't be closing with far better educational scores. This is

	<p>not a good educational decision. Northwood is falling down and poor generally from several accounts from parents who left there, love lane is full of children with learning difficulties so other kids are not getting the appropriate attention, Gurnard the suggested and promised alternative hasn't the capacity either. Feel lied too about that based on recent statements. Feels not enough work was carried out in the process. With the labour government showing clear plans to tackle the academy situation a 1 year delay and the correct closure would be made. My [REDACTED] loves [REDACTED], school, [REDACTED] friends the teachers and the council started the schools number issues by leaking possible closure years ago. Several of my [REDACTED] friends have moved already because of this possibility. It will also impact after school trade in the town and personally of I now have to travel miles further by foot I take my [REDACTED] too and from school I will need to close my business down [REDACTED] as my opening hours would be cut so much it won't work and more trade will be lost as more families leave Cowes. My [REDACTED] already had the impact of isolation during covid and now this. Extremely bad decision for everyone.</p>
Resident	<p>Is it possible to just not take reception class ongoing so children already attending won't be affected. If they'd move to high school when they were due to. Just no further intake.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>The closure of Cowes Primary is a short sighted option that affects the town as well as the school community. Closing the primary school nearest to the town centre will be detrimental economically to town centre businesses as they will no longer have the afternoon trade from families walking the short distance to town after school. Parents chose their school with options such as wrap around care to help with work. Without their current arrangements this will have a detrimental effect on working parents. Already parents are looking at alternative schools and both Gurnard and Lanes End are full giving the only option of Northwood which by their own admission cannot support more children as their buildings are struggling. It is very hard to put any faith in a cabinet/council decision where they have no clear structure to support their proposal. They have not considered the longer term effect of the proposal from an economic or environmental perspective or considered the impact on families from a social or economic perspective.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>There will not be enough school places for all the Cowes children, and new children that join the island when the NHS increases its capacity by 50%.</p>
Resident	<p>Absolutely disgraceful. Stop cutting primary schools on the island down. They are the only schools that nurture our future generations. Children need this nurturing close to home to build community.</p>

Aunty and resident	<p>1. Cowes is a good school with the highest Y6 sats results. Northwood and Lanes end have not achieved such good results across their year groups. Surely the best performing school should stay open.</p> <p>2. As a resident of Cowes, the parents and children of Cowes Primary are able to walk to this local school. That is not the case for Gurnard which already has horrendous traffic problems which will be added to if the children from Cowes Primary also have to go there.</p>
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	<p>The new Bill ought to be considered to include local academies in the place planning decision to provide a fairer process. Cowes Primary School is in the heart of the community, closely affiliated to St Mary's Church and the majority of its pupils walk to school. The school has achieved very good educational results and to close it would not be in the best educational or logistical interests of its school community.</p>
Staff at an early years setting on site of school affected by proposals	<p>I understand there is a need to reduce surplus places but I don't believe closing a school with better educational standards than other schools in the area will improve the education standards in Cowes overall. The Cowes Primary school site is best situated within the town for the children to attend and be able to access easily on foot, by car and public transport. Closing this school will increase journey times and distance and will lead to increased traffic and parking problems at the other schools. There will be an impact on the preschool and nursery which operates on the Cowes Primary School site. We have already had parents asking if we will be closing too. I believe that there should be a school or educational provision on this site whether it is under the name of Cowes Primary or not. Would another school be better sited there than where currently.</p>
Resident	<p>surplus school places must be addressed across the island. there are ample spaces at other schools in the Cowes location if Cowes primary closes.</p>
Member of staff at adjoining preschool at school affected	<p>As a member of staff at BlackBerry Lane Pre School, closing Cowes Primary will massively affect the day to day running of the preschool. The school provides our children with freshly cooked hot lunches. The school allows us to have use of their hall weekly and for special occasions for example the preschool Christmas production. We also have use of the school field for the preschools sports day and during the school holidays.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>Closing a very good school (one of the best on the island) is shooting yourself in the foot. What with the go ahead of the film studio being given the green light and tax being raised on private education, some parents may have to pull their children out of private education and have to put them into a school</p>

	<p>close to private school standards, of which Cowes primary school is very close to.</p> <p>My family came to the island in [REDACTED], In our search for a school on the island we were amazed at how poor that some of the schools were (at the time) most required improvement, a number of which are in Cowes, only Cowes Primary and Gurnard were rated good.</p> <p>In addition, the current year 5 are the last generation to have their education effected by the Covid pandemic, and by closing the school before they start their SAT year is absolutely unfair to them and could have a negative impact on their lives, having the experience being the lower group at school myself because of [REDACTED] (which wasn't diagnosed until I was much older). therefore, it's virtually impossible for a child to get out of the bottom 2 groups, as a majority in those classes there are children who have no desire to better themselves. To prevent this, we've had to hire a private tutor to help [REDACTED] to a good standard, but this will be for nothing if [REDACTED] final year is disrupted, again. (you may get parents seeking legal advice, should their child's level slips from their current grade to something worse(I.e. current grade = A or B but the SAT score is D or worse)). It might be more prudent to hold off another year, and maybe advice parents who want to choose either of the academy schools to choose Cowes Primary if they want a better education for their child(ren).</p> <p>Now, I understand that the depletion of children being born across the UK has an impact on schools. (as mentioned at the meetings) However, the island has a distinct disadvantage to the rest of the UK, what with the extortionate cost of the ferries, which is having a massive impact to the island, and if there are not efficient good standard of schools young families will be put off by both the cost of the ferries and the lack of good schools on the island, this will put families off with young children from coming to the island, to the point that eventually there will be NO good schools(if any) the island will become a haven for the retired or close to retirement.</p> <p>Please put the child's education before finance, if need be find a way to close one of the failing academy schools first, (this might be better for everyone)</p>
Parent of teachet	<p>I am writing as a parent of a teacher at Cowes primary school and am heartbroken by the way the IW council have chosen this school to be at risk of closure</p> <p>Apart from the historically good performance of this school I</p>

	<p>am extremely concerned about my son's feelings about his career since this has come about. [REDACTED] and was excited and proud to have been given the opportunity to teach at this school</p> <p>[REDACTED] years on and having endured [REDACTED] years of worry he is now considering leaving this profession due to the appalling way IW council have treated the teachers and parents by constantly giving confusing and untrue information regarding the closure. He is now faced with the worry of finding another teaching position, should he choose to stay in teaching, as there is no redeployment for him.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Nothing is fair about the choice of the school closures all over the Island as the failing Academies have not been included in this decision.</p> <p>Whatever the final outcome due in March I will still be bitterly disappointed with IW Council and very concerned for my son and his family</p>
Parent/guardian	Totally supportive, our island education needs drastic change and by spreading the resources too thinly this can only negatively impact on them. The IWC are offering parents a good, strong education offer and therefore it's seems sensible.
Parent/guardian	Unfortunately with the islands education standards being so low decisions are going to have to be taken to ensure as much money is spent on the children as possible if we want the best for them. If teachers cared about the children they would support the need for this
Parent/guardian	Whilst closing schools is sad and disruptive it's how it's managed and if we want the best for our islands future children then difficult decisions need to be taken.
Parent/guardian	I feel this would be the best option for closure.
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	The proposal is a poor document that has not taken into the consideration if providing a good education for the area.
Resident	It gas notctaken in to consideration the Oat Academy taking over the school. This will result in Hunny hill geing the feeder school to Cowes Academy
Resident	It should not close, it is a well performing school and the alternative provision is poor
Resident	The process is poor and has not been done fairly
Resident	Close a school that is not GOOD
Parent/guardian	There doesn't seem to be any answers or proposals for the children displaced apart from they will be offered a space at Gurnard. Have you been on a school run at Gurnard? I have to

	arrive at 2pm in order to get a legal parking space for a 250pm pick up. It isn't safe at the moment with the traffic, add more children and it will get worse. Will Gurnard become a 3 form entry school? What's the offer? I understand Cowes needs to close due to the economics but you need to provide a solid plan for the alternative
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Responses received via: Online Correspondence

Comments made by:	Comment:
School Governor	Given the need to reduced places and the number of available places within the Cowes area, whilst also considering the number of children who travel into the area and therefore have a closer school I believe it is a viable option to proceed with the closure of Cowes Primary School. There are adequate places for children, particularly moving forward with reducing numbers.
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	The proposal now, (not noted within original consultation documentation), is that the Cowes Primary site be used for Gurnard Primary. Adequate consideration and consultation within the Cowes and Gurnard community has not been given for this scenario and throws into question whether TUPE should actually apply to Cowes staff. Numerous other questions and comments around this, are being addressed through Unions, so the senior IWC staff responsible for Place Planning will be contacted for answers and not through this generic form.
Resident	<p>The proposal to now use the Cowes Primary site as an overflow for the over capacity Gurnard Primary School (over capacity because of the cabinet proposal to close CPS) raises more questions that must be fully and honestly addressed by the decision makers.</p> <p>1 How will the site be staffed? It is certain that no present Gurnard School staff will be willing to make this change. Will jobs be offered to CPS staff recently so badly treated by their employer? If not then new staff will be have to be engaged, at significant cost. If this is the path chosen, then why take the jobs of the fantastic current CPS staff in the first place?!</p> <p>2 Which pupils will attend the site. Again, it is certain that no current Gurnard School attendees or their parents will be willing to make the change to this site. After all, why should they, the council have painted CPS as a school not fit to stay open, despite having significantly better standards in all areas than other schools in the area. If not Gurnard pupils then who? Current CPS children must be the answer. So the council propose to close CPS, dismiss the whole staff and then re open the school on the same site, teaching the same pupils with newly employed staff who will be of a lower level of experience so ensuring the children's education is inevitably damaged? So much for educational standards being the driver behind these plans! Surely even the morally vacuous cabinet can see that this is baffling madness.</p>

	<p>3 How can this 'satellite' school hope to function without significant investment in the site infrastructure? Lack of such investment in the school buildings by the council has caused issues in recent years. Then, using the argument that the site is run down, as part of the closure plan, is disgraceful hypocrisy. If the council wish to place pupils in the site, investment will have to be made. If so, why not make the identical investment in CPS on that site? Again, this closure to then reopen is utterly nonsensical.</p> <p>There are many more questions that need to be fully addressed by the cabinet and not dismissed as so may have been in previous hearings. One would hope that local government would be representative of its residents and be willing to, at the very least, give honest and detailed answers to questions that have very serious effects on the lives of pupils, parents and School staff. From what I have seen from this morally bankrupt decision making body, I have no faith that honesty and empathy will get a look in above financial concerns, which is the only true driving force behind all of these proposals.</p> <p>Councillor Love is a little late to the party to be calling for discussions around this issue, the damage has inevitably been done. However, I urge him to push for full answers to these questions, and the ones coming to the council from teaching unions. Truly put education standards first, do not close Cowes Primary School for short term financial relief.</p>
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	<p>Being a parent of a child that attended Cowes Primary, as well as discussions with other parents in the same position, we chose the school over others in the area as, at the time, they had a better Ofsted rating than Lanes End and a more intimate environment than Gurnard. We are all still unclear why of all the schools in that area did it have to be Cowes Primary, a nurturing school that has been at the heart of the community for decades.</p>
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	<p>The new proposal, not made public in the original consultation, is that Cowes Primary School should close and Gurnard Primary School will use the Cowes site as there is not sufficient space at Gurnard Primary School.</p> <p>I don't think that this scenario has been planned for. We have constantly been told by the senior staff managing Place Planning that children's education is the IWC's priority. This is untrue. Finances are the IWC's priority and driving force.</p>

	<p>Have the Place Planning committee, the Councillors and the Cabinet really thought about, addressed and planned for:</p> <p>The financial implications of keeping open the Cowes site for use by Gurnard.</p> <p>Which year groups the Cowes site will serve and how the Gurnard staff and parents feel about this – have they even been consulted?</p> <p>How the site at Cowes would be staffed and the financial viability of this.</p> <p>How keeping the Cowes site open would affect redundancy and lack of TUPE arrangements for staff of Cowes Primary School already employed within roles that will be needed on the Cowes site.</p> <p>The advertisement and re-appointment of staff for the Cowes site, even though there are existing Cowes Primary School staff on site and in position.</p> <p>What ratio of staff/skill sets, legally have to be on the physical site and how would absence cover be managed across the sites.</p> <p>The change to Gurnard's staff contracts regarding working on/across both sites, the change in their roles and pay.</p> <p>Finally, if keeping the Cowes site open involves IWC investment, why are the IWC willing to invest in Gurnard Primary School on the Cowes site but not invest in Cowes Primary School on the Cowes site?</p> <p>It may be legal but it is morally reprehensible as it suggests that Cowes Primary School staff are disposable and of lesser quality.</p> <p>This is not the case. Cowes Primary School out-perform two other local schools, both academies, yet the IWC are choosing to keep the lesser performing academies open. And yes, that is the IWC choice; adequate research and clarification into the legislation regarding not being able to close Academies was not completed by the IWC at the beginning of this process. In April 2024 we were told, quite clearly and in person by a member of the Place Planning team, that ALL primary schools were on an equal playing field in terms of Place Planning. How lax of the IWC not to have had clarification and full knowledge of this situation and the legalities by April of 2024! This</p>
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	<p>suggests that the whole Place Planning Process is a failure from the beginning, beset with lies, misinformation and incompetence and certainly not with the education and wellbeing of Cowes, Gurnard and Northwood children as a priority.</p> <p>It's all about money. The end.</p>
Parent/guardian	In favour of more SEN provision being provided through closure.
Resident	Cowes have the issue with the fact the other school taking them greenmount I think wants to use Cowes as the overflow. Essentially shutting a school and then using it to house the overflow from the new school which will cause a divide amongst the students?
Parent/guardian	I think it's stupid! It's been around for years. Even I went to this school! There's so many babies been born from 2020 and I think it's going to be an issue where there's not enough schools! Cutting down and making classrooms more full which leads to children missing out on education as they are missed! It's not good. Cowes primary have helped my son with his issues and helped him. I'm very against losing this school!!!
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	The closure of this school will have a huge impact on our current children. Having to squeeze children into schools is not what education is about.
Parent/guardian	<p>Firstly, the location of Cowes Primary is located in an area of residing families in that part of the town. Not many of the terraced houses have access to parking to warrant having a car. This means that if the school is to close these children will be made to walk further in poor weather conditions or Parents would be expected to pay to get their children's school on time. Parents already pay enough to ensure the children are dressed correctly for school, contribute to all of the schools request every week to ensure that child has the best learning experience possible.</p> <p>In addition, the closure of the school would mean that more places are taken up in the other schools within Cowes, Gurnard and Northwood. Although this could be seen as a good thing and a purpose of this closure, it is not a productive move as it will be unsettling for the children moving school as well as accepting more and more children into that already established, manageable classes. This makes me think that the purpose of this closure is purely put money back into the pocket of the council once again not working in the best interest of those children.</p> <p>Finally, as it stands, the teachers are already working over</p>

	<p>their prescribed hours to ensure the best possible learning experience for our children. Not forgetting working above their pay grade.</p> <p>If more and more children are being put into the other schools it will have an effect on the teachers, who will probably work even longer hours, at minimum pay.</p> <p>The council needed to decide whether money is more important than educating the next generation. This closure will make this clear and I for one will be looking to move off the island within the next few years if this continuous as they are clearly prioritising money over the education of the next generation.</p>
Resident	Cowes Primary is an amazing school and should not be closing. If anything it should be Northwood Primary as they are massively failing.
Resident	If resources from Cowes Primary can be allocated to the other 3 schools then I approve. This is both financial, material and human resources.
Parent/guardian	<p>I wanted to explain my situation to understand where my views are coming from. I am a parent of a child who currently attends Gurnard primary school, [REDACTED] is doing well academically, is happy and enjoys school. I am also a parent of a child who will be starting school in September 2025, they are currently being assessed for an EHCP, have been referred for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and we are, like many parents on the island, in a position where we know that a mainstream school is unlikely to meet their needs in the long run, but also likely is not severe enough to require a spot at Medina House. Leaving them in this 'void', the crack that is so evident on the island where our SEN children fall when they have no place at either mainstream or the current specialist provisions (or lack of) on the island.</p> <p>I do have concerns around how Gurnard will acquire these extra students, my [REDACTED] class is already at 31, but I have faith that it is a good school with the children's best interests in mind.</p> <p>My heart goes out to the parents of the schools being proposed to close. I know I would probably feel the same if it had been my child's school planned to be closed. I agree that children could thrive in these smaller schools, smaller classes. If we had more time and more money to throw at this, absolutely I'd welcome researching different ideas, other alternatives that could work. But put frankly we don't have the time and the money as evidenced by the need for these</p>

	<p>changes. Now there's a bigger discussion to be had around SEN and funding, but if the money needed for extra SEN provisions locally is tied up with funding schools with empty spaces, then I truly believe every single day this consultation goes on, every day that we await the closures and these places at schools remain empty and wait for extra provisions to be opened for SEN, is robbing many many children on the island the right to access an appropriate education however that looks for them.</p>
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Responses received via: Online Correspondence

Comments made by:	Comment:
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	With the local authority unable to make decision about closures of academics, this seems like the only way forward with managing school place planning in the Cowes area.
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	Although the school is a good school, there are too many surplus places in the Cowes area. Sadly the town has one too many schools for the number of pupils. In addition to a significant falling roll, with the exception of year 5 is a concern
Resident	In my opinion, as someone who works in education I would argue smaller class sizes is beneficial for pupils. In a time where there is a rise in the number of SEN students each year and an increasing demand on resources for schools as well as the teacher recruitment and retention crisis this seems to be a counterintuitive approach. I fail to see how reducing access to school places will improve educational opportunities on the island.
LA Officer	Whilst the closure of any schools creates a level of uncertainty and is difficult for all involved my view is that despite this it is necessary and I am in full support of the decision to close Cowes Primary School, with no prejudice against this specific school. The decision to close certain schools is based on the need to address the issue of having too many school places and create a more sustainable and effective educational infrastructure that benefits all students.. By reducing the number of schools, resources can be used more effectively. This will allow schools to provide a higher quality of education, with better facilities and more focused teaching. Children should benefit from a more enriched learning environment. Throughout this process, the local authority has ensured a high level of information provision and stakeholder engagement. Senior leaders have made significant efforts to provide detailed information and engage with all stakeholders, which has supported the transparency of the process.
Parent/guardian	Whilst closing schools is difficult, particularly for the staff who's jobs may be impacted, the information that has been provided by the Isle of Wight Council makes it clear this is a necessary step to address surplus places and therefore I fully support this decision. As a parent my priority is that my child has access to high quality education and I feel this should be available to all Isle of Wight children. Whilst I am not commenting on the standards of this specific school the performance of Isle of Wight schools generally

	<p>shows that standards are fair from where they need to be and change is absolutely required. Continuing to allow schools to have surplus places would be a failing for Isle of Wight children for a range of reasons including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inefficient Use of Resources: Maintaining underutilised school buildings can be costly. Funds that could be used to improve educational resources and programs are instead spent on maintaining empty classrooms and facilities 2. Reduced Educational Quality: Schools with surplus spaces may struggle to provide a vibrant learning environment. Fewer students can lead to less interaction and engagement, which can negatively impact the overall educational experience. 3. Financial Strain: Surplus spaces can lead to financial inefficiencies. Schools may receive less funding based on student enrolment numbers, which can result in budget cuts and reduced services. 4. Resource Allocation: Surplus spaces can lead to an uneven distribution of resources. Schools with fewer students may not have access to the same level of resources and opportunities as those with higher enrolment. <p>I would also like to add that I have been extremely impressed with the level of detailed information that has been shared by the Isle of Wight Council and the efforts that LA Officers have made to respond to queries and be visible at a range of community events. In contrast I have been appalled by the responses of some parents to this process. I fully accept that this is a distressing time and people will have an emotional response to this that individuals will all manage differently but I do feel this is not an excuse for personal attacks on professionals doing their job or deliberate spreading of misinformation to disrupt the process.</p> <p>I have also been extremely disappointed with the conduct of a small number of elected leaders who have had no regard for the Isle of Wight as a whole community and instead of focused on supporting just a small portion of the community at the expense of the majority or worse just appearing to be acting in a way motivated solely by their own political agenda or personal interests.</p>
Resident	<p>This is appalling!! It's disastrous to see schools closing down like this, the council needs to be doing more to keep school</p>

	places open. Two miles extra commute is a long way for a primary school! There are people who normally walk, getting exercise for themselves and their children, who will now be forced to drive and contribute to the Island's clogged roads. Shameful.
Parent/guardian	supportive of the closure
Parent/guardian	<p>This school is a Good school with much better results than the local Academies. Before the school was listed for potential closure it was viable financially. It is unacceptable that the initial consultation did not consider the impact the Council have had on the numbers within the school. We were told multiple times that if the Academies were considered in the original proposal, Cowes would not have been listed. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools bill is in the second stage and will be reported on 11th February. This will provide the council with greater powers to close failing Academies. I also would like you to re-consider your treatment of the staff within the schools proposed for closure. The Council's mission statement is to make the Island a great place to live, work and visit. I am unsure how your approach, which appears to be to suggest they can get a new career is working towards this. It is unacceptable that new roles are not going to be ringfenced for those being made redundant. Our teachers are amazing. I have no idea how they have carried on through all of this but they all have day in day out which demonstrates how resilient and a credit to the profession they are. Please reconsider this whole process.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>How can you be supportive as a council when you are going against the new governments plans to help schools by making more academies.</p> <p>The government has outlined how it plans to improve schools. I believe and request you read the following article (link below) and take this into consideration to take Cowes off the closure lists and allow it to complete its application to become an academy and hand it over to the government. Please read the whole article, I've copied section 4 to support this argument as this would be a better decision to save cowes and best support our children and future.</p> <p>https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/academy-schools-government-plans-for-change/</p> <p>One of the government's five national missions is to "break down the barriers to opportunity".[15]. This includes helping every child to "achieve and thrive at school, through excellent teaching and high standards".[16] As part of this mission, the government has introduced the Children's Wellbeing and</p>

	<p>Schools Bill. If enacted, this would make various changes to academy schools and the rules they must follow. For example, several provisions would apply the same rules to academies that currently apply to LA maintained schools. Some of the key changes proposed in the bill are summarised below.</p> <p>I presume that if you are not willing to keep Cowes open, swallow your pride and do what is best for the children! shows that we as voters and taxpayers have made the wrong choice in you as a council.</p> <p>Your plans are not in favour of the children's future.</p> <p>What happens to your jobs when the whole island becomes academies post you closing all the maintained schools? You'll lose your jobs that's what! then what? The island secondary schools are all academies I believe so you don't have control there. It won't be long before the same happens in regards to primary schools and maybe that's for the better if all you're thinking about is the cost rather than the standards. If the island schools continue to close at the same rate as per Paul Fuller and other councillors have stated (11 need to close) it might be good as we'll have less council workers to pay for, it might actually lower my council tax rather than the year on year rises! On the other hand maybe they'll be a mass exodus from the island and your drive away your younger voters and families faster than ever before because they won't have a choice and want better futures for their kids, have you thought of that! Then you'll have no kids, no schools and a ageing island which will just eventually mean the island crumbles.</p>
Resident	Fully support the decision, schools need to close to maintain the wider school system on the island

Responses received via: Online Correspondence

Comments made by:	Comment:
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	The process for the selection of schools, the consultation and the report coming out of it are irreparably flawed. This will wreak havoc on education on the Island. The process should be restarted.
Parent/guardian	<p>This process is completely flawed. The council is proposing to close Cowes Primary School, yet looking at the table 3 on the Full Proposal there are actually no available spaces in other Cowes schools for children in Year 5, (there are currently 28 children at Cowes in Year 5). There are 4 available spaces in other schools for Year 4 children, whereas there are 15 Year 4 children at Cowes Primary. There is 1 place available for a Year 3 child at Lanesend Primary, yet there are 16 children at Cowes Primary. I cannot understand how you propose to close a school and do not have sufficient places to place the children at that school in other local schools. If you ask the schools to make spaces, the children at Cowes risk being taught in large classes or mixed classes in portacabins; Neither of these options are likely to raise educational outcomes for our children. It is well known in the local area that Cowes Primary children will not be made welcome at Gurnard Primary, where the council is suggesting they should be placed. The children at Cowes Primary are happy and well taught. Cowes Primary has received a "Good" in every OFSTED report recently and the children achieve national outcomes in SATS at KS2. Cowes Primary offers children a wide range of educational opportunities, including trips and visitors - despite what the council is suggesting in its proposal. Closing a school so close to its secondary school also doesn't make sense. Cowes Primary and the Enterprise College have good links and this leads to very successful transitions for pupils to high school.</p> <p>Many of the teachers at Cowes Primary have been at the school for many years, showing that it is a good school to work at and that these teachers have consistently achieved a GOOD at OFSTED shows the standard of their teaching is consistently good. Therefore if the aim of the council is to raise educational standards, then closing Cowes Primary is not really a sensible decision. The teachers have many years of expertise that they use to provide our children with a very good educational foundation.</p> <p>Cowes Primary school is located centrally in Cowes and therefore the majority of pupils walk to school, an aim that the council has for school attenders. If the school closes, this would put many parents on the road taking their children out of</p>

	<p>town to other schools; The schools may not be miles away, but still too far for small legs to walk to by busy roads in the morning.</p> <p>The main reason the intake of Cowes Primary school has dropped is because it was previously on the closure list and parents are unlikely to send children to a school they think has a possibility of being closed. This is also the reason that the school is in deficit, as before the previous (then withdrawn) plans to close Cowes Primary 2 years ago made parents panic and many left mid-year. Before that, Cowes primary school was victim to the PAN being increased at Gurnard Primary and Lanesend schools. Previous to their PANs being increased, Cowes Primary school had fun classes at 2 form entry. The council's bad decisions in successive years in place planning are the reason Cowes Primary has fewer pupils at the moment. The site of the primary school is ideal for anybody living in central Cowes and it would be a huge loss for the future of the Cowes community to loose a school so centrally placed. There are many housebuilding projects in Cowes at the moment, that are attracting many people to the area. Cowes Primary is ideally placed to take children from these new housing estates should it remain open. Reading the new proposal , which in the introduction says it is from 12th December 2024, I cannot find a new use for the land the school is on. I am wondering if this is because the council is hoping to sell the land as it is in a prime residential area. This would then leave the Cowes area with potentially not enough school places due to all the new families in the area!</p>
Resident	<p>The only age bracket to show any significant drop is the 0-4 age group. This is assumed to be a permanent downward trend which is not a given; the birth rates in these years has been triply impacted by the pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine, and the cost of living crisis, leading to people putting off major life decisions such as having children. It is entirely possible the birth rate will increase again, as in this very specific period of years of 2020-2024, assuming behaviour in those years is a predictor of future behaviour is less valid than using pre-2020 trends.</p> <p>In addition many children who can currently walk to Cowes Primary will have to be driven to Gurnard Primary, impacting their health and activity levels as well as impacting negatively on the cost of living of families in needing to spend more on petrol. This also negatively impacts the Isle of Wight's aim to reduce emissions in light of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency.</p>

<p>Parent/guardian</p>	<p>I am a parent of [REDACTED] children attending Cowes Primary. Whilst I understand that hard decisions need to be made due to the financial situations I do feel the decision to close a school which is performing well is flawed. If the aim is to improve education standards on the Island we need to find a way of keeping well performing schools open and closing lesser performing schools. If this then means waiting for a year to see if things can be developed alternatively (ie. if Academy's can also be brought into the decision making so it is a fair decision) then this would make better sense. Lesser performing schools can then be considered and children would be moved to Cowes which is producing better results therefore an improvement in overall standards.</p> <p>Alternatively by a year delay it would also give Cowes a chance to become an Academy so their funding is changed.</p> <p>Currently Year 5 is a very large class and frankly there is no where to place these children without a direct disruption to them & impacting on the school (s) they go too. So to wait a year and see if the above comments can be worked on it would make more sense.</p> <p>If you do then decide to close Cowes Primary the following year groups will be easier to disperse.</p> <p>I should comment there has been a large amount of pupils also leaving the school since this was first announced 18 months ago therefore the I.O.W council have a direct responsibility on impacting this fall in pupils and frankly should not be surprised - people are moving their children out.</p> <p>To delay, if you announce it would be after the ex. yr 5 leave would also give time to prepare where the remaining pupils feed into and the staff time to prepare for new roles.</p> <p>What like lesson does this teach students, parents & teachers that if people work hard to improve a school it can still be closed and the teachers loose their jobs when lesser performing schools are allowed to continue. In my opinion this alone is a very poor example for the council to be shown to set.</p> <p>At the very least it should be ensured respect is given by making a smooth transition to all involved , keep the school open until summer'26 so Cowes can potentially become an Academy & you can work on closing lesser performing schools</p>
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	<p>Children attending Cowes Primary must not be forced into attending lesser performing schools due to the councils decision, this will go against the principal of it being said that the aim is to improve education, I hope this will be the case or a lot of respect will be lost to I.O.W council</p> <p>Many walk to Cowes Primary, we drive as attend from just outside of the Cowes area. There will be a significant affect on traffic around Gurnard Primary if all pupils are moved to there - especially as most of the road on the approach has double yellow lines - this is something that needs addressing. Would it make sense if cost saving needs to be done to merge the schools with Cowes site being used for say Reception & Yr 1 or Yr 5 /6 Using the main buildings only (not the outside portacabins) - this would ease traffic, utilise ex. buildings and maintain jobs. It would also save the costs for expanding the Gurnard site.</p>
<p>Staff if an affected school AND a parent of a child at an affected school</p>	<p>As a member of staff, I fell let down by you, the council. We have been totally undervalued and demoralised. You're now proposing to use some of our Cowes Primary site, yet we would still be made redundant and new staff will be hired. Does this sound fair to you? Have you even looked at our teaching? Do you know who we are and what we each have to offer?</p> <p>We've heard that you're hoping the new set up will entice people from the mainland - I am originally from the mainland and have taught in Outstanding schools. I've taught for [REDACTED] years, both on the mainland and on the loW. I have only ever received Outstanding and Good feedback from OFSTED and from my leadership teams. Yet you're hoping to entice more 'qualified' staff to the Island? You're clearly not valuing the staff that you already have and it's extremely disappointing and unprofessional. How is closing schools and treating staff so badly going to entice more people over?</p> <p>I've worked at several schools [REDACTED] - Cowes primary has one of the most skilled set of staff I have EVER had the pleasure of working with. You'll not only be losing some extremely experienced staff, but one of the best head teachers I've ever had the pleasure of working for too - Stephanie Praetig.</p> <p>Yes, we can go and apply for another teaching post - How do we know that the school we move to will not be closed during the next round of closures? Can you guarantee us a secure</p>

	<p>job? Or are you hoping we leave council paid jobs and move to academies?</p> <p>As a parent, I feel let down by you. My [REDACTED] is currently in year [REDACTED] (aged [REDACTED] at Cowes primary. [REDACTED] a high achiever with the world ahead of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] loves school, [REDACTED] loves meeting with friends, and [REDACTED] loves learning. How do I know that [REDACTED] will be as valued at Gurnard Primary school as [REDACTED] is at Cowes? If I place [REDACTED] in a different school to your suggested Gurnard Primary - How do I know that the school I move [REDACTED] to will not be closed during the next round of closures? What security can you give me as a parent?</p> <p>Yesterday we were at the rally. One of the councillors arrived at the end. My [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] went to talk to him. [REDACTED] stood there for 5 minutes patiently waiting and wasn't even acknowledged. I couldn't believe it.</p> <p>You started this saying that children's education is the priority - I haven't seen any proof of that yet. Losing skilled and experienced leadership teams, losing skilled and experienced teachers, losing skilled and experienced LSAs, sending children to other schools with different curriculums and core values - Is this improving standards? Should we all move our children to academies to protect them from this happening to them again? Or is that what you're hoping we'll do, so that you don't have to crunch the numbers?</p> <p>These are people's lives you're changing, not just figures. Please think about what you're doing. Make a good choice. Wait till the jigsaw puzzle fits together as opposed to rushing things to meet the September 2025 deadline.</p> <p>It would be good to hear your thoughts about my above comments, as I really am confused as to what to do as a member of your staff and a parent of one of the affected schools. Please reply to [REDACTED].</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>I believe strongly that some schools need to be closed, which will cause disruption and upheaval for some. Delaying will only ensure other will face uncertainty and disruption in the future. I do not know individual cases for all schools involved so do not feel qualified to comment.</p>
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	<p>This is a good sized successful school. It's makes no sense to close it.</p>

Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	I believe this is another important decision due to the surrounding schools. This will ensure schools are full.
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	Unfortunately certain schools have been chosen for a variety of reasons however schools need to close so the process just needs to happen. No matter where it is it would be a difficult process.
Resident	Must close due to surplus places
Parent/guardian	Supportive of closure

Responses received via: Online Correspondence

Comments made by:	Comment:
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	No one wants to see schools close, however the excess places have to be addressed. There are plenty of schools in Cowes to give parents choice.
Parent/guardian	<p>Keeping the school open ensures children living in this particular area of Cowes have access to quality education without having to travel a longer distance.</p> <p>Not only does it support their academic development but emotional well-being too.</p> <p>This school is a central part of the Cowes community and forms an integral part of the community's identity, and if it were closed, it would affect families and the staff within the school, thus affecting finances within a family.</p> <p>Keeping the school open is in the best interests of the community and it's future development.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>It's best school in cowes . [REDACTED] I'm so happy about my child's improvement in language. [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] But now [REDACTED] can speak, can write also [REDACTED] is good in reading. It's only in [REDACTED] years time [REDACTED] achieved this all. At the same time some of my friends children they came before [REDACTED] still having issues with language. Also cowes primary giving the best support for children. Also they teach how to behave or respect others. If council is taking a decision to close cowes primary because it's not an academy that a worst decision. Don't look at the name academy just understand or see the performance of a school that they are providing the best education. We need a very educated and also respectful generation.</p>
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	From reading the reports previously sent out I feel this school has been given a rough deal due to the academies in its local area. Although there is a big deficit budget issue children are attaining well and children from this good LA school will be asked to attend a poorer performing academy school.
Parent/guardian	Ridiculous, who's to say if the birth rate may go up or down in the next couple of years. Going to cause more traffic on the roads, and alot of people don't drive so will take all day taking children to and from schools that aren't in there region.
Resident	<p>Island Education needs to be drastically changed. It's undoubtedly sad to have to close schools but there is alternative work available for the teachers affected and there is plenty of alternative space for the pupils. Cowes as a town does not need 4 primary schools. It needs 3 that are full and fully funded.</p> <p>I'm a parent myself and I work in an industry that trades with</p>

	<p>schools. We simply cannot go on with a situation where we have too many school places, other parents need to understand that full schools are well funded schools meaning they have the greatest chance of success.</p>
Pupil	<p>My school make meals themselves so I know I can eat them. The school I will be going to will only have jacket potatoes or tomato pasta as safe options. That's not fair. If I go to Gurnard I probably won't be in any of the sports teams which will make me sad.</p> <p>Teachers keep saying is important for my SATs. I don't think it will be good for me to do this in such a big school. Cowes is a great school. It might be a small school in pupils but it's big in heart. Please don't close my school.</p>
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	<p>Cowes Primary School is in the centre of the community it serves.</p> <p>The school has better outcomes for children than two schools that are proposed to remain open. There is no council has repeatedly talked about raising standards and yet proposes closing one of the better performing schools.</p> <p>The Government has put forward a bill which will enable local authorities to consider academies in place planning, and any council with foresight would defer this process pending such changes.</p> <p>The alternative school, Gurnard Primary School, has insufficient space to accommodate children transferring as a result of closure.</p> <p>There is no public transport to Gurnard Primary, making it less accessible for families. Cowes Primary is close to a bus route, enabling families to travel easily, and to the ferry terminal (making it possible to recruit staff from the mainland)</p> <p>School closures will have a greater impact on poorer families, who may be unable to afford transport to schools that are further from home.</p> <p>Families on low incomes may struggle to reconcile the additional time to travel further to school with the need to work their current hours and, as a result, may lose income.</p> <p>Cowes Primary offers a holiday club.</p> <p>According to the council's last transport survey, a far higher proportion of children walk to Cowes Primary than any other school in the Cowes area. A high proportion of children are driven to Gurnard Primary and this already causes concern for local residents.</p> <p>Cowes Primary was solvent and thriving until the Isle of Wight Council announced its possible closure - before any initial consultation had been completed. This was both immoral and irresponsible and led directly to over 40 children being removed from the school.</p>

	<p>The island economy will suffer through job losses, and we will lose talented staff.</p> <p>Buildings will still have to be maintained and cannot be sold off, still incurring a cost.</p> <p>Other local authorities are able to maintain smaller schools and offer a good standard of education.</p> <p>Parents have proposed reducing the PAN at Gurnard and maintaining two single form entry schools, thus offering greater parental choice.</p>
Parent/guardian	Completely unnecessary and an unfair process in all areas!
Parent/guardian	<p>All schools in the area should be considered including Northwood and Lanes end when planning.</p> <p>The proposal to merge Cowes and Gurnard will affect children at both schools. Facilities will be removed from Gurnard school to allow for the extra numbers in an already full school.</p> <p>Traffic chaos at drop off and pick up times at Gurnard will be out of control.</p> <p>A phased closure over 3 years would be the least disruptive. Moving children from Gurnard to Cowes after the closure is simply ridiculous; hence why schools such as Lanes End and Northwood should be included to split numbers.</p> <p>Gurnard school is simply not big enough to cope with an extra 140 pupils. The dining hall is set for the current number and after school clubs and holiday clubs are already full.</p> <p>I strongly disagree with the closure unless all the schools are included in the process for a sensible outcome. Projected intake numbers are not based on the exact figures and in reality in the next 2 years intake numbers are likely to be significantly higher with more and more people moving to the Island.</p>
Multi-Academy Trust	Pupil number viability determines that this school must be closed to secure the sustainability of other schools on the Island.
School Governor	<p>Although I am supportive of school closures, I do not understand why poor performing academies were not considered. Both Northwood and Lanesend have a poor academic records and Lanesend a poor OFSTED. If Cowes had become an academy would you now be shutting Gurnard one of the most successful schools on the Island? Academies should have been considered as schools were told in the beginning. It has been said that the council phoned the trusts and asked if they would consider closure. Of course they said no so they were no longer considered in the mix.</p>
Parent/guardian	This will put a ridiculous amount of pressure on Gurnard Primary School. Both schools are doing very well academically and the closure of Cowes will be detrimental to the children at

	<p>both schools. Gurnard/Baring Road will become incredibly unsafe at drop off/pick up time; it is already a difficult situation. I understand the need for change but this is not fair on the current students of either school and will have a lasting impact on their education.</p> <p>The numbers at Cowes have declined because of the Isle of Wight Council's ineffective attempts at school place planning over recent years and scaremongering caused by rumours of closure. If they remain open, I'm sure they will turn this around.</p> <p>Lanesend and Northwood are the schools that should be closing/reducing numbers and the council should be lobbying the government on the unfair security academies currently have - not closing schools that are performing well.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>I am a parent at Gurnard Primary School. In the proposal it states that the school my kids go to will have to adapt quickly to the arrival of all these extra kids. What you don't mention is how Gurnard go about doing this. There is no time between the 31st August and the new school year. Gurnard Primary School already has a large number of pupils. Where are these extra kids going to go? How do you accommodate them at lunch time? How will the roads around School drop off and pick up cope with this excess? Will my children's education be affected by the school taking on many more children? Many questions which I would appreciate answers to. It very much sounds as if you are expecting Gurnard Primary School to just sort it.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>I am writing to express my profound concern and strong disapproval regarding the proposed reallocation of students from Cowes Primary School to Gurnard Primary School, as outlined in the recent statutory notice.</p> <p>Upon thorough examination of the document, I have identified significant contradictions that undermine the proposal's validity. Table 3 explicitly shows that the combined available capacity across all three additional schools in Cowes is only 90 places. This falls a quarter short of the total 121 students currently at Cowes Primary School. This stark shortfall directly contradicts other claims in the report that suggest sufficient space is available. Such fundamental errors cast serious doubt on the accuracy and reliability of the data informing this decision.</p> <p>Furthermore, the proposal states that the existing Cowes Primary School site may still be utilised. If this facility is to remain operational, then it is both logical and efficient for the current students to continue their education there. Forcing them into an already overstretched Gurnard Primary School is</p>

	<p>not only impractical but will severely disrupt their education and well-being. Table 3 clearly shows that Gurnard Primary School is already at full capacity in all year groups except Reception. This means there is no feasible way to accommodate the displaced students from Cowes without significantly overburdening the school. If closure of Cowes Primary School is deemed necessary, then the data shows that Northwood and Lanesend have more available capacity than Gurnard, making them more suitable alternatives.</p> <p>Additionally, while your report makes no mention of this, there are strong local rumours that students from Gurnard Primary School may themselves be displaced to the Cowes site to make room for incoming students. As a parent of children at Gurnard, I would absolutely not support this. My children attend Gurnard because I specifically chose it for their education. If I had wanted my child to attend Cowes, I would have enrolled them there. Any such move would be an unacceptable betrayal of parental choice.</p> <p>This proposal is flawed, contradictory, and deeply concerning. I urge the Local Authority to reconsider and to provide a transparent and consistent explanation of its plans. The children of our community deserve better than this ill-conceived and disruptive restructuring.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>While the forecast is based on an estimate for 2027 intakes being significantly reduced it would seem that these proposals are based on short term measures. What is the contingency for growth in primary school places let's say in 2035? Furthermore, while there is limited space available at schools within the area (not enough to accommodate all of Cowes Primary!) have the knock on effects of quality of education been thought relevant to larger class numbers?</p> <p>Have members of the council visited Lanesend, Gurnard or Northwood at drop off/pick up times? It is not only chaotic but extremely hazardous. My child attends Gurnard and I see near misses on a daily basis. I would like this on record that there will undoubtedly be a serious incident if the school and local authority do not intervene and create a safe way forward to mitigate the risk by working on sensible traffic management plans coincided with altered drop off / pick up times.</p> <p>By increasing numbers at these schools you will be increasing the risks associated with the above. What would the council do to mitigate this?</p>

<p>Parent/guardian</p>	<p>I feel that the loss of Cowes primary is unjust given that the academies were not included in the descision and that lower numbers at the academies would be a better solution.</p> <p>I am concerned that calculated numbers for years starting 2026/2027 are incorrect with more families moving to cowes and full nurseries for these years.</p> <p>I feel that it is a bad decision to move pupils to gurnard for several reasons:</p> <p>First gurnard is full and the provisions of after school clubs would not be sufficient.</p> <p>It will be v disruptive to bit cowes and gurnard pupils. Cowes and gurnard learn phonics from different systems so difficult for teachers</p> <p>The loss of cowes will also lose the holiday club that some parents desperately need.</p> <p>The year groups will be v large and classes need to be redistributed.</p> <p>A huge concern is the trafffic and danger at drop off and pick up. It is already so so busy and dangerous. Adding even a small increase would be detrimental. Baring road is jammed and hazardous.</p> <p>I feel that keeping cowes open and reassessing the intakes of the other schools in the area is a much better idea. If not a phased closure of cowes would allow a more settled transition.</p>
<p>Parent/guardian</p>	<p>As a parent of a pupil for Gurnard Primary School, I am not supportive of the proposed closure of Cowes Primary. The noted transfer of children from Cowes to Gurnard is not sustainable. There is not spatial provision for additional children, with Gurnard School running at full or near to full capacity with not enough teaching or enclosed recreation space to accommodate and additional 120 students. There is no space within classrooms, and no additional classrooms to move into. Mobile classrooms would see children (and teachers) in these spaces be at a disadvantage as not connected to the new, exisiting, main school building. Mobiles are notoriously cold in winter and hot in summer, and are inferior teaching spaces to that of the existing school.</p> <p>Proposed locations to the front green space on the school, near to the wildlife pond and mile path, will have a negative impact on amenity space for the children, reduce the activity of wildlife and impact negatively on the overall environmental green agenda that this green space has been nurtured by the school community over previous years. The existing school hall facility is currently not big enough to accommodate the existing cohort, let alone additional numbers. School performances are operate a reduced capacity, or are often held outside of the school as the space just isn't big enough. School dinners at</p>

	<p>lunch time are at a quick rotation and there is insufficient time for the children to eat and turn the tables over currently, which will only be a problem exacerbated by additional children within the school. Library spaces will also need extending to accommodate and I have no information on other facilities within the school, such as toilets etc as this will all need addressing. This issue of physical space to accommodate the displaced children could be resolved by either a more shared responsibility of other schools to absorb these additional children and/or physical built additions to the existing school building to enable it to grow to support the needs of the children and staff. These could include an extension to the school building for additional teaching and amenity spaces, toilets, kitchens and other auxiliary facilities associated with such growth. Moreover, the main and principal concern that I do not see how it will be overcome, is the parking situation on Baring Road, especially at drop off and pick up, and the ongoing safety issues that surround this issue. The danger to life is a real concern, with no perceivable support from the local authority to manage the problem currently, let alone with the additional vehicular footfall associated with the additional attending children. The yellow lines the local authority have implemented have just moved the problem to further down the road and was a short sighted implementation by the local authority in my opinion. Whilst I appreciate the push for sustainable travel, bikes, walking etc, most parents, myself included, require cars to go straight to work after drop off in the morning, and pick up is straight from work in the afternoon. I desperately urge the local authority to review and think of ways to mitigate the problem as I fear it is only a matter of time before someone is seriously hurt or killed and with the existing proposals, the problem is only going to get worse. I am sure these issues can be overcome if the local authority are willing to spend money to build additional facilities and acquire the advice of traffic consultants to think outside the box for an alternative proposal for a drop off and pick up that would solve the vehicular access issues. As a [REDACTED] I am convinced there is a design solution to mitigate the problems associated with space, assuming the local authority are willing to spend the money to solve the problem. The offset of savings from the Cowes closures should be used to implement the necessary changes to Gurnards.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>I believe that the process has been deeply flawed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it has led to the proposal to close one of the best performing schools while leaving failing schools open - by being unable to close academies there has been an un-level playing field resulting in poor outcomes for education

	<p>standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there has not been a consistent plan for what will happen to the pupils at Cowes primary. Plans have included giving everyone the opportunity to move to Gurnard and keeping the site open in Cowes for a few unlucky students who will have a strange educational experience in a ghost-building - Suggestions of keeping the Cowes site open indicate that the plan to reduce places is premature and should have been handled differently - such as deferring until the current year 5 move up to secondary school - There has been very little evidence of impact from the previous consultation. My impression is that the consultation was done to tick a box rather than as a useful tool to steer the process - The answers given to questions by the council have been very unsatisfactory - the same responses over and over have led to lots of frustration - Parking and overcrowding in the Gurnard area have not been well considered throughout the process - The actions of the local councilor for Cowes/Gurnard - Paul Fuller - have been erratic. This has meant that Cowes has not been supported well by their elected representative
Parent/guardian	<p>As a Gurnard primary parent it is clear that the school facilities are not large enough for extra children. [REDACTED] class size is 31. The canteen facilities are not big enough for the children already in the school. Sometimes [REDACTED] has to wait for space to be available so she can have her lunch and the children are rushed through as there are other children waiting to come in and eat. The playground is large but already they have a classroom open at lunch for children who can't cope with the amount of children outside. Putting children in temporary classes will be divisive, cold and costly. The parking situation along Baring Road is dangerous and local residents are already frustrated with parents needing to park on those streets. An extra influx of children will add to these stresses.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>Where is the capacity at Gurnard? what impact will it have on staff and pupils there, as well as how pupils moving there will feel? there is no existing space for them, so they will either be in portacabins, feeling extraneous to the current school place, or they will take up classroom space in the building and existing pupils may end up in these temporary classrooms, neither of which is satisfactory. How can Cowes, with better SATs results than Lanesend and Northwood, be closing ahead of them, except for the reason that it is not an academy. In the initial proposals, there was no mention of academies being 'exempt' from inclusion in consideration for closure - either this was known and not shared, which is underhand, or it was not</p>

	known that they weren't able to be closed and thus incompetence from the council to be unaware.
Resident	Without a clear weighted criteria against which each primary school on the Isle of Wight has been marked, I cannot support the closure of any of the named schools.
Parent/guardian	<p>I am very concerned at the proposal to send some of the children to gurnard and have others stay on the cowes site. This seems to have not been thought out at all. What about assemblies? After school clubs? Socialising? The children staying at cowes would be even more isolated than they would be in porta cabins at gurnard. I also have a child who will be in [REDACTED] and a child who will be in [REDACTED]. I am very worried I'll end up with them at different schools as it is, let alone same school but different sites. I believe this option could only work with some very serious forethought and planning which I have zero faith would happen.</p> <p>One of my main points I want to get across is the concern for staff and teachers. The teaching standard at cowes has been incredible. You only have to look at their exceptional results despite such little funding. It would be an absolute travesty to lay off these teachers with no thought for their future. If it is possible to keep them on with permanent contracts this should be a priority. It would also greatly help the children deal with this huge change.</p> <p>Parking is already a major issue at gurnard primary, not to mention the incidents of children being hit by cars outside the school because there is no school patrol! This is very worrying. The majority of people who will be joining gurnard from cowes walk to school currently and will have to drive to gurnard. That's a huge amount of extra traffic and parking spaces (which are already impossible to come by).</p> <p>Also, I'm aware that the phonics taught at cowes primary is different to that taught at gurnard. So the children (especially year 1) will really struggle with the transition to something so different and will fall behind very quickly if extra help and support isn't given. This may also be the case for the rest of the curriculum so that really needs to be looked into.</p>
Parent/guardian	Due to falling numbers at the school over a number of years, I believe this is the right choice to close CPS, however I do not agree that all pupils should be automatically transferred to Gurnard primary, as surplus places in the Cowes area should be filled first.
Parent/guardian	I wish to express concern over what plans will be put in place if the closure does take place. It will not be feasible to try and have two sites open, how will the Cowes children feel integrated if they are not on the Gurnard site. How would they attend assemblies? After school clubs and feel part of the

	<p>school. I would much prefer to see a phased closure of the school keeping all of the Cowes primary school children on the Cowes primary school site. There are some very experienced teachers at Cowes whose skills will be lost if they are made redundant. [REDACTED] is in year [REDACTED] has been impacted by COVID and facing a move in the most important year of [REDACTED] primary education.</p> <p>The timescales are very short for a closure and I worry how a transition will be managed. Children from Cowes must feel part of the Gurnard community if the closure takes place and they choose to move there. Children must not feel segregated or treated less favourably. How will temporary accommodation be used? Will children be mixed in with current Gurnard children. Thank for you taking time to consider these points.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>Land and Building should be used to continued benefit of community and not be left to fall into disrepair. Even if only some parts are kept and some sold off. If sold off then funds should be controlled and used specifically to benefit other 3 schools in Cowes area.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>As a parent at Gurnard Primary School I feel the closure of Cowes Primary is going to have a detrimental affect on the children at Gurnard. The school was rebuilt to accommodate 30 children in each class which is already a high number of children to educate adequately and to a high standard, being able to meet individual needs and ensure pupils are receiving the best possible education. After school clubs are already over subscribed leaving children who are already at the school having to go without. The Christmas production this year only allowed 2 tickets per child, no grandparents etc were given the opportunity to attend so with even more pupils how can that possibly be accommodated without things having to change for the worse. The parking situation at Gurnard is horrendous and already an accident waiting to happen with very limited parking in the area, there simply is not the road infrastructure to accommodate more traffic and cars. Sixty children in a year group is a large number of children for students to intergrate with and just about still allows relationships to be build and for students to get to know the pupils I don't see how this can be possible if more pupils are added. With Cowes educating the children differently to Gurnard there will without doubt be a large gap in the education of those at Gurnard and those at Cowes, this will have a negative on pupils from both sides impacting on everyone's learning.</p> <p>Cowes currently provides a good learning facility where many children are settled and happy, the closure doesn't benefit any of the children or the families involved.</p>

Resident	Inefficient sized schools impact all schools, weakening the impact of fixed resources, causing morale issues in staff, and divert attention from improving children's live chances.
Resident	With an ever increasing population and more housing being built, it is absurd to think about closing this school!
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	<p>A suggestion I would like to put forward is to consider using the existing Cowes Primary school site for one year. Then to move all children from Cowes to the Gurnard Primary site, using temporary accommodation once the larger current Y5 cohort has moved on to secondary school.</p> <p>This will also help to deliver a smoother transition for the rest of the children at Cowes Primary as Gurnard will have a longer period of time to move children over ensure children are well prepared for that change at both schools.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>I don't believe the council is making an fully informed or fully investigated decision on these proposals. I also do not believe that any one's points in the consultations, or the professionals working in the education systems are being listened to by the Isle of Wight council.</p> <p>Political interference from councillors seem to be playing a bigger part in these than any professional knowledge or with any form of competence in the decision making process.</p> <p>Gurnard primary has not got the capacity to take the extra children displaced from Cowes primary, it will harm the quality of education for current pupils of all schools involved.</p> <p>Lane End is already beyond full, classrooms have been divided up to create more classes and the kids are packed into the school like sardines!</p> <p>The Isle of Wight Council is failing our children's education by continuing with this despite, being made aware that they have messed up the process and got it very wrong.</p> <p>This consultation is not seriously taking people's or professionals feedback into account and is just steam rolling ahead with the plans to suit political persuasions and to divert money away from education and towards sources that councillors and officers prefer, and to not used for the best management of civic responsibilities.</p>
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	Although it is sad for any school to be forced to close, and for those there this must be very painful. There is a desperate need to reduce excess places across the island and improve financial prospects for all the schools across the island as a result. The consultations and accompanying documentation

	has made this very clear and no viable alternatives have been put forward to resolve this.
Parent/guardian	Closure should be postponed until potential legal changes that would enable other schools in Cowes - Lanesend and Northwood to be considered for closure.
Resident	I can see that there are insufficient students to fulfil the number of spaces currently on offer in the Cowes area. Whilst I appreciate the dissatisfaction that academies cannot be included within the place planning against their will, I do understand the feelings this has caused within that area and for the staff and students effected.
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	To many empty school places in Cowes.
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	<p>This is a high performing school and the one of the aims of the proposal is to improve education.</p> <p>No consideration has been given to the staff wellbeing and they are being treated as an after thought - no support getting jobs and expecting them to pick up and support issues with children after mess left by the way that this has been dealt with by the council is a joke. I am particularly disgusted by the way that schools not affected by the closure have been given the impression that it has been a supportive well planned process - it hasn't. [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] only to face it again. My [REDACTED] year old has also faced moving twice. It has now been suggested that some Cowes children stay on site and are taught by Gurnard staff. What a shambles and disrespectful to staff...again.</p>
Parent/guardian	Unfair and bias consultation. Try again.
Parent/guardian	<p>The move and increase in numbers of the classroom will severely disrupt the wellbeing of my child who requires a lot of additional support, which the staff of Cowes primary have done.</p> <p>The suggestion of having some children sent to gurnard and some to stay at Cowes primary cannot be an option. I have [REDACTED] children at Cowes primary and potentially having [REDACTED] children at 2 different sites is not sustainable and could cause a considerable amount of stress.</p>
Parent/guardian	This whole process has caused a significant amount of stress to families, children and staff. The whole uncertainty of the "plan" and the u-turns along the way has been so unsettling for all and if a more structured and fair approach was adopted from the beginning, it might have been more reassuring for those involved. By highlighting Cowes primary in the media in 2023 as a school that would potentially close, it has had such a

	<p>detrimental impact on the numbers of children in the school. It wasn't until Cowes primary was mentioned in the media that the numbers of children and staff started reducing, and it was the result of the announcement in the media in 2023 that has caused such an impact.</p> <p>Cowes primary school must not close. It would be such a loss for the community and such an injustice to the kind, talented and dedicated teaching staff who would lose their jobs because of this.</p>
<p>I am a family member of children affected, a friend of staff affected, and a teacher at a school not affected</p>	<p>It is, firstly, ludicrous that a high-performing school should be closed whilst poorly-performing academies nearby are kept open. This reflects extremely poorly on the early stages of planning - where communication with these failing academies might have prevented Cowes being suggested for closure in the first place.</p> <p>Furthermore, I find it more than a little concerning that the school earmarked for closure happens to be on valuable land in a prime area of a desirable IOW town.</p> <p>In addition, I think it was an absolute embarrassment that the closures were announced and then retracted in the way they were, causing parents to lose faith in the future of Cowes primary and therefore cause an exodus of children, unfairly portraying Cowes primary as a failing school when its numbers have in fact been devastated by the premature closure announcement.</p> <p>If the closure is inevitable, then it is of utmost importance that all children are moved to the Gurnard site and not split between two sites by some being kept back on the Cowes site. It is entirely unfair on the remaining Cowes children to be left in a "ghost school" with unfamiliar staff and no access to normal school life including enrichment opportunities that would be almost certainly unavailable in an abandoned site with only a few pupils present. No school identity, no school pride, nothing. Whoever suggested that has obviously never met a child or been to a school, and has no appreciation whatsoever for the importance of school spirit and community (of which Cowes at present has an abundance).</p> <p>In addition, as many of the current Cowes primary staff should be retained as possible. Their professional expertise is invaluable, and their knowledge of the children of Cowes primary is beyond precious.</p> <p>Finally, I would like to express my utter disgust and disdain for the way this whole affair has been handled. Meetings have been held where no minutes were taken. Schools targeted for the value of their land alone. Children, parents and staff left in limbo for months. The claim that these closures are to raise standards is laughable. Island education has fundamental</p>

	challenges and these absolutely need addressing. Closing schools that are performing above the national average is NOT the way to do so. I hope that those involved are thoroughly ashamed of their role in this farce and that they are highly motivated to ensure they minimise further damage to the children of the Isle of Wight.
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Responses received via: Online Correspondence

Comments made by:	Comment:
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	It is one of the best primary schools on the Isle of Wight. It has a much better reputation than the others around it that will have to be overpopulated in order to accommodate a closure. Lack of investment is the problem, not this school.
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	There are not enough pupils for this school to sustain itself.
Grandma	The process has been totally FLAWED and undemocratic!!!
Grandparent	The process is flawed, is poorly managed / mismanaged, and a top school in Cowes is needlessly being closed in error.
Resident	This is a good school with a good ofsted and some great results in both KS1 and 2. It seems crazy to close a good school in that area when there are 2 academies close by that have poor results and our failing children. Cowes is a happy community school, pupils who attend are happy and thriving.
Pupil	<p>"My friends might not be with me anymore."</p> <p>"Children will be sad."</p> <p>"I love the 'everywhere bear,' creating and break times."</p> <p>"I have friends in years 1, 4, 5 and 6. I play with them at break times."</p> <p>"I'm sad that my [REDACTED] might not find a new job. [REDACTED] is a really good teacher. She does fun clubs too."</p> <p>"I really like geography and history with Mrs Castle."</p>
Pupil	I don't want my school to close. If my school does have to close, I want to go to Gurnard Primary so I can be with my friends who already go to that school and make more friends there. I don't want to stay in my old school building if it is not going to be Cowes Primary any more, that would make me sad. I love my teachers and the other staff at Cowes, I would like them to come and work in my new school.
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	Although it is understood that schools must close, it seems unfair on our children who are getting a great education. This long drawn out process has led to a lot of uncertainty and fear for children.
Parent/guardian	<p>[REDACTED] goes to this school and is very happy and well supported here. The results achieved by the school are excellent and I think it is wrong that this school will close and the staff be made redundant when they have worked there for a long time and do an extremely good job. The entire team there are excellent and seem to work together really well. [REDACTED] is treated as an individual and given the support [REDACTED] needs to achieve [REDACTED] full potential.</p> <p>If [REDACTED] has to transfer to Gurnard Primary School then it is</p>

	<p>important that ■ moves across to the Gurnard site so that ■ feels fully a part of his new school and is able to integrate with the other children. I feel the proposal to keep ■ and ■ classmates on their old school site but still make them pupils of Gurnard is unfair and discriminatory as they won't be able to play with the other children, won't be included in school events and assemblies, after school clubs etc. unless transport is provided between the two sites and even then time during the school day would be wasted moving them to and from the main site. I feel that the closure of the school is a distressing enough event for them as it is without the added anxiety of being treated differently from the other children in their new school. ■ is currently in year ■ so if they stay on the old site ■ would then have further disruption when ■ year is finally transferred across to the new site, as well as having to be part of progressively dwindling number of children on the old site as the older children move up to secondary school. This is unacceptable.</p> <p>If it is not possible to fit all the children onto the Gurnard site and treat them equally, I would not object to a phased closure of Cowes Primary over 1-2 years where the school retains its identity and staff and there is a single clear transition for his year group across to the Gurnard site once capacity is available.</p> <p>I think the council should do more to retain staff/jobs on the island. Why can't some of the Cowes staff be employed at Gurnard to help children manage the transition and give them the support of having some people they know there? Why are they all being made redundant when they do such good jobs?</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>Until the LA can work constructively with the academies in Cowes (Northwood and Lanes End), Cowes Primary should not be closed. The Department for Education should review Primary provision in Cowes holistically including the viability of the academies in the area. Cowes Primary is a high performing school and should not be closed whilst poorer academies remain open and outside of LA control. This situation is appalling and should never have been allowed to happen.</p>
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agree it is better for it to close. - lots of space in the area. - makes sense to share funds and experiences more easily in the area.
Parent/guardian	<p>Closing a good school to improve education in the area makes little sense. This action is wrong and the outcome will be a decline in standards. In the long term the financial situation will be better for the council as it won't have a school in deficit.</p>

	Lanesend and Northwood are already struggling, closing Cowes will not strengthen them.
Resident	Too many cut backs and the population is growing
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	<p>The uncertainty of how the Council will ensure that children from Cowes Primary and Gurnard Primary will be treated equally is unfair. The uncertainty of how the additional children will be included on the roll and where the education of children indicates a lack of foresight by the Council. The potential need to use the Cowes site as a satellite site for Gurnard Primary indicates lack of foresight by the Council. The need for additional staff by Gurnard Primary means a merger of the schools would be preferable.</p> <p>The Council's lack of fairness across the island - not including academies or federated schools in the process; not including all LA staff in the option for redundancy; minimising redundancy payments and limiting allowances - means that children and staff in the schools proposed to close have been unfairly treated.</p> <p>The Council's decision to propose to close Cowes Primary School - a high performing school with consistently good outcomes - whilst keeping schools with lower Ofsted ratings and poor SATs outcomes open is appalling and the Council should be ashamed that they think this is a right and fair thing to do to these children and staff.</p>
Resident	The school has a good reputation and standard of teaching Impact on jobs and local community
Resident	<p>As a taxpayer I urge you to reconsider as I feel strongly the council are about to be thrown in to a huge and expensive (but justified) legal challenge from the Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Education. Any savings you think you might make and I've yet to see any evidence of cost analysis, despite asking in FOI's, will be swallowed up in expensive legal action or the decision being delayed by the Independent Adjudicator. These people have evidence to support their case, and you have the power to save the tax payers these legal costs by pressing pause and working with the Diocese and unions to come up with a transparent process. I argue this as someone who believes cuts do need to be made but I disagree strongly with how you're doing it. You didn't even know you didn't own 3 of the school sites so how can we have confidence in your secret 'findings'.</p> <p>The Board have stated that you have "inaccurate, Incomplete information". They go on to state that they believe the "criteria is not clear", "that specific costs are still a mystery because of a "flawed process". Whilst the council education team and cabinet have repeatedly say they have the evidence and that they are confident in their process they are NOT demonstrating</p>

	<p>this by being transparent. So many responses are batted off with answer that you wont know that until the final decision has been made - be honest its a done deal. You have no intention of changing your minds, or pausing to ensure full transparency. You wont even let all the council members see the secretive documents that you believe hold the answers.</p> <p>What I strongly oppose are the flaws in the process, inconsistencies, lack of transparency and unknown criteria.</p>
Resident	Inaccurate information
Resident	It's incorrect
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	<p>The proposal to close Cowes is deeply flawed. There is still no confirmed plan for the children only places guaranteed at Gurnard. The council seems to be making this decision without a plan in place for the spaces needed at Gurnard. Talk of keeping the Cowes site open leads to questions regarding which children will remain/will current Gurnard pupils, we do not deliver the curriculum in the same way (particularly KS2). It will be major disruption to both schools pupils during their sats with the added question of who will teach these children; you will be making teachers redundant only to advertise for teachers again at that site. Sounds like unlawful dismissal grounds.</p> <p>Given that the Gurnard school/head teacher and parents seem to have little to no information about talks happening and even the current state of the Cowes site. I would be seriously unhappy if my child was moved from the Gurnard site/provisions to a new school which is closing. Therefore are you proposing to only keep the Cowes children there if the site remains open.</p> <p>You have unfairly completed this process and now it seems you are not carrying out with a completed plan of action. It's disgraceful.</p>
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	<p>This whole process from start to finish has been yet another shambles. Cowes primary staff understand the need to reduce pupil places in the cowes area but this has NOT been a fair process.</p> <p>From the very start Ashley Whittaker told us at the CEC meeting that all schools including academies would be included, surely he would have known then that the local authority had no power to close academies.</p> <p>We are high achieving in all areas, far higher than the national average and are rated Good by Ofsted. Our pupil numbers have drastically fallen since being named not once but twice for closure, which has then been used as evidence against us as a reason for closure. The two academies are failing - one if</p>

	<p>not both are failing in all areas and yet you say you are putting educational outcomes first! It is an absolute travesty.</p> <p>If Cowes is to close then it is my strong belief that the children should all be moved to the Gurnard site rather than some being taught at Cowes. I also think to ease the children's transition Cowes staff should also be offered roles at Gurnard primary.</p>
A grandparents who has had children go through this school	<p>This is an amazing school not only have I had grandchildren go there, The teaching staff are dedicated to supporting all the children from the high flyer's to these that are struggling.</p> <p>I also feel that moving the children will be very unsettling, plus all the amazing staff will loss their jobs what a waste,</p>
Resident	<p>My understanding is that around 2011 the IOW council closed a number of Middle schools with the aim of saving money to improve the overall education standard on the island. Where is the evidence that this has worked and therefore a good model to use in this case? My understanding - from your own statements are that the IOW is deemed to be one of the worst authorities for providing excellent education, so obviously your plan from 2011 did NOT work. PRESS PAUSE now</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>In 2011 the Isle of Wight Council decided to close 16 of its middle schools. Apparently this decision was made to switch from a 3 tier education system to a 2 tier system. It was also didnt to improve education - where is the improvement?</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>I am not in support of any of the statutory proposals for the named schools as I cannot support a procedure that has been rushed, is flawed, short-sighted and stands to tear the heart out of some of our poorest communities. To continue with it would destroy trust. It is contradictory to the council's mental health policies (connect, be involved, be present, be mindful) and stands to cause significant harm, both in the short-term and long term. Our councillors would be better set using their voice to lobby for greater national change in education standards and delivery, or face unprecedented numbers of families opting for home-schooling in a bid to support their children in an ever-more disconnected community.</p>
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	<p>It's a disgrace that a school with an excellent academic record can be closed with the reasoning that it is improving education standards on the islands</p>
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	<p>I agree that the council needs to reduce school places on the Isle of wight but I feel that it is unfair that not all schools in the area were considered in the consultation as they are academies. Northwood Primary and Lanesend schools should have been looked at too.</p> <p>As a worker in the receiving school of [REDACTED] Primary I feel</p>

	that if the proposal to close Cowes goes ahead, we as workers and the parents, need to be informed asap as to how they are going to accommodate the children and staff as there are ideas/rumours flying around.
Parent and staff	Closing Cowes Primary School will not improve education in the cowes area-for current or future pupils. It will only save money. Please do not split siblings over different school sites if Cowes Primary site is used as part of Gurnard primary.
Parent/guardian	This decision is not in the best interests of our children at Cowes Primary - or Gurnard Primary either. We are a well performing school being forced to close instead of two lesser-performing schools just because they are academies. The Guarnard site is not equipped to take on additional children - it is already unsafe to cross outside with no parking for parents, and I would be forced to drive to drop off if we moved there, whereas we happily walk to Cowes Primary now (as do most parents). This move would be of the detriment not only to all our Cowes primary children, but also Gurnard Primary too.
Pupil	"please don't close our school, I love walking to school and seeing my friends and if I move to Gurnard we will have to drive every day which is bad for the environment. We have really nice teachers at Cowes Primary and they deserve to keep their jobs. It is a happy school" [REDACTED]
Parent/guardian	This decision is not in the best interests of our children at Cowes Primary - or Gurnard Primary either. We are a well performing school being forced to close instead of two lesser-performing schools just because they are academies. The Guarnard site is not equipped to take on additional children - it is already unsafe to cross outside with no parking for parents, and I would be forced to drive to drop off if we moved there, whereas we happily walk to Cowes Primary now (as do most parents). This move would be of the detriment not only to all our Cowes primary children, but also Gurnard Primary too.
Parent/guardian	The decisions do not seem to have been made with the best interests of the children and their education in mind. The lack of communication and treatment of staff has been terrible.
Resident	You are proposing to close a school in the heart of a community which in turn lessens the connectedness of that community for all ages. We need that connectedness to thrive. The environmental impact pushing people to drive to school where once they could walk will increase. Less walking means an increased strain on NHS abilities to address obesity and mental health wellness. Time taken to drop/pick up children at schools further away will eat in to work time for many parents - this impacts the economy far wider than the council.

Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	It is vital that some schools on the island close to ensure the education of young people on the Island is not affected and schools will have sufficient funding levels to operate and provide the highest quality of education. A lack of funding to schools will mean that all our young people would miss out on opportunities.
Staff (at a school unaffected by the proposals)	It is sad to see a school go, but this is necessary in order to forward plan and ensure that the schools we have on the island are full and therefore fully funded.
Grandparent	<p>My grandson has been extremely well supported at this school. If the school is closed the staff should be retained within the educational system wherever possible and preferably at Gurnard Primary School so that they can support the children who are moving. The school closure is incredibly distressing for the children so the council should be investing in ways of supporting them through it, for example keeping familiar staff and having extra staff at the receiving school to assist with the move. This is particularly important given that the move is happening on such a short timescale so the children will have very little time to integrate.</p> <p>The suggestion of keeping the Cowes children on a separate site to the existing Gurnard children is completely inappropriate. All children at the same school should be given the same treatment. I am already concerned that [REDACTED] will feel like a "second class" member of [REDACTED] new school and to keep [REDACTED] separate for the first couple of years before moving [REDACTED] again would make this ten times worse. Any split site proposal for Gurnard School should involve whole year groups being kept together and treated the same - eg KS1 on one site, KS2 on the other. To separate the children within each year group by school of origin is unfair and unacceptable. We were promised in that the children could all be accommodated on the Gurnard site and this promise should be kept, it is the very least these children deserve.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>To whom it may concern</p> <p>My wife and I have a [REDACTED] in Year [REDACTED] at Cowes Primary.</p> <p>Firstly we could not be happier about the education and care [REDACTED] has received in the School so far. The staff have been exemplary and we cannot ignore the fact that their continued employment has been a subject of uncertainty and speculation for well over 1 year at this time. This must be very difficult for them, but they have never let it affect their professionalism and dedication at all. Most of them have their own children to consider, some with children at Cowes Primary, and others</p>

elsewhere. Losing a teaching job could mean uprooting their own children, moving location, and disrupting their education, even if they are at other Island Schools. So firstly I'd like to say to those considering the closure of Cowes Primary, think about the teaching staff and the impact of losing those jobs. If the teachers leave the island or leave the profession, they won't be easily replaced in the future - we know that the Island has a real problem attracting and retaining skilled professionals in every sector.

We are of course very concerned about disruption to our child's educational and social development which could occur if the school is closed. Our child has been with [REDACTED] year group for almost [REDACTED] years at Cowes and has known many of [REDACTED] cohort for longer than that, via the neighbouring Pre-School and Nursery. All in all [REDACTED] been at Nursery / Pre-School and Primary for most of [REDACTED] life, since [REDACTED] was 2 years old [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Our biggest concern is the possible separation of our child from [REDACTED] cohort. In the unfortunate event that the site at Cowes Primary closes, we have the strongest preference that our child remains with [REDACTED] classmates, even if they end up in a new site.

We noted with interest the possibility of giving all children the option of place at Gurnard Primary. We know from our own discussions with Gurnard (and Lanes End and Northwood) that the current year group 2 is completely full in all other schools. Gurnard and Lanes End have two full forms of 30 and Northwood one. There are currently ~20 children in Year 2 at Cowes. So moving 20 children to Gurnard doesn't seem to solve any logistical issues or close any funding gap. I don't know how the other year groups stand, but I would not be surprised to find a similar situation for them also.

Given that moving the current Year 2 to Gurnard doesn't seem to improve funding at all, we don't see any gain there, at least in the short term. And all of these children currently in Year 2 will be in Primary School for another 4 years after summer 2025. We have of course visited Gurnard Primary and know many Parents and their Children who currently attend. We know that it's a very well run school, and also that the site is full. The idea apparently is that 'temporary accommodation' would be put in the playing fields. Being children of the 80s, we are sadly quite familiar with being educated in portacabin style 'temporary accommodation', with poor heating and sound insulation. We don't find that prospect at all appealing, and

	<p>definitely a detriment and a downgrade from the excellent, modern accommodation provided at Cowes Primary.</p> <p>Another option mentioned was keeping the children at the Cowes Primary site (presumably with the same teaching staff) but under the Leadership Team of Gurnard Primary. One could of course advance the argument that consolidation in the leadership team would save money, but that presupposes that there is considerable idle time enjoyed by the LT at Gurnard, and that they would be able to manage another site remotely, without any impact on the children and teaching staff at Gurnard Primary. You'd have to ask the Gurnard LT but I'm quite sure they are fully busy managing their own school, as you would rightly expect. And you'd have to make the argument that, even if you assume there is sufficient spare management capacity, that they would provid</p>
Resident	<p>I oppose the closure of Cowes Primary School. I am concerned about the job losses and the effect on the community. I am also concerned that the site will likely be sold off for more luxury developments that we don't need, causing further pressure on the medical centre and exacerbating the issues around seasonality affecting the economy of the town.</p> <p>If the school does close, all children should be treated fairly. Keeping some children on the Cowes site for a few years and not allowing them to actually move to their new school is wrong, and presumably means the previous promise to establish a teacher training centre there has now been quietly forgotten. I have friends whose children will be affected by this and it has caused them a huge amount of distress to think that their children will be treated so differently to other children already at the new school. It is hard to believe that the council are putting children first when they are suggesting something so outrageous!</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>I hear the academy school is doing way worse. Why close a good school. Then keep a bad academy open. This needs to stop. Unfair process.</p>
Resident	<p>I do not support the closure of a good local school that caters to many international families and NHS staff. Cowes Primary is an inclusive school that is particularly supportive of children who don't speak English as their first language. If the school closes all children should be treated fairly which means making space for them at their new school and fully integrating them with the other children, not keeping them on a separate site.</p>
Preschool manager	<p>There are currently 4 primary schools within the Cowes area that needed to be taken into account when formulating the way ahead. 2 of these school are academies, and it has since</p>

been revealed that the Local Authority have no legal ability to close these. These academies are actually performing below the national average where phonics and Key stage 2 are concerned. One of them is even rated as Requires Improvement by Ofsted. Whereas Cowes Primary School is a very good academic school with an Ofsted rating of Good. The children are exceeding the national average where both phonics and Key stage 2 are concerned. Surely the education aspect of any decision based on schools operating should be first and foremost. Parents will be expected to select a school for their children and the options left are - 1 school who is currently operating above national standards - but will become very overcrowded and having to resort to temporary / substandard accommodation or the 2 academies that are failing to meet the national standards in education. This in itself causes me concern as I fear that parents may opt for home education rather than choosing to send them to a school that is not fulfilling the national standards of education. Home schooling can hide so many problems ie Safeguarding, mental health etc. These parents have already had to go through a certain periods of home schooling due to Covid.

Cowes Primary School is local to Cowes town centre and the majority of parents whose children who attends Cowes primary school walk to and from school. The distance from the town centre to the schools staying open will have a huge impact on the children. The proposed offer of their children attending Gurnard for instance will add another 30 minutes or so to their travelling time. Not all parents have access to vehicles and there are no bus services available to them. Would the council put on additional school buses to alleviate this? The added pressure of more vehicles on the road while small children are travelling to and from school is also a worry. Road safety will need to be considered.

Learning environment

The surplus children going to Gurnard will apparently be out in temporary accommodation. Will the children moved from Cowes be mixed amongst the original Gurnard children or separated and put into the temporary accommodation. I truly hope all the children will be mixed and treated equally. Gurnard have a wonderful environment at the moment because of the space it has, this will soon change with new accommodation being put in.

Our Preschool is attached to Cowes Primary

	<p>Blackberry Lane preschool and Nursery are located on the site of Cowes Primary School, and yes it has been mentioned in the proposal that the preschool will have the option of expanding if there are enough children needed the service etc - however - the preschool works alongside the primary school. It rents the building from them. Who is going to be the new landlord? What is happening to the site? We do come under the Local Authority for advice etc however the school is our first port of call when needing advice. We use their school hall, school field, the reception room and resources from time to time and also their school kitchen for hot lunches. I feel we would not be able to run the preschool and Nursery at its best without these extras resources etc. The preschool has already lost 2 children whose older sibling has been moved due to having no transport to get to Gurnard should Cowes be shut.</p> <p>Practicalities</p> <p>The parents of Cowes Primary School have purchased uniform already, as have Gurnard parents, however, the Cowes parents will now face yet another expense (added to the travelling) and will need to purchase Gurnard's uniform. Is there any thought about perhaps changing the name of the school to accommodate all children and possibly a different uniform.</p>
<p>Parent/guardian</p>	<p>There is no set criteria identified for closing schools. None. Outside agencies have NOT been consulted, as per the findings of a freedom of information request. When asked for information regarding outside agencies, who we knew were gagged from commenting on the school place planning strategy, the Director for children's services said repeatedly that this was not the case. Both him and Councillor Bacon assured teachers, union representatives and parents during council meetings that those responses were "in the pile" and tapped a pile of papers to indicate this. The freedom of information request allegedly confirmed no such consultation documents were received or included. The cabinet member has lied and obstructed the process. These outside agencies needed to be consulted as the effects on the wider community from a professional perspective needed to be heard and seriously considered. they were not. Furthermore, the feedback from some of the employees of these agencies, has been that the atmosphere has been one of fear allegedly due to the service director for education. Council employees and outside agencies opposed to the strategic plans, due to the far reaching consequences on children and communities, are too</p>

	frightened of losing their jobs to speak out. It will take just one strong whistleblower to confirm this.
Parent/guardian	<p>Since the very first announcement of this rather botched attempt at making school closures, it's been clear that no amount of views or arguments against the closure of Cowes Primary will deter you, which is a real shame as the school has been wonderful with my [REDACTED] kids, who are [REDACTED] still there. They have been especially good with my eldest, who when [REDACTED] started was quite isolated and didn't want to engage with any other children, and now has many, many good friends which is heartwarming to see. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and has never once in [REDACTED] 5 years there had any incidents, with the kitchen staff making [REDACTED] feel very safe when eating there.</p> <p>However I had some sort of peace when it was announced that when (if) the school closed, that the pupils would move en-masse to Gurnard so at least they'd all be there together in the same boat. This was especially important to our family, as our children are in different year groups. I now see that options on the table include the possibility of splitting up children across 2 different sites, somehow making use of Cowes school, which you've previously said should close?</p> <p>Can you please make the best of an extremely bad situation by either leaving Cowes Primary alone and letting them rebuild, or by closing the whole thing down so everybody knows where they are? If people want to take their kids to Northwood/Lanesend, great, let them, but the rest of the children need to move together, so they can help each other through a very difficult process. Otherwise the friendships and family ties that have helped shape my and all the other children's there futures will be very badly fragmented, which I feel will hinder my eldest's social development quite hard.</p> <p>To summarise, this has been demoralising from the start. My preference would be for Cowes to stay open and be given the support to rebuild after your mixed messages over 2 years have helped to decimate the staff and pupil count. If it must close (and I did have sympathy at the start of this regarding finances, but not any more) then it must close completely, and the pupils all moved to Gurnard (unless they wish to attend viable alternatives). Anything in between is just going to prolong the suffering of the pupils during an already uncomfortable time for them.</p>

Responses received via: Online Correspondence

Comments made by:	Comment:
Council tax payer with no link to any school	<p>I'm confused as to the criteria that was used to list the 6 schools which later became 5. Newport and other big towns have many schools in very close proximity to each other - why have these not been targeted? The schools you have chosen are mainly in rural areas where you will destroy communities. Of course children in Newport schools would be upset but they wouldn't lose their friends and could almost certainly still walk to school. Why not look at closing some of your older schools where maintenance costs are high and especially those that may need major works in the near future. This appears to be a deliberate policy to target rural schools in poorer areas leaving those in the more affluent areas untouched. Academy schools were apparently out of scope despite some performing badly and I gather you're sending children from schools where the Ofsted reports are encouraging to poorer performing schools and claiming it will improve education on the island - HOW?</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>As with all the other primary schools, they should be seen as assets embedded in their communities. Primary schools should be within walking or bicycling distance of most homes. I suggest the IWC raises local council tax to support the existing schools across the Island. They may be 'combined' under fewer heads or managers and admin staff may be shared but smaller classes with teachers and TAs are required to raise standards across the IoW for our children, to give them the best start in life as possible. Income generation from use of the sites in the evenings, at w/es and through school holidays should be explored, also possibly selling any surplus space for affordable rented accommodation (income coming back to IWC)</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>-We specifically chose Cowes primary due to it's central and convenient location. It is a 10 minute walk for us, meaning we have time to get to work after drop off. This is a healthy start/finish to the day, and allows us to engage with other school goers on the way.</p> <p>-Holiday club. This is a separate issue to wrap around care as wrap around care is during term dates. Cowes primary is now the ONLY school in the area to offer holiday club. Gurnard, Lanesend and Northwood do not provide this service. Even as a two parent family, we do not get sufficient annual leave to cover all the school holidays, and would certainly not be able to holiday together as a family. An NHS colleague recently had to decline promotion at work as their school had stopped this service.</p>

-Links to Cowes enterprise. Another reason we chose Cowes primary. The older years at Cowes primary attend activities and use facilities at Cowes enterprise. Since this started, there has been a noticeable difference within year 7 pupils between those who are already familiar with the setting and those who are not. The transition is known to be much easier for all concerned, and benefits the overall wellbeing essential to the local community, within and outside the school environment. The school is planning to join the Ormiston Multi Academy Trust, which will enhance these links further.

-Links to nursery and preschool. The onsite preschool meant a smooth transition into primary for [REDACTED]. The staff are superb and there is a waiting list.

-There needs to be some flexibility for future uncertainties. My understanding is there was a Covid baby boom. More houses are being built. Cowes primary has the space for flexibility. This recent national news article makes this point. We don't know how many people are having babies - and that's a headache for schools - BBC News

-Change in government, means change in policies. The proposal to tax private school fees, is likely to result in increased demand for state school places. Cowes has both the building and outside space to accommodate increased demand...If there is ever any increase of regulation to home schooling provision. Many parents who currently home school would potentially return their children to state schools.

-Parents who commute. My husband and several other parents we know commute to the mainland, so we need to have a school close enough to the red jet to enable this. Ourselves and several other parents we know, particularly need Cowes primary for this reason. Recruitment and retention of NHS staff is an ongoing issue for the island. Loss of Cowes primary would have a direct impact on provision of local health services available.

-Diversity. Having visited Gurnard, Lanesend and Northwood. The diverse demographic of Cowes pupils seemed more reflective of the wider UK population.

-Quality of results - recent statutory test results were above national average.

	<p>I strongly urge you to consider all these factors and please keep our school and community.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>I oppose the closure of Cowes Primary School!</p> <p>So far the process has been highly frustrating, not particularly reassuring and at times confusing and contradictory.</p> <p>The school should be used an example of how to achieve the improvements of educational outcomes the Council seeks across the island. Against a back drop of continued restructuring, almost 2 year of closure threats and as a result of that falling pupil number the school as been able to achieve results above national averages for Phonics and Y6 SATs. While working under financial restraint in an effort to make the budget stretch while not impacting the children's opportunities and educational offer. A real credit to the CPS team! Recent pupil, staff and parent surveys have been very positive and encouraging despite the challenging times the school is going through as a result of the councils place planning process.</p> <p>We need a detailed plan of the future of our children and the staff of the school. The limbo that the whole school community is in is exhausting and adding to stress levels and worry. Parents need to be able to give their children information - correct and accurate information in order to manage any transition, their expectations and emotional welfare well. So far the council has not been showing a lot of reassuring concern for the pupils mental well-being throughout this process. Should this process continue along its trajectory I firmly believe that a number of pupils affected by the school closures will in the future appear as patients and cases in the Isle of Wight's Mental Health Service. A service that is already overstretched.</p> <p>For this to be in the best interest of the children and education on the Island instead of balancing books and making numbers on spreadsheets add up and not go into the red, everyone needs to be able to contribute, be heard and taken seriously.</p> <p>I would also like to ask that Headteachers and chairs of governors of both schools - Cowes Primary and Gurnard Primary should be involved in this process to ensure the best interests of all the children directly affected are represented and both schools can feel like their voices and concerns are heard and acted upon.</p>

<p>Parent/guardian</p>	<p>Here I my thoughts on the possible options:</p> <p>1. considering the provision of temporary accommodation at the Gurnard site</p> <p>Complete closure of the CPS apart from the preschool currently located at the site, with full transfer of all children to the Gurnard primary school.</p> <p>Merit school community is all together on one site with friends and siblings Full integration of pupils from Cowes Primary School moving to the Gurnard site</p> <p>Demerit Overcrowding of a school designed as a 2-form entry site Traffic, congestion during peak drop off and pick up times No crossing patrol or zebra crossing Safe walking routes to the school, especially coming from Cowes town are limited Potentially having a negative impact of a currently financially viable school Phonics scheme and curriculum alignment is required</p> <p>Comments: At this stage this seems to be the least bad option. However, I am doubtful if this plan can be achieved in the timeframe set out by the council.</p> <p>2. utilising the existing Cowes Primary School site</p> <p>Option A - retaining CPS pupils on CPS site - Essentially a merger of the two schools. When this was suggested during a meeting quite early on in this process the Isle of Wight education team was quick to dismiss this as a viable option.</p> <p>Merit: pupils will be in familiar surroundings</p> <p>Demerit: Cost - keeping the Cowes Primary School site open will incur all the cost it currently does, minus a few senior leadership posts, and will just pass the maintenance cost on to a currently viable school, potentially causing it to also go into deficit. Either</p>
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	<p>way the council will end up footing the bill. while the setting is familiar to the children everything else about the school would change - staff, uniform Logistics of catering provisions for lunch Logistics of wrap around care and after school clubs Segregation of pupils No cohesive school community No integration</p> <p>Option B - Having a certain part of the school, for example school community is split up by Key Stages and accommodated at the current CPS site</p> <p>Merit: short term solution to accommodate all children as 'one school'</p> <p>Demerit: Cost - keeping the Cowes Primary School site open will incur all the cost it currently does and will just pass the high maintenance cost on to a currently viable school, potentially causing it to also go into deficit. Either way the council will end up footing the bill. For some children the setting is familiar, but everything else about the school would change - staff, uniform Logistics for parents - potential school drop off at two different site for parents with children in more than one year group Logistics of catering provisions for lunch Logistics of wrap around care and after school clubs Segregation of pupils Gurnard parents will likely be unimpressed by their children having to attend the CPS site No cohesive school community No integration</p> <p>Observations:</p> <p>Table 3 summarises data incorrectly.</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>Questions:</p> <p>Wasn't the reorganisation of Island schools from 3-tier to a 2-tier system supposed to deliver better outcomes? How do the current results measure up against success criteria set for this process?</p>

	<p>Will there be a comprehensive plan to monitor the performance of the educational outcomes to track the effectiveness of this process? Since this exercise is in part aimed at improving better educational outcomes for Isle of Wight children, will a 5+ year monitoring plan with, if required, intervention opportunities and strategies?</p> <p>Where does the Council see the Island ranking for outcomes in 2,5 and 10 years time? Surely a bar needs be set to be able to assess the success of this process.</p> <p>What is the council's ability to support/intervene in academies that might be performing below national average on outcomes in order to improve their performance and deliver a high quality of education?</p> <p>Concerns and questions raised at the previous consultation that are unanswered:</p> <p>How are you making sure the well experienced and dedicated team of staff that make Cowes Primary school such an excellent team will be retained as part of Island education? Their skills, knowledge and experience are vital to ensuring the improvement of educational outcomes on the island.</p> <p>How are the transitions going to be managed?</p> <p>How are the differing phonics schemes of Cowes Primary and Gurnard Primary going to be aligned, so that pupils joining Gurnard aren't disadvantaged?</p> <p>How will the curriculums of the two school going to be aligned, so that pupils joining Gurnard aren't disadvantaged?</p> <p>How will the council ensure that the required additional physical infrastructure is in place in time? The time scale seems very tight keeping in mind no plans have been drawn up, no planning permission has been submitted, no public planning consultation has taken place - objections (including Island Roads declaring the road unsuitable for the increased traffic as a result of the additional children attending the school) which could halt the whole process leaving the future of the children in jeopardy and with no learning environment to go to, no contractor has been found (it could be argued that a contractor that can be found in that short a space of time might be of questionable reputation, large reputable council-</p>
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	<p>approved contractors and firms tend to have work booked in way in advance),... The logistics of this are very complex and intertwined, and the timescale for this seems too short to be implemented successfully, keeping in mind that it is beneficial for the transitioning children to be able to explore their new class rooms, learning environment and new school setting prior to September 2024, ideally in June/July 24 before the summer holidays.</p> <p>How will the council ensure the soft infrastructure is in place to accommodate the additional children? To ensure additional teachers and support staff are hired, wrap around care provisions are expanded to allow for more children, after school club offerings are expanded, logistics of running a two form entry site with the numbers of three form entry school - lunch arrangements, PE, hall use, assemblies.</p> <p>Will a pastoral service be offered to support all the children to adjust to their new situation?</p> <p>Will measures be put in place to allow for better road safety at the entrance to the Gurnard Primary School site? Zebra crossing, crossing patrol, additional footpaths, extended drop off zone, traffic lights.</p> <p>How will the increased need for parents to drive their children to school be counter acted? Active travel plan to encourage physically active, healthier travel to school?</p> <p>Who will manage the Transition and Integration? Who will be the driving force to make sure this happens and is managed well? School senior lead ship teams of the schools concerned or IoW education team?</p>
Parent/guardian	<p>I would like to comment on the proposal to close Cowes Primary, specifically the plans regarding what will happen to the pupils should Cowes close.</p> <p>As a parent of ■ children currently at Cowes I am strongly in support of a phased closure where the current children remain on site with the current staff, attending 'Cowes Primary'. Speaking to my own children their priority is to remain with their friendship group, and ideally familiar teachers/ staff. If a phased closure is not viable due to low pupil numbers, then I support the move of all children to the Gurnard Primary site.</p> <p>We are not in support of joining Gurnard Primary but with either some or all students staying on the Cowes site. We do</p>

	<p>not feel this would be good for the children's wellbeing; closing their school but expecting them to return with new uniforms and teachers but back in their old classrooms is not fair. They need to integrate with their peers in their new school not be annexed away.</p> <p>Practically speaking breakfast club and after school club provision would have to be provided at both sites, as well as hot meals. How would whole school events like sports day/ Christmas functions/ assemblies work? If only certain year groups are kept on the Cowes site will things like start and finish times be staggered with Gurnard to account for sibling drop offs? How would the school ensure teaching consistency across the year groups if they are not on the same site. I know consistency between classes is really important/ valued in 2 form entry schools, how would this work over physically different sites? This would impact teaching staff as well as students.</p> <p>When making a decision please consider the children involved; those attending these affected schools *now*, and how to make any changes as easy for them as possible.</p>
Pupil	<p>I think that the council are making a huge mistake. My school is amazing and doesn't deserve this one tiny bit and I really want you to concentrate on our views as children because you are not being affected, we are. Our staff, our cooks, our pupils have we given our school a magic that cannot be replaced. when you (the council) put us down for closure in 2023 lots of children left, we had teachers leave and now we are on the list again and one of the the reasons for our closure is the lack of students.</p> <p>██████████</p>
Staff (at a school affected by the proposals)	<p>We're supposed to be an eco friendly island. This is being hindered by the amount of cars on the road. A number of our families that used to walk to school have moved their kids due to this threat of closure. I know of a family that live within walking distance of the school that are now attending a school in Newport! How is this helping the environment?!</p>

Responses received via: Email and Letter Correspondence

#	Comments made by:	Comment:
238	Councillor	<p>(See Reference E below responses) https://iowc.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/SchoolPlacePlanningProject-StaffandConsultationmeetings/EUzsUXgg8ZxNnTGo7yAKT4UBz-ACS4lj_wqPwZpgwZAncw?e=a6yy2V</p>
97	Governor	<p>(See Reference C below responses) https://iowc.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/SchoolPlacePlanningProject-StaffandConsultationmeetings/EWq8foHgC19Gvw-2_UXmHPYBUFFI5uEd-Scrruvoj6MEgg?e=Smef4Z</p> <p>Response from Ashley Whittaker:</p> <p>Thank you for your submission.</p>
191	Governor	<p>Dear Strategic Planning team,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Isle of Wight Council's statutory consultation on the closure of Cowes Primary School. I am a Governor [REDACTED] I am however submitting this response in a personal capacity. I am fully supportive of the official consultation response submitted by the school's Governing Body. In this response, I will share some personal thoughts based on my own views and experiences in relation to place planning. In preparing this response, I have drawn upon my previous response to the place planning consultation because a number of the points I raised then remain relevant.</p> <p>Cowes Primary School [REDACTED] I have been hugely impressed with the staff at the school. They are an incredibly dedicated and professional team. The public meeting at the school that took place as part of the place planning exercise made it very clear how much the community value the school and want to keep it open. The school is able to offer a level of support to individual members of staff and children which most schools cannot come close to matching.</p> <p>Naming Cowes Primary School for closure When Cowes Primary School was named for closure in the place planning consultation document this was actually the third time that the Council had named the school for closure. Each time the school was named for closure it was a source of significant anxiety for staff at the school as well as for parents and others in the wider school community. It made it even more challenging to recruit staff, make decisions around contracts and prepare budgets. It should not have happened the way it did.</p> <p>The Council's approach to place planning The Council's approach to place planning in recent years has been</p>

		<p>problematic. Had the Council carefully managed place planning on the Island there would be fewer schools in a deficit position or setting deficit budgets. In the present exercise, the Council named six primary schools for closure in single academic year. If this goes ahead then there will be a large number of teachers and non-teaching staff from the schools looking for jobs on the Island at the same time. These staff could all end up applying for a relatively small number of jobs. Surely, it would have been better to have been closing one or two schools a year for the last three to six years so that school staff have a better chance of securing a role on the Island.</p> <p>In addition, a more forward-looking, gradual and better managed approach to place planning could have allowed for more meaningful dialogue with the Department for Education and the academy trusts that run schools on the Island. This could have avoided some of the sub-optimal proposals the Council has put forward in the recent consultation for example the proposal to close a school in Cowes that was assessed as 'good' by Oftsted (Cowes Primary School) while leaving open one that was assessed as 'requires improvement'. I appreciate that the Council does not have the legal power to recommend the closure of academies at present. This is an area where I think the law may need to be changed to avoid sub-optimal decisions being made in future place planning consultations on the Island and elsewhere. I have copied in Richard Quigley MP who I hope will raise this point in Parliament.</p> <p>Lack of clarity on transition planning In the Council's place planning material there is very little detailed information about the practical steps the Council would take support the transition if a school in the Cowes area was to be closed. Would there be additional funding to support transition for the school to which the children are being moved to? I raised this question in my response to the place planning consultation but I did not receive a response from the Council.</p> <p>I understand that Cowes Primary School has one of the highest percentages of children with English as an additional language (EAL) of any school on the Island. The school has developed very good relationships with the families of the children with EAL. In addition, the staff have significant knowledge and experience of supporting these children. This could pose a major challenge to other schools in the area if Cowes Primary School were to be closed because they may not have the necessary capability to support large numbers of children with EAL. I am concerned that the Council has not given this sufficient weight in its decision making around school closures and has not made sufficient plans or preparations to mitigate the negative impacts of the proposed closures on these children.</p>
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70	Headteacher	[REDACTED]

2	Parent	Could you please clarify the information provided in this letter? We had been told throughout this process that the kids from Cowes would be moving to Gurnard. Is that now not the case?
3	Parent	Please can you confirm that the plan to move all Cowes Primary children to Gurnard primary school is still going ahead if Cowes closes. The letter sent out this morning has panicked parents as it says nothing about children moving to Gurnard under "Next Steps", only that they will be supported by admissions to find school places.
7	Parent	The attached letter states that we can arrange an appointment to speak to an officer regarding the current proposal to close Cowes Primary and other schools at the end of this academic year. I'm a parent of [REDACTED] children at Cowes Primary [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Myself and other parents have a number of questions we would like to ask as a part of engaging with the current consultation phase ending on 3rd February. Please can we arrange an appointment to discuss this further? I may have one or two other parents who want to join also, so a conference call would be preferable.
15	Parent	I am horrified that you are planning to close Cowes Primary School! This school was rated good by Ofsted. Its SATS results are above those of the two Academy schools in Cowes. Yet you plan to leave them untouched and close a highly rated school stating the ambition of "Better Education " This is madness! What is more, you propose sending all the children to Gurnard Primary (another highly rated school) and totally overcrowding it to its detriment. Meanwhile the underachieving Academies continue to underachieve while 2 good schools suffer! Cowes Primary is a happy thriving community with an excellent, enthusiastic staff. Please think again.
20	Parent	Re: Proposed Closure of Cowes Primary School During the recent Schools Place Planning consultation process many Cowes parents raised concerns that there was not sufficient capacity on the Gurnard Primary School site to accommodate the additional children from Cowes. We were assured repeatedly that this was not the case and the council were confident that there would be space, even if temporary accommodation had to be erected. Then, in an astonishing u-turn, Cllr Bacon announced to the Cabinet Meeting on Thursday 12th December that in fact this might not be the case and the council were considering keeping the children on the Cowes site after all. Cowes is a close-knit community and many of our children have neighbours and friends who are Gurnard Primary School pupils. They play together in local playgrounds, they see each other at out of school activities. Our children have been caused a great deal of anxiety in recent months at the thought of their school potentially closing but we have been able to reassure them that they will at least have the happy advantage of being able to join their existing friends at Gurnard Primary. Now we are being told that even this

		<p>might not happen.</p> <p>Imagine being told that you are going to a new school: new uniform, new teachers, new routine. Except that you won't be able attend the lovely modern building with the other children, you will be staying separately in your old school building. This is what has been proposed for our children, some of whom will be as young as six. How will it feel to them to be treated in this way? To go from being part of a small friendly school with staff they know and love, to being in a new school yet not in the school? To wear the same uniform as their friends yet be treated completely differently? It horrifies me that such a scenario would even be suggested, and it gives me very little faith that our politicians truly have our children's best interests at heart. When we as parents seek clarification we are met with the response "nothing has been decided yet". I feel this is wholly inadequate. Whilst detailed plans understandably cannot be made at this stage, certain scenarios could very easily be ruled out.</p> <p>It has been pointed out in council documents that there are other primary school options for parents in the Cowes area. However, both the remaining options are academy schools with below average results: one of is Ofsted-rated as "requires improvement" and the other saw only a shocking 20.7% of its pupils achieve the expected standard for KS2 last year. In addition to this, Cllr Bacon stated at the meeting on 12th December that he intends to hold a further place planning process in the Cowes area when the Children's Wellbeing Bill is enacted, this time focusing on the academy schools. The initial place planning document published by the council in the spring of 2024 stated an intention to remove 60 places from the Cowes area. It is therefore highly likely that a second process will result in the closure of at least one more school.</p> <p>For Cowes Primary parents the options are therefore very limited: choose to send our children to a poorly performing academy that may close within the next year or two, thus causing even further disruption to their education. Or choose the transfer to Gurnard Primary School, a successful school with a secure future, but risk that our children will be segregated from their peers and treated unequally at a time when their education is already being disrupted.</p> <p>If there is not sufficient capacity to fully accommodate our children at Gurnard Primary School then the alternative plan should be to conduct a phased closure of Cowes Primary School over the next 1-2 years. This would enable the Year 5 "covid cohort" to complete their education with minimal disruption and the remaining children can be educated in a familiar environment with staff they know and love until the numbers are low enough for them to transfer to Gurnard Primary.</p>
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23	Parent	<p>To Whom it May Concern,</p> <p>I am very puzzled and shocked that you are planning to close Cowes Primary School.</p>

		<p>Why are you closing a top performing Cowes school on the Isle, and at the cost of heavily disrupting an also good second school on the Isle at Gurnard?</p> <p>Cowes Primary School was rated good by Ofsted, and SATS results are ABOVE those of the two Academy schools in Cowes.</p> <p>Yet you plan to leave the Academies untouched and close a highly rated school stating the ambition of "Better Education".</p> <p>I suggest this is madness.</p> <p>What is more, you propose sending all the children to Gurnard Primary (also a highly rated school), thereby disrupting its established management and smooth running by totally overcrowding it to its nonsensical detriment.</p> <p>Meanwhile the underachieving Academies continue to underachieve while 2 good schools suffer.</p> <p>Cowes Primary is a happy thriving community with an excellent, enthusiastic staff.</p> <p>Please think again, thank you.</p>
129	Parent	<p>I am writing to you to voice my concerns regarding the planned closure to Cowes Primary and its impact on Gurnard Primary students, families and the wider community. I have [REDACTED] who is currently in year [REDACTED] at Gurnard and my [REDACTED] we have applied to start [REDACTED] in September.</p> <p>I understand the current protection granted to Academy schools for Northwood and Lanesend, but I would question how the one of the best performing schools, with good ofsted ratings and above average SAT results is being selected to close? Lanesend is listed as still requiring improvement in education, leaderships, management and early years provision. The stats shows that both Northwood and Lanesend underperform in several areas for Maths, Phonics, Reading and English.</p> <p>My key question is what provision is being put in place to manage how Gurnard would absorb potentially 100 + students into a school that is already at full capacity? I understand the discussions regarding temporary classrooms on the site. This has an immediate impact on removing space for play and sports while still increasing student numbers. I have also read of a proposed plan to host the older years (5&6) at the Cowes site as part of a staggered merge. This would immediately impact children who will be heading into [REDACTED] final and more academically, and I would also suggest emotionally challenging period before moving to high school. How would you manage keeping a whole school community with assemblies and events when you have different schools years at different locations, let alone how you manage the teachers to move between sites.</p>

	<p>Besides the teaching impact, how would the school manage over 100 more students for lunch, sports, extracurricular activities? At present you need to request a spot at a school club for extracurricular activities, in order to ensure all students have the opportunity places are rotated across terms, so it is often possible to not have a club for your child every other term, surely the influx of an additional 100 students would have a negative impact on this for all students. [REDACTED] year is at full capacity, the teacher and TA have to manage 30 children, which is a huge challenge let alone adding an additional 5- 10 children per year. I fail to see how this can be viewed as having a positive impact for any of the students or staff being asked to manage this.</p> <p>The other impact would be to the community itself, with the school at full capacity alongside a pre school at full capacity the site is often chaotic in the mornings, parking is always a huge challenge and Baring road can be dangerous for small children during this period. There have been a number of traffic incidents on Baring road including two children hit by cars I the last 5 years, which in itself is two too many. The cycle lane is essentially redundant during drop off and pick up period. With parking on one side of the road the only option is for the oncoming traffic to drive across the cycle lane. I cannot see how adding 100 more families for drop off and pickup during this period would be a positive experience for those attending the school or the people who live in the area.</p> <p>My overriding concern is a lack of planning, and communicating to everyone what happens in the event this goes ahead. The ultimate result from this closure will be to negatively impact the education needs, as well as the mental and emotional wellbeing for the students in the community and it is incredibly sad to see this happening.</p> <p>If due to economic pressures alongside a falling birth rate there is no option but to close Cowes Primary, can I please implore there is a more measured approach which would see the closure run over a staggered period enabling a smoother transition for the families and communities of both schools?</p> <p>Response from Naomi Carter:</p> <p>Your email will be considered as part of the Statutory Consultation process.</p> <p>However, I wish to clarify a point you raise regarding the proposed new Children Wellbeing and Schools Bill. Whilst it states that academies will have a duty to work with Local Authorities' and 'so far as is reasonable' on admissions arrangements and regarding increasing/reducing Published Admission Numbers (PANs). There is no mention of Local Authorities having authority to direct academies in regards to school closures. I have checked this with the DFE and they confirmed that: "in relation to academy closures, academies are maintained through a contractual arrangement. The</p>
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		<p>parties to the funding agreement are the Secretary of State and the relevant academy trust and no third-party rights are given to the local authority under the funding agreement. Any decision relating to termination of the funding agreement sits with the Secretary of State.”</p> <p>I realise this is disappointing, but I hope this clarifies the situation.</p>
130	Parent	<p>Refers to #129</p> <p>I also wanted to add the table that shows the stats on the performance of Cowes, vs Gurnard, Northwood and Lanesend as well as draw your attention to the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill is being introduced in Parliament which is expected to take effect in 2025 - this is the law change that would give local authorities the power to include academies in place planning.</p> <p>Delaying the closure of Cowes Primary by just a year could be enough to give us a fair process in Cowes and Gurnard. The council have previously rejected this proposal on the grounds that there was no clear timescale for the legislation and it could take years but this is now not currently the case.</p> <p>Response from Naomi Carter:</p> <p>Your email will be considered as part of the Statutory Consultation process.</p> <p>However, I wish to clarify a point you raise regarding the proposed new Children Wellbeing and Schools Bill. Whilst it states that academies will have a duty to work with Local Authorities’ and ‘so far as is reasonable’ on admissions arrangements and regarding increasing/reducing Published Admission Numbers (PANs). There is no mention of Local Authorities having authority to direct academies in regards to school closures. I have checked this with the DFE and they confirmed that: “in relation to academy closures, academies are maintained through a contractual arrangement. The parties to the funding agreement are the Secretary of State and the relevant academy trust and no third-party rights are given to the local authority under the funding agreement. Any decision relating to termination of the funding agreement sits with the Secretary of State.”</p> <p>I realise this is disappointing, but I hope this clarifies the situation.</p>
135	Parent	<p>I don't want Cowes Primary to close. If the decision is made to close, I wouldn't want the children to be split between Cowes and Gurnard sites. My first preference would be for them to stay on the Cowes site with as many Cowes staff as possible. If this is not possible, I would like them all to be relocated to Gurnard. However I do have concerns about temporary accommodation at Gurnard as I wouldn't want Cowes children to receive a poorer quality education</p>

		<p>setting than the other children at Gurnard.</p> <p>I am very concerned about the disruption already caused in [REDACTED] class with [REDACTED] new teacher leaving after 1 term due to the uncertainty.</p> <p>Please add my comments to be considered as part of the consultation.</p> <p>Response from Jade Kennett:</p> <p>Thank you for your email.</p> <p>We understand this is a particularly unsettling time for parents and children and thank you for sharing your views.</p> <p>The proposal to consider retaining some of the children on the Cowes Primary School site was a suggestion brought forward at the consultation event held at the school, and through some of the feedback we received. Therefore, we felt it was appropriate to explore this further during this consultation.</p> <p>Should Cabinet take the decision to close Cowes Primary School the Local Authority would oversee the transition to Gurnard Primary School, or another school if parents opt for an alternative. This would include a range of support measures but as part of this we would be ensuring that children and families are carefully integrated into the new school community. We would not expect the children to feel isolated or kept as a separate cohort of children.</p> <p>Your comments and views are recorded, and I will ensure this forms part of the decision-making process.</p>
136	Parent	<p>Dear Strategic team,</p> <p>I am emailing you as a part of the current consultation phase regarding the closure of Cowes Primary school.</p> <p>I have [REDACTED] children at the school who will be going into year [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] - two year groups very vulnerable to the upcoming changes. My children are upset that they will lose their school and need more reassurance about this situation than I can currently give them.</p> <p>There seems to be an idea gaining traction that if the school shuts and the pupils are transferred to Gurnard Primary, the former Cowes school site would be kept open to house the former Cowes pupils.</p> <p>This idea is very concerning for me when I consider it from the point of view of the pupils themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will not provide them with any continuity as the teachers they know will have gone, they will be in different uniform and some of the children in their school that can be placed in the other site won't be there. • They may well feel like the poor relations compared to the rest of

		<p>the Gurnard school population, with ever decreasing numbers of pupils around them as pupil numbers on the site continue to fall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the idea of using the Cowes Site for exsising pupils is chosen because it will save costs and time, this indicates to me that the welfare of the pupils left at the school is not being treated with enough seriousness. <p>You would have a set of children here who, through no fault of their own, are effectively being sold down the river with some kind of hybrid school that could be confusing and demeaning for them. This current uncertainty of where exactly our children will be schooled in September is unnecessary, stressful and upsetting. These past couple of years has been a difficult time for the school and a clearer plan and support is needed. Please do more to support our school staff and pupils through this difficult time. Please don't let anyone treat our children left at the school like some kind of problem to deal with.</p> <p>We do not want the school to shut. If it does, my recommendation is that a clear plan of transition is presented to Cowes community straight away. And that all Cowes children who opt for Gurnard, and as many of the Cowes Primary school staff as possible, are relocated to the Gurnard site in September.</p> <p>Please ensure that the children are welcomed and integrated into Gurnard Primary with open arms, not left apart from the rest of the existing school population.</p> <p>It may not be the cheapest or easiest option but it best protects the welfare of the children of Cowes Primary and, if their school is to close, and they deserve nothing less.</p> <p>Response from Jade Kennett:</p> <p>Thank you for your email.</p> <p>We understand this is a particularly unsettling time for parents and children and thank you for sharing your views.</p> <p>The proposal to consider retaining some of the children on the Cowes Primary School site was a suggestion brought forward at the consultation event held at the school, and through some of the feedback we received. Therefore, we felt it was appropriate to explore this further during this consultation.</p> <p>Your comments and views are recorded, and I will ensure this forms part of the decision-making process.</p>
138	Parent	<p>I am a parent of a grade 1 pupil in Cowes</p> <p>Concerning the closure of the school. I would prefer a gradual closure of the school until space is gotten in Gurnard, because apparently, there will be too much pressure on the facilities in Gurnard for all the pupils in Cowes to join them.</p>
173	Parent	<p>Dear Sir, I am responding to the request for consultation during the school place planning process.</p>

		<p>I am a parent of [REDACTED] children at Cowes Primary currently in Years [REDACTED] & [REDACTED].</p> <p>We appreciate from your figures that difficult decisions need to be made.</p> <p>Obviously we would prefer Cowes Primary to remain open in it's current format as [REDACTED] our children are thriving there.</p> <p>If the school has to close then in my opinion it is vital that as many children as possible as well as their teachers are transferred to the Gurnard site.</p> <p>There is a real danger that children being taught at Cowes under the Gurnard umbrella would become isolated and detached from the other children at Gurnard. This will lead to conflict and ill feeling on both sides. It will need a great deal of time, money and effort to ensure this isn't the case.</p> <p>Keeping all children together although I have no information from the process on how the Gurnard site will look / cope with the influx of 100+ more children, is my preferable option. This will need resource, money and effort to ensure the transfer is successful. Continuity is vital to ensure the children's education and wellbeing do not suffer.</p> <p>Please do not take these decisions lightly and mess up our children's future.</p>
176	Parent	<p>I am [REDACTED] moved to Isle of wight on [REDACTED]. Working in [REDACTED]. We rented the house near to school as I work 9-5 and my [REDACTED] don't drive and stay at home pick and drop my kids.</p> <p>If you close the cowes school it will cause lot of financial and mental burden on me my family and kids. [REDACTED] love the school, teachers and colleagues. Changing school will cause de-settlement and we would face difficulty.</p> <p>Even if you give us a place in Gurnard School it will be very long distance to go from [REDACTED] road to gurnard school by walk. It would be better not to close the cowes school as many families are living near to cowes high street they need to mobilise them as well. It will cause further reduction in business in west cowes and people will ultimately move to mainland.</p> <p>Also I am thinking, if we lost the Cowes school, i might look for the job in mainland as there is plenty of health care jobs. I came to IOW because it is serene, peaceful and less crowded.</p> <p>Definitely closing school will also affect the local cowes market as well. As many families live nearby because of school.</p> <p>Council need to consider all aspects.</p>
185	Parent	<p>Firstly the proposed closure of such a brilliant school is a huge mistake .</p> <p>I don't feel as parents we have been treated very fairly at all . There seems to be such vague plans as to how our children are going to be integrated into Gurnard , it's very unsettling for us all .</p> <p>My [REDACTED] is in year [REDACTED] , and the way I would like to see this happen is to be phased over at least another year . This would allow Gurnard to build appropriate buildings for our children to go in . I would like</p>

		<p>the children to have plenty of transition days to get used to the idea of moving . There will not be time for this if the school closes in July . 5 months is not long enough to sort out this mess the council have created ! This extra time would also help all the staff who are being treated appallingly by the council .</p> <p>The schools that are exceeding and doing well with amazing children and teachers should be getting praise and being rewarded , not getting closed !</p> <p>No one has any trust in the councillors making these massive decisions , I really hope you don't end up messing up our children's education with what you're doing.</p> <p>I also really hope you take the time to read all of our responses and take on board our ideas about how to go about it all .</p>
194	Parent	<p>Even though my greatest wish is for Cowes Primary to remain open and to build upon It's excellent portfolio of results, diverse learning opportunities and fostering a true sense of engagement within and for the local community I feel that the continued place planning juggernaut (with all Its inequalities and insensitivity) has pretty much destroyed any future for the school and the amazing staff who work there.</p> <p>I fear that any measures considering using the Cowes Primary site as a satellite for Gurnard Primary overspill will be detrimental and lead to a damaging two tier education and environment for any pupils, regardless of year group, who are schooled there in ever decreasing numbers. I cannot believe that parents of current Gurnard pupils would be willing to accept their children moving there as part of a restructuring and isolating Cowes Primary pupils on their own there would create a 'Them and Us' segregation which I'm sure would be strongly challenged.</p> <p>All children need to be housed at the Gurnard Primary School site (which you promised was viable at the consultation meeting between parents and council) and fully integrated so every child, regardless of which original site they came from, receives the same education, opportunities, wraparound care etc.</p> <p>If the proposal is voted through then there also needs to be some meetings held where parents, Council and the Gurnard Primary school hierarchy are all present to discuss the finer points and methods for implementing a safe transition and to allay any fears of parents.</p> <p>Finally, I feel the Council need to make an apology to the many children who are going to be affected, not only by the closure of their school which they regard so affectionately as a safe and inspiring community of friends, but as collateral damage in this flawed process. You keep mentioning how it's all about making sure the children get a better education in the future, but you are sacrificing the wellbeing of so many children currently at primary school to reach this promised land.</p>
207	Parent	<p>My wife and I have [REDACTED] in Year [REDACTED] at Cowes Primary.</p> <p>Firstly we could not be happier about the education and care [REDACTED]</p>

		<p>has received in the School so far. The staff have been exemplary and we cannot ignore the fact that their continued employment has been a subject of uncertainty and speculation for well over 1 year at this time. This must be very difficult for them, but they have never let it affect their professionalism and dedication at all. Most of them have their own children to consider, some with children at Cowes Primary, and others elsewhere. Losing a teaching job could mean uprooting their own children, moving location, and disrupting their education, even if they are at other Island Schools. So firstly I'd like to say to those considering the closure of Cowes Primary, think about the teaching staff and the impact of losing those jobs. If the teachers leave the island or leave the profession, they won't be easily replaced in the future - we know that the Island has a real problem attracting and retaining skilled professionals in every sector.</p> <p>We are of course very concerned about disruption to our child's educational and social development which could occur if the school is closed. Our child has been with [REDACTED] year group for almost [REDACTED] years at Cowes and has known many of [REDACTED] cohort for longer than that, via the neighbouring Pre-School and Nursery. All in all [REDACTED] been at Nursery / Pre-School and Primary for most of [REDACTED] life, since [REDACTED] was 2 years old ([REDACTED] now [REDACTED] will be [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]).</p> <p>Our biggest concern is the possible separation of our child from [REDACTED] cohort. In the unfortunate event that the site at Cowes Primary closes, we have the strongest preference that our child remains with [REDACTED] classmates, even if they end up in a new site.</p> <p>We noted with interest the possibility of giving all children the option of place at Gurnard Primary. We know from our own discussions with Gurnard (and Lanes End and Northwood) that the current year group 2 is completely full in all other schools. Gurnard and Lanes End have two full forms of 30 and Northwood one. There are currently ~20 children in Year 2 at Cowes. So moving 20 children to Gurnard doesn't seem to solve any logistical issues or close any funding gap. I don't know how the other year groups stand, but I would not be surprised to find a similar situation for them also.</p> <p>Given that moving the current Year 2 to Gurnard doesn't seem to improve funding at all, we don't see any gain there, at least in the short term. And all of these children currently in Year 2 will be in Primary School for another 4 years after summer 2025. We have of course visited Gurnard Primary and know many Parents and their Children who currently attend. We know that it's a very well run school, and also that the site is full. The idea apparently is that 'temporary accommodation' would be put in the playing fields. Being children of the 80s, we are sadly quite familiar with being educated in portacabin style 'temporary accommodation', with poor heating and sound insulation. We don't find that prospect at all appealing,</p>
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		<p>and definitely a detriment and a downgrade from the excellent, modern accommodation provided at Cowes Primary.</p> <p>Another option mentioned was keeping the children at the Cowes Primary site (presumably with the same teaching staff) but under the Leadership Team of Gurnard Primary. One could of course advance the argument that consolidation in the leadership team would save money, but that presupposes that there is considerable idle time enjoyed by the LT at Gurnard, and that they would be able to manage another site remotely, without any impact on the children and teaching staff at Gurnard Primary. You'd have to ask the Gurnard LT but I'm quite sure they are fully busy managing their own school, as you would rightly expect. And you'd have to make the argument that, even if you assume there is sufficient spare management capacity, that they would provide the same high level of leadership that the children and staff currently enjoy under Mrs Praetig and her staff, as what we in Boy Scouts called a 'spare time activity'. That seems quite doubtful to us, frankly.</p> <p>Finally we do recognise that there are funding challenges, and don't dispute that. We are primarily concerned, as you would expect, with the educational and social well-being of our child, but also consider the wider situation of the other children, parents, staff and Leadership Team.</p> <p>To sum up, we do not agree with the closure of Cowes Primary and object in the strongest possible terms.</p> <p>We wish you all well and appreciate all the efforts you have made and are making and will make in the months to come. We hope that somehow a solution can be found to fund and retain the status quo, for the sake of all involved.</p> <p>Whatever the outcome, we will of course continue to give our full support and work with the teachers and staff responsible for the in-school education of our child.</p>
214	Parent	<p>Please see below my point of views to be considered in the consultation regarding the proposed closure of Cowes Primary School (CPS). Thank you.</p> <p>I understand that there is a need for an islandwide restructuring of schools and education to help improve standards. However, this process is to be fair, and include all schools on the island; including academies.</p> <p>In the case of CPS, it is unfair to close a OFSTED rated 'good' school and allow under achieving schools in the local area remain open as they are exempt from the process. It is illogical to do this and this short-sighted step will have long term consequences. It is extremely disappointing that teachers in the school, who have</p>

		<p>years of experience and worked hard towards attaining the requirements to make CPS what it is today, are being made redundant. Their hard work is not being recognised and it is instead futile in an unfair process.</p> <p>It has become apparent that the original plan, should CPS close, all the remaining children on the school register transferring to Gurnard Primary School (GPS) may not happen. There are many hypothetical points being raised and no clear answer. One option is to keep all the children at CPS on the current site and another is to split the children so some go to GPS. Are GPS parents on-board with the idea of sending their children to CPS, or will it just be CPS children at CPS? Not to mention, where the CPS children will be accommodated at GPS. Is it portacabins or classrooms? It is plausible to have the CPS site open and use the facilities it offers, rather than place the children in portacabins. Does this mean that the current staff at CPS will retain their job?</p> <p>Can GPS accommodate the influx of pupils from CPS? How much do parents of GPS know of what will happen to their school? Have they influenced the deviation to the proposed plan, hence different options being considered? There are so many more questions to ask and answer, that we should not rush this. Parents from both schools and the council must have a discussion of the proposal. The potential closure of CPS impacts GPS too.</p> <p>I am sure this uncertainty is creating anxiety amongst families on how to best plan their next steps. As a parent, should the year groups be split between CPS and GPS be decided, it will have an impact on us as a family. I have a child in Year [REDACTED] and Year [REDACTED]. I have no idea where the cut-off year is for this. If it is from Year 4, then my youngest will be going to GPS and eldest will be at CPS. The prospect of siblings being separated is unsettling for them and not what they, (nor us as parents) wish to happen. It is unfair to do this and will impact the mental health of children; both short and long term. It will make drop off and pick ups stressful splitting between the two schools should this option become reality. As a working professional, I have made a 'draft' copy of changes to my work rota, factoring in my children potentially going to GPS. I work [REDACTED] on a 24/7 rota including night shifts. I will have to give up one of my 'off' days, in my 8 week rotational rota and make it a 12 hour shift, to allow me to be able to finish early at 2.30pm on 4 days. Not to mention, I will become less flexible and available to help out at work at short notice, which can impact the service the [REDACTED] provides. It is disappointing that I have to lose an 'off' day and I am less flexible to an already stretched [REDACTED] [REDACTED]</p> <p>This whole process is unfair. To improve island education, in the case of Cowes Primary, the council is closing a 'good' school and allowing failing schools in the local area to remain open. I</p>
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		<p>understand for legal reasons the council cannot consider academies, however the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill is expected to take effect this year. This should allow local authorities the power to include academies in place planning. Thus, allowing this process to become fair, and ultimately, improving the standard of education across the whole island which everyone is aiming for.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to read my email and considering my points raised.</p>
221	Parent	<p>Regarding Cowes Primary school. I was disappointed not to receive an adequate response to my previous concerns. One concern is that it would cause a socio economic divide that our society has been struggling to fight against. There is no doubt that it would result in the more affluent families having better access to quality schooling and the less affluent likely to have choice only of the schools with notably poorer educational standards . The fact that the Children's Wellbeing Bill is well underway and would change the result of the consultation in this area needs to be seriously considered. Currently it is proposed that a good and popular school is shut. There are already far too few "good" schools on the Island, we really can't afford to lose any more. I am thoroughly disappointed in the way our excellent teachers have been treated during this process. We should be treasuring and protecting them, not treating them as a disposable commodity. I am concerned at the lack of plan in place for the children of Cowes primary. Cowes is in a different situation to the rest of the Island in that there is not nearly enough space for children in other schools in the area. I understood that in this stage of the consultation, there would be a clear and detailed plan. My great concern is that these children will either be left on site on what is essentially a ghost school with no or minimal assemblies and after school clubs etc. The other possibility it seems is that they are crammed onto an already full site with again, not enough resources for all of them. Then there is the consideration of what will happen to the last few classes of children. Would they just be left, isolated on the CPS site? It really does appear that the best option would be to keep Cowes Primary open.</p>
224	Parent	<p>██████ has been very happy, well looked after and has received a consistently good education at Cowes Primary School. Behaviour amongst pupils is excellent and ██████ has benefitted from being in a small family orientated community where all the teachers know the children and the pupils mix extremely well across the school year groups. We chose the school exactly for these reasons, we wanted a stable primary education for ██████ to create a happy foundation to build ██████ subsequent education on. Cowes has provided a holistic approach to the educational experience, balancing the importance of social, practical and academic skills to nurture well rounded</p>

		<p>individuals. As our child has additional [REDACTED] needs we also felt that the school provided a caring, inclusive environment where [REDACTED] would be supported in learning to take responsibility for [REDACTED]. We have been impressed that the school has also taken the time to instruct [REDACTED] peers on how best to support [REDACTED] too which has led to a supportive and understanding peer group around [REDACTED].</p> <p>Sadly, the school population has been detrimentally affected by the insensitive handling of the place planning matter by the Local Authority. I do not see a way back now without the closure of another local school and combining the two populations on the Cowes site. (To me, the most practical solution to the problem in the first place). Unfortunately the lack of foresight leaves us in the farcical situation of closing a well performing school under the guise of betterment of education. I recognise that the school is now in financial deficit and in the current situation it would seem impossible to turn it around. The LA has ensured that Cowes is no longer a viable option for future families. The school has effectively been tarred and while I'm not privy to information on reception applications for September 25, I'd be very surprised if you received more than a couple of applications for Cowes. I strongly suspect these would have come from parents who already have children in attendance at Cowes.</p> <p>My feeling is that you made your mind up from the off which school was to go in the Cowes West area, you have been blinkered to the arguments against closure and obstinate in holding fast to the party line on closure. You have taken us so far down this road now that I see no way of turning back despite wanting to. We know that these closures are as much about cost savings as safeguarding our children's educational future. We don't need to hear the same rhetoric trotted out repeatedly to understand that you have little care for our children who are caught up in this circus. I have lost count of the empty promises and hollow words issued by the local authority. Our children are not pawns in your game, they deserve better than this. If closure has to happen and I think unfortunately you have taken us so far down the road there is no other option, then the children must be moved as quickly as possible to their new home, not retained at the Cowes site under Gurnard management to feel segregated and a burden.</p> <p>The Local Authority must take responsibility and ownership for their actions,.They have decimated a happy, vibrant, well achieving school community at Cowes. They must therefore ensure that if closure is the final decision, our children receive the education they deserve. Jobs should be ring-fenced at Gurnard for the staff being made redundant, and additional classes added to Gurnard school. Children should be integrated fairly in an equal manner so that new teachers and transferred children are not just shoved together in a portacabin somewhere, segregated from the original school</p>
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	<p>population, marked out as different. Class sizes should reflect fair opportunity to learn and not exceed the 30 PAN limit set.</p> <p>We are advocating for our children, that they deserve the best education NOW not in 5-10 years time. The mission statement of the place planning strategy has been to provide better education Island wide for all children. However our children will not see the benefit of these changes, they are caught in the upheaval of transition and we, as parents will hold you to account. Our children are not a 'bulge' until things get better, they are not excess numbers who don't fit anywhere. They are individuals who have aspirations and ambitions.</p> <p>Prolonged decision making at this stage is disastrous. You cannot leave families and employees with an axe hanging over them and not expect repercussions. far reaching consequences on their wellbeing and education. A staged closure would be an appalling result for Cowes children, it may suit those in current year 5 and solve the Council's problem of placating angry parents but the majority of the children it will be hugely detrimental. Drawing out the agony, staff and resources will continue to ebb away and children will inevitably feel like they are unwanted in a closing school while the local authority scrabble around trying to shoehorn them into whatever space they can.</p> <p>Recent suggestions that the Cowes site could be managed by Gurnard and some or all of the children retained there seems to me ridiculous. This would presumably result in the redundancy of all current staff at Cowes, as Gurnard will be in charge of staffing and closure of the kitchen. No younger children will be enrolled at the Cowes site so the children will attend in ever decreasing numbers and witness the gradual stripping of the school to nothing around them and made to feel like pariahs.</p> <p>A school is not just bricks and mortar but individuals that make the whole. From the tiny new reception children to the ladies in the kitchen each has a part to play and depends on each other. Take any of these elements away and it is no longer Cowes Primary just a holding pen until the numbers fit in the spreadsheet. I cannot see how this will benefit the children. I cannot see how they will have the same opportunity as those children at the Gurnard site, surely this will create a two tier education within the same school.</p> <p>No amount of good intentions will replace the vibrant school community you ripped apart in May 2023, our children are suffering now for the greater good. You cannot sacrifice their education for future improvements, you must be assured that their education will be better and at least no worse than that which Cowes Primary could provide prior to May 2023's announcement. We do not get this time back, they cannot sit their primary education again, these</p>
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		<p>are their formative educational years and you are causing enormous disruption. Disruption which could have been avoided. A proper consultation that involved all schools and did not name any specific sites would have made for a much fairer and transparent process.</p> <p>Upon reading the consultation information released by the Council there are a number of points I would like to raise, firstly I would like it noted that your figures in Table 3 , year 2 are incorrect, it reads that there are 22 surplus places in the 3 other schools in the Cowes West area, however 8 + 5 is 13 not 22. So there are 13 surplus places in year 2.</p> <p>I quote</p> <p>'The council does not underestimate the potential impact of this proposed change on the pupils at the school, whose circumstances may already make them vulnerable. This impact could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption to education • Emotional and psychological stress • Social impact • Logistical challenges for families' <p>I cannot believe that you still are not acknowledging that this process is impacting our children already. Not potentially, not could, but IS impacting.</p> <p>██████ has had 3 supply teachers since September as long serving staff have left prior to being made redundant and vacancies cannot be permanently filled under the spectre of closure. My child has lost friends as parents decide to move their children away from the threat. My child worries and asks questions about what will happen and what █████ new school will be like. I do not know whether █████ will have the same opportunities █████ had prior to May '23, whether █████ will be able to continue █████ lessons, enjoy the same extra-curricular activities at school. I do not know how we will financially manage to get █████ to and from school and balance our work commitments. Failure to recognise that the impact is already being felt amongst our community shows massive ignorance and insensitivity towards all those affected, pupils, staff and their families.</p> <p>You state,</p> <p>'There is a breakfast club run at the School from 8am each morning and after-school activities for pupils.'</p> <p>Basic facts are wrong in your report, if you cannot get basic facts right this gives me serious mis-givings about how future closures will be handled. Breakfast club at Cowes in fact, runs from 7.45am each morning and after school club until 5pm. In addition to this provision,</p>
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		<p>a range of after-school activities are provided for pupils. You omitted to mention that the school provides a holiday club (usually two days a week, open 8-5pm) during the school holidays providing vital care for pupils whose parents work. Many privately run holiday activities only run school hours (9-3 or 10-3) so as a working parent juggling these limited hours is very difficult. Having a trusted provision on site is a huge help and something we depend upon.</p> <p>'With Gurnard Primary School being only 1.12 miles from Cowes Primary School it is anticipated that pupils will walk or use other sustainable modes of travel to alternative schools in the local area and therefore any impact on road traffic would be minimal. The council would work with schools who receive children from Cowes Primary School to develop their school travel plans to seek to mitigate against increased car use.'</p> <p>It is just not feasible to walk or use other sustainable modes of transport and get to work on time. To make the assumption that most will not drive is, I feel, a huge oversight. Gurnard primary already suffers from major traffic problems and to not have a robust plan in place for how you will deal with increased traffic to the site is at best remiss, at worst arrogant.</p> <p>We will have no choice but to drive to Gurnard unless something like a walking train or bike train is introduced. Could this be a viable option? Especially with the advent of new cycle lanes through Cowes? A bike train that left central Cowes and took children along the seafront to Gurnard would be a safe and manageable way of getting a large amount of children to and from school everyday. I would like to know what other plans the council has to mitigate against increased car use.</p> <p>There is a massive contradiction in the literature you released, you begin with</p> <p>'All children will be offered a school place at Gurnard Primary School, within the locality of Cowes West. There would be no denial of the same level of education and schooling.'</p> <p>Yet later in the same document,</p> <p>'However, current numbers of children on roll in the upper year groups may require the LA to work with other schools in the planning area or adjacent planning areas (Newport and East Cowes) to accommodate the bulge year groups should parents preference be to attend an alternative school closer to their home address.'</p> <p>I understand that you are making allowances for parent preference with this statement which is to be commended, however how are we</p>
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		<p>as parents supposed to make an informed decision about where we would like our children to attend without having any idea of what this transition will look like or how it will be managed? It now seems you are considering keeping Cowes Primary site open to manage the 'bulge' presumably to appease Gurnard parents who have made letters of complaint that their children's education will be unfairly affected.</p> <p>You rightly identify that there are larger numbers in the upper 3 year groups which cannot be easily re-homed in other local schools without significant changes being made.</p> <p>Current year 5 at Cowes has 28 pupils, Current year 5 at Gurnard has 63, there are no surplus spaces at the other two schools. That would make September 2025 Year 6 at Gurnard 91 pupils.</p> <p>Current year 4 at Cowes has 15 pupils, current year 4 at Gurnard has 60 pupils, there are 4 surplus places at Northwood, so potentially 71-75 pupils in September.</p> <p>Current year 3 at Cowes has 16 pupils, Gurnard 62, 1 surplus place at Lanesend, in total 74-75 pupils in September .</p> <p>And it should be noted, current year 2 has 21, 59 at Gurnard and surplus of 13 in total,</p> <p>It will be completely unacceptable to accommodate these children in two form entry. Class sizes will be upwards of 37 pupils to 45 pupils. This is absolutely unacceptable. You must provide a three form entry for these children. Neither parents of children from Cowes nor from Gurnard will not stand for it. These children must be afforded the best opportunities to equal education before this debacle began.</p> <p>A third class in each of these years must be created and all pupils from Gurnard and Cowes mixed amongst the three classes to ensure no preferential bias for teachers or resources is made while still maintaining friendship groups wherever possible. This would ensure that more jobs are provided albeit on a temporary basis while the 'bulge' passes through the system. These jobs should be ring fenced for those teachers and support staff primarily affected by the redundancies in the interest of fairness and retainment of talent.</p> <p>I resent our children being referred to as a bulge year group. They are not excess numbers to be shoehorned in wherever you can, they are individuals who have every right to be respected. We made decisions about our child's education based on class sizes, having been educated in large classes ourselves with inadequate resources. We know how difficult it is to have your voice heard in these classes, how teachers can feel overstretched, pupils</p>
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	<p>overlooked, behavioural standards drop as a result. We made decisions about where to send our child to school based on school size and teacher reputation. Individual teachers contribute so much to how a school functions, their hard work and generous nature make a school a community, which is what we have at Cowes Primary. Keeping children at the Cowes site may seem like an easy solution to keep unhappy parents at Gurnard appeased. It may placate some parents of the overly affected current year 5's who began their reception year during the pandemic but I do not see it as a sensible solution. A school is not solely a location or bricks and mortar, it is a whole package. Every individual contributes to making a school community. Keeping children at the Cowes site doesn't achieve anything if you take away their teachers and prevent any new pupils joining.</p> <p>You state,</p> <p>'the transition would certainly separate pupils from their established relationships with teachers and staff within the school, many of whom have a crucial impact at formative stages of learning and development.'</p> <p>By your own admittance this move will have huge consequences for the children, you are effectively divorcing them from the adults that they have built trusted relationships with during their school career at an especially vital part of their lives. How can you mitigate this effect? Finding a way of ensuring some of those staff go with them so there is some degree of continuity at least in the transitional stages. Children will benefit from having familiar and trusted faces around to ease the transition process. Putting children through this upheaval isn't what anyone wants but the damage has been done and you must ensure that you do not shy away from the difficult job of making a successful transition now. These children do not get this time back, they will not get to re-sit their primary education again so if you must make these changes, you must be absolutely assured that the transition is as smooth as possible. And that their education will not suffer or be affected in any way, during or after this transition.</p> <p>The Local Authority claims it will broach the subject directly with the children,</p> <p>'Care will be taken to engage fully with affected individuals so they understand fully the meaning and potential consequence of any decision taken. This is especially important for pupils of schools, as the anxiety and stress in which potential closures cause are well evidenced at this stage. Communication methods and language used will be appropriate to these respective age categories.'</p> <p>I see no efforts whatsoever to communicate this in age appropriate</p>
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		<p>ways to the children. Are you saying you're going to send someone in with sock puppets to let the children know when you've made a decision? I would like to know who will be carrying out this communication? Will the school staff be expected to do this? How will this happen? Will parents be consulted before this happens?</p> <p>In the prior consultation you said children would have access to the 'My Happy Mind' programme to support their wellbeing through the process. This seems to be purely a box ticking exercise, as access is only available if the school decides to deliver it themselves. Since the delivery is 1 hour over 20 weeks that's a significant investment in time that already overworked, stressed staff will have to commit to, learning a new programme and finding the time to deliver it. And while I think it would be of great benefit to the children, it is an extraordinarily big ask for staff under threat of redundancy to find the motivation to do this and if indeed it is appropriate for them to, given the circumstances. If the council genuinely have the children's best interests at heart, would it not be better to ask a third party such as MHST to deliver it and help our children become resilient and adaptable for all inevitable future upheavals?</p> <p>Spinning of statistics to suit your narrative,</p> <p>'Gurnard Primary do have comparable number of English as an additional language (i.e. non-native) speaker (22 at Gurnard Primary, 32 at Cowes Primary)'.</p> <p>I don't think these numbers are comparable. 22 pupils with EAL at Gurnard works out as approximately 5% of pupils while 32 at Cowes primary is 25% pupils. So Cowes with significantly less resources manages to successfully support 25 % EAL pupils, a quarter of the school population. Therefore comparable numbers at Gurnard would be equivalent to just over 100 pupils having English as an additional language.</p> <p>I am seriously concerned about the management of this closure, the Council seem to have little idea about the how the transition will work. Something which will happens in 7 months time. I am appalled that you would consider running two sites for the same school unless these sites were fairly mixed, i.e all key stage 1 moved to Cowes while all key stage two move to Gurnard. I doubt whether a suggestion like this would be accepted by parents of children already in attendance at Gurnard and understandably so. In summary I feel that if you are going to go ahead with the closure of Cowes Primary that a proper, well planned transition is enacted. Children should be moved as a whole to the Gurnard site, classes must be no larger than 30 pupils, pupils must be properly mixed and integrated with the current Gurnard population and afforded the same access to extra-curricular activities they enjoyed at Cowes, new vacancies should be ring fenced for staff at risk of redundancy.</p>
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		<p>This process should happen as soon as practically possible to prevent the further erosion of their educational provision while in limbo.</p> <p>I ask you to consider again, while you repeatedly say you are doing this for the good of all island children and the future of their education, can you be assured that you are taking the right course of action for the children at the centre of this change? And if this course of action cannot be changed, to keep these children in your minds as you move forward, at every stage ask yourselves, are we best serving the children caught up in this transition to the best of our ability? Are we protecting their education? Are we doing what is best for their wellbeing? Will they have the same opportunities as they had prior to these decisions? You must take ownership of this matter and guarantee that they have central to your consideration.</p> <p>I repeat the Cowes Primary values, Right to Learn, Right to be Safe and Right to be Respected.</p>
227	Parent	<p>I am writing to share my views on place planning with regards to Cowes Primary School.</p> <p>There is a lot of speculation regarding the options may be implemented should Cowes school close. Several different suggestions have been put forward about retaining children at the Cowes site or moving them to Gurnard. My preference would always be to remain at Cowes site for many reasons: It is the location we chose as it fits in our daily routine with work. Changing location would have a direct impact on my ability to continue my job.</p> <p>There is no capacity for increased traffic around Gurnard school, and is already dangerous for children and parents trying to park and cross the roads at drop off / collection time.</p> <p>All children must be treated equally. Disrupting their schooling with changes to location, staffing and teaching methods; will place unnecessary and undeserved stress on everyone involved.</p> <p>-We specifically chose Cowes primary due to it's central and convenient location. It is a 10 minute walk for us, meaning we have time to get to work after drop off. This is a healthy start/finish to the day, and allows us to engage with other school goers on the way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>-Holiday club. This is a separate issue to wrap around care as wrap around care is during term dates. Cowes primary is now the ONLY school in the area to offer holiday club. Gurnard, Lanesend and Northwood do not provide this service. Even as a two parent family, we do not get sufficient annual leave to cover all the school holidays, and would certainly not be able to holiday together as a family. An NHS colleague recently had to decline promotion at work</p>

		<p>as their school had stopped this service.</p> <p>-Links to Cowes enterprise. Another reason we chose Cowes primary. The older years at Cowes primary attend activities and use facilities at Cowes enterprise. Since this started, there has been a noticeable difference within year 7 pupils between those who are already familiar with the setting and those who are not. The transition is known to be much easier for all concerned, and benefits the overall wellbeing essential to the local community, within and outside the school environment. This generation of children have already been impacted severely by the pandemic. Further disruption will cause further impact mentally.</p> <p>-Links to nursery and preschool. The onsite preschool meant a smooth transition into primary for [REDACTED]. The staff are superb and there is a waiting list for places due to demand.</p> <p>-There needs to be some flexibility for future uncertainties. My understanding is there was a Covid baby boom. More houses are being built. Cowes primary has the space for flexibility. This recent national news article makes this point. We don't know how many people are having babies - and that's a headache for schools - BBC News</p> <p>-Change in government, means change in policies. The proposal to tax private school fees, is likely to result in increased demand for state school places. Cowes has both the building and outside space to accommodate increased demand...If there is ever any increase of regulation to home schooling provision. Many parents who currently home school would potentially return their children to state schools.</p> <p>-Parents who commute. My [REDACTED] and several other parents we know commute to the mainland, so we need to have a school close enough to the red jet to enable this. Ourselves and several other parents we know, particularly need Cowes primary for this reason. Recruitment and retention of NHS staff is an ongoing issue for the island. Loss of Cowes primary would have a direct impact on provision of local health services available.</p> <p>-Diversity. Having visited Gurnard, Lanesend and Northwood. The diverse demographic of Cowes pupils seemed more reflective of the wider UK population.</p> <p>-Quality of results - recent statutory test results were above national average.</p> <p>I strongly urge you to consider all these factors and please keep our school and community.</p>
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234	Parent	<p>I would like to comment on the proposal to close Cowes Primary, specifically the plans regarding what will happen to the pupils should Cowes close.</p> <p>As a parent of ■ children currently at Cowes I am strongly in support of a phased closure where the current children remain on site with the current staff, attending 'Cowes Primary'. Speaking to my own children their priority is to remain with their friendship group, and ideally familiar teachers/ staff. If a phased closure is not viable due to low pupil numbers, then I support the move of all children to the Gurnard Primary site.</p> <p>We are not in support of joining Gurnard Primary but with either some or all students staying on the Cowes site. We do not feel this would be good for the children's wellbeing; closing their school but expecting them to return with new uniforms and teachers but back in their old classrooms is not fair. They need to integrate with their peers in their new school not be annexed away.</p> <p>Practically speaking breakfast club and after school club provision would have to be provided at both sites, as well as hot meals. How would whole school events like sports day/ Christmas functions/ assemblies work? If only certain year groups are kept on the Cowes site will things like start and finish times be staggered with Gurnard to account for sibling drop offs? How would the school ensure teaching consistency across the year groups if they are not on the same site. I know consistency between classes is really important/ valued in 2 form entry schools, how would this work over physically different sites? This would impact teaching staff as well as students.</p> <p>When making a decision please consider the children involved; those attending these affected schools *now*, and how to make any changes as easy for them as possible.</p>
82	Public	<p>Letter received via Royal Mail post</p> <p>(See Reference A below responses)</p> <p>https://iowc.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/SchoolPlacePlanningProject-StaffandConsultationmeetings/EZZavWU5D7JAvtvGIESYqPQBN1QSFZFVLvkrHg6DgJZcA?e=SukFkh</p>
133	Public	<p>The new proposal, not made public in the original consultation, is that Cowes Primary School should close and Gurnard Primary School will potentially use the Cowes site as there is not sufficient space at Gurnard Primary School.</p> <p>We have constantly been told by the senior staff managing Place Planning that children's education is the IWC's priority. This is untrue. Finances are the IWC's priority and driving force.</p> <p>Have the Place Planning committee, the Councillors and the Cabinet really thought about, addressed and planned for:</p>

		<p>The financial implications of keeping open the Cowes site for use by Gurnard.</p> <p>Which year groups the Cowes site will serve and how the Gurnard staff and parents feel about this – have they been consulted?</p> <p>How the site at Cowes would be staffed and the financial viability of this.</p> <p>How keeping the Cowes site open would affect redundancy and lack of TUPE arrangements for staff of Cowes Primary School already employed within roles that will be needed on the Cowes site.</p> <p>The advertisement and re-appointment of staff for the Cowes site, even though there are existing Cowes Primary School staff on site and in position.</p> <p>What ratio of staff/skill sets, legally have to be on the physical site and how would absence cover be managed across the sites.</p> <p>The change to Gurnard's staff contracts regarding working on/across both sites, the change in their roles and pay.</p> <p>Finally, if keeping the Cowes site open involves IWC investment, why are the IWC willing to invest in Gurnard Primary School on the Cowes site but not invest in Cowes Primary School on the Cowes site?</p> <p>It may be legal but it is morally reprehensible as it suggests that Cowes Primary School staff are disposable and of lesser quality. This is not the case. Cowes Primary School out-perform two other local schools, both academies, yet the IWC are choosing to keep the lesser performing academies open. And yes, that is the IWC choice; adequate research and clarification into the legislation regarding not being able to close Academies was not completed by the IWC at the beginning of this process. In April 2024 we were told, quite clearly and in person by a member of the Place Planning team, that ALL primary schools were on an equal playing field in terms of Place Planning. How did the IWC not have clarification and full knowledge of this situation and the legalities by April of 2024? This suggests that the whole Place Planning Process is a failure from the beginning, beset with misinformation and lack of knowledge and certainly not with the education and wellbeing of Cowes, Gurnard and Northwood children as a priority.</p>
168	Public	<p>Please find my email of objection to the plans of closure for Cowes Primary School.</p> <p>The attached was prepared for the first consultation and still carries valid concerns for this stage.</p>

		<p>The current proposal for the Cowes area falls outside of the scope of the initial consultation. A consultation on closing Cowes Primary predominantly drew interest from Cowes Primary families, with Gurnard families largely disengaged. It appears that an outcome for this area is that children from Gurnard may be unsettled and moved to the Cowes site as a rebranded split site Gurnard Primary. The impact of this change may actually be felt by more families than the Cowes closure itself. Surely this deviation from the original consultation proposal is too extreme and warrants a consultation involving all stakeholders.</p> <p>In the event that a closure goes ahead, I would also like to offer my preference for the nature of that closure. While forecast admissions are low, there are not sufficient surplus places in the coming year 5 and 6 provision to allow a school closure in the area without relying on what are currently hypothetical changes at the Gurnard site. DfE guidance clearly indicates that the availability of space in nearby schools is an important factor when considering a school closure. Time should be made to allow the changes at Gurnard to be implemented before parents have to choose their child's new school. Parental preference cannot be supported with hypothetical future places.</p> <p>If Cowes Primary is to close, it should happen with 1 or 2 years of notice, with the year R intake closing to prevent perpetuating the problem. The current year 4 and 5 groups could see out their primary education at Cowes Primary. After 2 years the remaining year groups could move to Gurnard without the need for temporary classes. This action should have been taken a year ago to prevent the huge surplus in year R. This would improve the notice given to staff and families.</p> <p>Alternatively, the current year's R to 3 could migrate to Gurnard Primary from Cowes and the current year's 4 and 5 could migrate to Cowes Primary from Gurnard to create a temporary split site for Gurnard. This takes full advantage of the existing available space, and groups children with their peers.</p> <p>Overall, these phased approaches allow for an improvement in the treatment of staff.</p> <p>Closing good schools goes against the objectives of place planning. Cowes Primary has been, demonstrably, a good school and an asset to the Islands education system. Its absence will not change the underperformance of neighbouring schools, but will negatively impact the education of the children involved. Schools and their staff that achieve what is asked of them should be rewarded and protected. Isn't place planning about ensuring a sustainable, high</p>
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		quality education provision? There is little point to a sustainable low quality service.
171	Public	<p>Refers to #168</p> <p>I'd like the following added to my contribution to the current consultation.</p> <p>Please see below a question and response from the recent cabinet meeting on school place planning where members voted in support of the recommendation by the council to close Cowes Primary School in order to reduce surplus places across the Island. ■■■ question remains unanswered.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>"Cabinet – 12 December 2024 PQ 62/24</p> <p>Written question from ■■■■■ of Cowes to the Cabinet</p> <p>It is clear that closing Cowes Primary will reduce education standards on the island and in Cowes in both the short term and the long term. If this is not justification to keep a school open when so many other schools are underperforming, then I don't know what is. I'm left wondering what it would have taken for your consultation proposal, which was advertised as not predetermined, to have been changed. For example what effort did you, the council, make to support the academisation of Cowes Primary? The revised admissions policy from CEC shows a clear intent. Keeping this school alive while reducing the financial risk to the council would have been an achievement to be proud of.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Currently, the Island has 10,724 primary school places available, but the number of children needing these places is expected to drop significantly by 2027.</p>

		<p>The total number of primary pupils is projected to decrease from 9,300 in 2017 to 7,640 in the next three years.</p> <p>This decline has created substantial financial pressures, with school funding shrinking each year. The ongoing trend suggests that by March 2027, 22 primary schools may face budget deficits, potentially totalling £7.4 million or more.</p> <p>For every empty seat, schools lose about £4,500, impacting resources, opportunities, and the quality of education children receive.</p> <p>Falling enrolment also complicates planning and staffing decisions, with schools potentially needing to reduce essential support staff. This directly affects the quality of education and support for our children, as well as the ability to provide a rich curriculum experience.</p> <p>It is our view that if Cowes Primary School converted to an academy this does not reduce the number of surplus places, and for the reasons identified above is not a proposed option. "</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Frustratingly, the response to ■■■ question completely misses the point. Place planning is about ensuring a sustainable, high quality education provision. There is little point to a sustainable low quality service.</p> <p>Cowes Primary continues to deliver a high quality of education and with a handful of other schools is pulling the Islands standards in the right direction. Allowing this school to close will have an immediate and long term negative impact on the standard of education on the Island. Through academisation the school could continue on the sustainable heading it earned before low admissions were triggered</p>
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		<p>by premature Council announcements.</p> <p>If a large academy trust wants to adopt a school and liberate the council of it's financial risk, why would the council stand in the way?</p> <p>Gurnard Primary is financially secured by being a well populated 2 form intake school. The council cannot be concerned for it's future as it has a track record of attracting pupils from a wider area than most schools.</p> <p>If Cowes Primary were an Academy, it would join the ranks of the other two Academies in the area and be treated on a level playing field. If there are surplus places between 3 Academies, what action would the DfE take? Surely the education standards would become the priority.</p> <p>It appears financially reckless to overlook this opportunity to save a good school and avoid the huge costs that will be incurred by a closure.</p> <p>I suggest that the council should act on its responsibilities to deliver good quality education and as part of it's due diligence when considering a closure should explore the opportunity for Cowes Primary to join Ormiston Academies Trust.</p> <p>The matter of suitable alternative places for the displaced children is also still outstanding. How can a planning process advice to close a school with insufficient available places in the local area. The consultation proposal was for all children to be accommodated at Gurnard. This has been withdrawn. There is nothing in place to secure good standard places for the children.</p> <p>Clearly the DfE guidelines for closing a maintained school are not being followed. The published guidance shows a level of respect for the significance of such decisions that is not reflected in the process evident to the public. How can the termination of a well established,</p>
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		<p>successful school be permitted when sustainable options are available?</p> <p>I'd also like to add that it was completely unfair and imbalanced for the cabinet to discuss the future of a Cowes school without representation from either the Ward Councillor or a representative. For each of the other schools, the Ward Councillors were able to engage in lengthy debate. The situation was far from balanced and impartial. It was evident that despite the meeting being planned well in advance, with the sensitivity and contentiousness of the agenda being well understood, the execution was very unprofessional. Each school deserved it's own meeting with fresh and enthusiastic cabinet members rather than the marathon that was inevitably endured.</p> <p>Ultimately, it appears that surplus places give the council license to cull wherever they see fit without due regard for the educational impact. How exactly will other schools with typical attendance, that are underperforming and failing their pupils, improve in the absence of Cowes Primary?</p>
233	Public	<p>With regard to the Place Planning decision to close Cowes Primary School, I strongly believe that the Local Authority have not followed a fair decision process. It had already named Cowes Primary School prior to any other school being named, thus resulting in staff and pupils leaving the school prematurely. Whilst it is understood that the local authority is unable to include academies it is hardly a fair process that underperforming schools are not included in the overall decision making when the LA profess to putting the educational needs of the children in our community first. Cowes has demonstrated it is a "good" school. Aside of these comments, which I have already made and still have not received an explanation, I understand the options could now include the following and not as originally outlined that all the Cowes pupils would move to Gurnard collectively, should this be parental choice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving all children to the Gurnard site • Keeping all of the children on the Cowes Primary site • Moving some of the children to the Gurnard site • Gradual closure of the Cowes site, keeping the children here until there is room for them on the Gurnard site <p>Based on the above options, keeping all of the children on the Cowes site, based on locality and the high percentage of children that currently walk to school would be preferable until it is confirmed that Gurnard has adequate buildings to accommodate the possible 140+ pupils. Temporary classrooms are not a sign of either inclusion into the Gurnard school community nor demonstrating permanence for the remainder of these children's Primary education.</p>

240	Public	<p>Please see attached my personal response that I assume will be anonymous to anyone but yourselves,</p> <p>(See Reference F below responses)</p> <p>https://iowc.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/SchoolPlacePlanningProject-StaffandConsultationmeetings/EUB8tiXhUGVNvfIYYjlvT1MB18joNIW2trZtl6UgBxbew?e=j4EkJ8</p>
131	Staff member	<p>To whom it may concern</p> <p>I am a member of staff at Cowes Primary School.</p> <p>My feedback is assuming that the decision to close Cowes Primary school will be approved, a decision I do agree with, as the school is not financially viable in the short, medium or long term.</p> <p>I now wish to record my concerns for consideration regarding what would happen to the staff, pupils and school site in this eventuality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lot of anxiety over the current uncertainty regarding where the pupils will be educated. In the first consultation, it was proposed 'Closure of Cowes Primary School, with pupils offered a school place at Gurnard Primary School through the provision of additional temporary accommodation (or able to preference an alternative school.)' <p>I understand this raised a number of questions which then led to the amendment we are now being asked to consult upon for this second, Public Notice Consultation:</p> <p>'From 1 September 2025, the pupils remaining on roll at Cowes Primary School would be offered a place at Gurnard Primary School. Gurnard is the next nearest primary school and is 1.12 miles away by road. It has capacity to accommodate some of the pupils currently on roll at Cowes Primary School, and working in collaboration with Gurnard Primary School, the LA are exploring various ways to accommodate additional pupils should this be required. This includes considering the provision of temporary accommodation at the Gurnard site and/or utilising the existing Cowes Primary School site. The final decision will be made by the Local Authority in consultation with the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential utilization of the Cowes Primary site raises many questions. There would be many statutory costs, utilities to be paid, site maintenance costs etc. in addition to the staffing costs, should pupils remain on site. It is a very large site to maintain and would not in my opinion be a cost effective solution for the number of children remaining. • Splitting the pupils across both the Gurnard and Cowes site would have far reaching implications, in particular for those parents with more than one child. Siblings could be split over two sites. This would be a logistically nightmare for the parents, would impact on the environment and the already difficult parking situation as well as attendance as parents try to navigate getting two children to two

		<p>different schools for the same start time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retaining all the pupils on the Cowes Primary site would see an ever decreasing number of pupils over the next couple of years, leading to what we call the 'Chillerton and Rookley situation'. There would be approximately 100 pupils on site in this scenario in September 2025. Of these, 27 would be in year 6 and would leave the following summer, leaving just 73 pupils across our large 2 form entry site. • In either scenario of retaining the Cowes Primary site, there would undoubtedly be a loss of the sense of community which is what makes Cowes Primary so special. Pupils and staff would feel like the 'poor relations'. How for instance would whole school assemblies, sports days, Christmas and summer fairs be managed? Surely this would create a 'them and us' situation which would not be good for morale or wellbeing for either staff or pupils. • Whilst our children are used to a smaller school, surely it would be better they all move to the Gurnard site together in September, where they can meet up again with their friends who were previously at our school? This would be preferable for eventual transition to secondary school as they would have had the opportunity of making new friends prior to moving to secondary education. • I understand that Gurnard offer a completely different way of delivering the curriculum. How would this be managed for pupils who remained on the Cowes site? Would they have a different curriculum? How would this meet inclusion, equality and diversity guidelines? <p>Further considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a double mobile unit on the Cowes site. This could potentially be re-sited at Gurnard to help with reducing the costs compared to providing new modular accommodation? • The Isle of Wight Council is the employer for both schools. Under the Restructuring, Redundancy and Redeployment Policy, it clearly states that: <p>Definition of Redundancy</p> <p>A redundancy is defined in the Employment Rights Act 1996 as a dismissal attributable wholly or mainly to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the fact that the employer has ceased, or intends to cease, to carry on the business for the purposes of which the employee was employed; or has ceased, or intends to cease to carry on that business in the place where the employee was so employed; or • the fact that the requirements of that business for employees to carry out work of a particular kind; or for employees to carry out work of a particular kind in the place where the employee was employed, have ceased or diminished or are
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		<p>expected to cease or diminish.</p> <p>I would question that all staff would be made redundant upon the closure of Cowes Primary School. Redundancy is about posts not people. Whether the Cowes site is utilized or not, you cannot make staff redundant when the post/need still remains.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my concerns and I would be grateful if these could be noted and discussed.</p> <p>Response from Jade Kennett:</p> <p>Thank you for your email.</p> <p>We do understand this is a particularly unsettling time for staff, parents and children and thank you for sharing your views.</p> <p>The proposal to consider retaining some of the children on the Cowes Primary School site was a suggestion brought forward at the consultation event held at the school, and through some of the feedback we received. Therefore, we felt it was appropriate to explore this further during this consultation.</p> <p>Your comments and views are recorded, and I will ensure this forms part of the decision-making process.</p>
134	Staff member	<p>As a member of staff at Cowes Primary School I would like to raise a few of the concerns/questions that I have regarding the potential closure of our school.</p> <p>Assuming that the decision to close our school goes ahead, which I believe is extremely likely, due to us being named for closure twice and losing several children, therefore not being financially viable in the future.</p> <p>All of the staff are very concerned regarding securing a post in another school on the Island due to all the named schools being closed at the same time. Surely it makes sense to do phased closures to assist with this and not overwhelm the job market. How many will relocate to the mainland, losing many skilled individuals? The staff at Cowes Primary feel very let down. How can you make everyone redundant then replace them with new staff from Gurnard Primary. Redundancy is about posts not people. You cannot make staff redundant when the post still remains.</p> <p>Also, I am very concerned regarding the proposed plans for the ongoing education of Cowes Primary School children. Initially we were informed that all children would be moving to the Gurnard Primary site through the "provisions of temporary accommodation" which has now been amended to "provision of temporary</p>

		<p>accommodation at the Gurnard site and/or utilising the existing Cowes Primary School site".</p> <p>Imagine as a child you are told that you would be joining Gurnard Primary, where many of our children already have friends (several who moved when Cowes Primary was named for closure two years ago) and then find out that you may stay on Cowes Primary site. How would this work? How would they feel being on a separate site to the others? Gurnard also have a different way of delivering the curriculum, how would this work? Would the two sites join for events, such as sports day or summer fayres? Splitting the sites would have a massive impact on the community.</p> <p>The costs involved in keeping Cowes Primary running (site maintenance, utility bills, additional staffing etc) make no sense at all. With the pupil numbers diminishing each year it seems like a very expensive idea. Perhaps a phased closure of Cowes Primary would make more sense, then all of the children could fit on one site.</p> <p>Thank you very much for considering my points.</p> <p>Response from Jade Kennett:</p> <p>Thank you for your email.</p> <p>We understand this is a particularly unsettling time for staff and thank you for sharing your views.</p> <p>The proposal to consider retaining some of the children on the Cowes Primary School site was a suggestion brought forward at the consultation event held at the school, and through some of the feedback we received. Therefore, we felt it was appropriate to explore this further during this consultation.</p> <p>Your comments and views are recorded, and I will ensure this forms part of the decision-making process.</p>
147	Staff member	<p>Whilst I fully support the need for reducing pupil places on the Isle of Wight I must state that I strongly feel that the identification of Cowes Primary is far from the best choice to achieve the intended aim of raising standards in the Cowes area and the Isle of Wight.</p> <p>Cowes Primary is an 'Ofsted' good school and provides quality education, nurture and care for all of its children and the wider school community. The whole child and safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. The school is rich in diversity and this is celebrated through curriculum and annual International Days where we demonstrate clearly the sense of community within modern Britain. The children recognise and celebrate the diversity within school; this is amazing preparation for their future in the wider world. The number of children within Cowes Primary is the lowest in the area however this is due to the fact that the school was named by the Local Authority for closure last year and then this announcement was reversed. Sadly, this had a negative effect on the school by</p>

		<p>parents who felt the need to move their children amidst uncertainty. Parents, who by the same token, have said they would never had moved their children if it wasn't for the announcement and that their children are not as happy as they were in our school. Despite this fall in numbers the school continued to provide a good quality education and outcomes. Prior to this announcement the school was on track to be out of deficit, but through no fault of the school, losing a significant number of pupils because of the announcement of closure and subsequent reversal, meant that the budget again became a struggle. The school leadership team and dedicated staff continue (amidst this chaos) to provide the best opportunities for the children. The children are at the heart of everything we do; ensuring these children are given the best is essential and this can be seen daily within the heart of this very special school.</p> <p>Cowes Primary has an excellent team of dedicated staff who put the children and their education first. My concern during this phase of consultation is the absolute uncertainty of what we are consulting on: are we responding on a consultation to move all of the Cowes Primary children to Gurnard Primary School? Or are we responding to a consultation on keeping the children on the Cowes Primary site but under the name of Gurnard Primary School? Or are we responding to a consultation on a mix of both options? This is absolutely unclear and without this definitive and clear plan how can we possibly respond to the consultation? The closing school guidance clearly states that: "It is these specific proposals setting out details of the new school or the school to be closed which can be commented on or objected to during the statutory representation period." DFE Guidance Opening and Closing Maintained Schools. My feeling is very much that we do not have a specific proposal to comment on.</p> <p>The children of Cowes Primary School and the children of Gurnard Primary School deserve to know what the exact proposal is for them. This uncertainty is causing some anxieties as the children not only face losing the school they love but also are very unsure as to what their future schooling will look like. This is not okay. The children deserve much more respect and consideration. This will undoubtedly have an impact on their education and must be handled considerably and with an understanding of how big an issue this is for them. This is more than buildings and location for these young people, this is changing their day to day routines, their quality education which meets their needs, their safe adults and the happiness and safety they have quite rightly become used to. The subsuming of Cowes Primary School children into Gurnard Primary School must include opportunities whereby the children are made to feel an integral part of their new school. As much as I DO NOT want Cowes Primary School to close I am passionate that the transition for the children must be beneficial and nurturing; it must be right for the children.</p> <p>I must also highlight that the idea that the Cowes Primary site may</p>
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		<p>be used but under Gurnard Primary has caused much distress to the staff. There is a feeling that if the only change that occurs is the removal of the Cowes Primary staff then this infers that the staff are the problem. I must emphasise that this could potentially damage the professional reputation of these staff and this is far from deserved. The staff have worked tirelessly, professionally and are exceptional professionals.</p> <p>I appreciate I have raised a number of points but I feel very strongly about the future of education on the Isle of Wight and in particular the town of Cowes. The children of Cowes deserve the best opportunities and this starts from a quality education right from their primary days. If we fail to deliver on this then we are responsible for limiting their future life chances. Closing Cowes Primary will be a massive loss to the community of Cowes and losing so many of the exceptional staff who work there will be a travesty to Isle of Wight education.</p>
187	Staff member	<p>(See Reference D below responses)</p> <p>https://iowc.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/SchoolPlacePlanningProject-StaffandConsultationmeetings/EZQpFXmVL99HvjBawNVpdkEBcZvUrmlqjWBd2H-lvACXFQ?e=0FxKzY</p>
225	Staff member	<p>As a member of staff, I fell let down by you, the council. We have been totally undervalued and demoralised. You're now proposing to use some of our Cowes Primary site, yet we would still be made redundant and new staff will be hired. Does this sound fair to you? Have you even looked at our teaching? Do you know who we are and what we each have to offer?</p> <p>We've heard that you're hoping the new set up will entice people from the mainland - [REDACTED] and have taught in Outstanding schools. I've taught for [REDACTED] years, both on the mainland and on the IoW. I have only ever received Outstanding and Good feedback from OFSTED and from my leadership teams. Yet you're hoping to entice more 'qualified' staff to the Island? You're clearly not valuing the staff that you already have and it's extremely disappointing and unprofessional. How is closing schools and treating staff so badly going to entice more people over?</p> <p>I've worked at several schools [REDACTED] - Cowes primary has one of the most skilled set of staff I have EVER had the pleasure of working with. You'll not only be losing some extremely experienced staff, but one of the best head teachers I've ever had the pleasure of working for too - [REDACTED]</p> <p>Yes, we can go and apply for another teaching post - How do we know that the school we move to will not be closed during the next round of closures? Can you guarantee us a secure job? Or are you hoping we leave council paid jobs and move to academies?</p> <p>As a parent, I feel let down by you. [REDACTED] is currently in year [REDACTED] [REDACTED] primary. [REDACTED] a high achiever with the world</p>

		<p>ahead of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] loves school, [REDACTED] loves meeting with friends, and [REDACTED] loves learning. How do I know that [REDACTED] will be as valued at Gurnard Primary school as [REDACTED] is at Cowes? If I place [REDACTED] in a different school to your suggested Gurnard Primary - How do I know that the school I move [REDACTED] to will not be closed during the next round of closures? What security can you give me as a parent?</p> <p>Yesterday we were at the rally. One of the councillors arrived at the end. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] went to talk to him. [REDACTED] stood there for 5 minutes patiently waiting and wasn't even acknowledged. I couldn't believe it.</p> <p>You started this saying that children's education is the priority - I haven't seen any proof of that yet. Losing skilled and experienced leadership teams, losing skilled and experienced teachers, losing skilled and experienced LSAs, sending children to other schools with different curriculums and core values - Is this improving standards? Should we all move our children to academies to protect them from this happening to them again? Or is that what you're hoping we'll do, so that you don't have to crunch the numbers</p> <p>These are people's lives you're changing, not just figures. Please think about what you're doing. Make a good choice. Wait till the jigsaw puzzle fits together as opposed to rushing things to meet the September 2025 deadline.</p> <p>It would be good to hear your thoughts about my above comments, as I really am confused as to what to do as a member of your staff and a parent of one of the affected schools. Please reply to [REDACTED]</p> <p>Response from Strategic Planning inbox, as directed by Naomi Carter:</p> <p>Sent to NC, JK for information & response. Can you send: We acknowledge your concerns. All emails/responses will form part of the consultation analysis and we thank them for their contribution.</p>
87	Town Council	<p>(See Reference B below responses)</p> <p>https://iowc.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/SchoolPlacePlanningProject-StaffandConsultationmeetings/ERcbHgZQujZltwgISia1whcB9HynlrpOd4TLIGD0ALc2lg?e=PgBytu</p>

REFERENCE A

20th January, 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

Island school closures

This letter relates to the proposals affecting **Cowes Primary School**.

I refer to your statutory notice in the Isle of Wight County Press dated the 3rd January 2025.

I hereby object to your proposals which have generated much concern and anxiety amongst the Island population which have wide ranging repercussions for parent's pupils and their families.

The Statutory Notice does not state that the Council owns the school and not the Diocese as some people may believe.

The Statutory Notice does not mention this fact as it should have done. It is misleading to the public.

The Notice is defective and should be withdrawn forthwith.

I make the following comments relative to any correct Notice that you choose to publish.

Should you not acknowledge that the Notice is defective and misleading this objection letter remains effective.

As history will illustrate that child populations fluctuate with the passage of time and in my submission it is unwise to concentrate and make decisions upon years purporting to demonstrate reductions in child births.

A large number of planning applications have been made and granted for residential dwellings by the Council.

I set out hereunder some examples well known to you. Some are potential with Applications pending which I will identify. Your records will need to be consulted.

The first is commonly known as Pennyfeathers at Ryde. Approval has been given for over 1300 homes. Construction yet to take place believed to be imminent.

Blanchards at Brightstone where development has already taken place for over 100 homes.

REFERENCE A

Hunnyhill at Newport where building has already been commenced recently for over 100 homes.

Palmers Road Wootton for over 50 homes where development has already taken place.

There are Applications pending at Freshwater for a large number of homes.

Land to the rear of Gunville behind the shop where 100 homes are contemplated. No development has yet taken place.

The County Press of the 17th January records an Application numbered 24/01898/OUT for 27 residential units at Freshwater.

The same paper records under reference 24/01851/FUL proposals for 10 residential flats at Sandown.

150 or so houses are proposed at West Acre at Ryde. Development not yet started.

Forest Hills at Gunville where over 100 homes were constructed is another example for potential children.

The significance of these examples is to demonstrate to you the potential for more children destined to occupy school places. Say at least 2 children for each household.

The potential number of future children need to be taken into consideration in connection with your proposals.

The Prime Minister is encouraging the grant of new housing.

The Human Rights Act 1998 covers the children who will be affected by your proposals. They should be consulted with their parents. Where very young children are involved perhaps a guardian should be appointed to represent their interests for their views to be expressed.

The closure of any village school for whatever reason is a strategy destroying the very fabric of society to the detriment of many people who rely on that facility to continue.

The school performs an important social function for local events and meetings which will be lost upon closure to the detriment of the community.

There is an ulterior motive in your proposals. Demolition of schools will lead to vacant land owned or occupied by the Council which will be attractive for future development placing money in the hands of the Council. That is an unjustifiable reason for closure.

A number of schools on the Island received good Ofsted Reports thereby demonstrating the benefits of rural schools. The Council failed to take a good report into account in the closure of Yarmouth School.

The Council has "shot itself in the foot" by granting many permissions for residential development with the potential for more families and children and is now seeking to close schools.

REFERENCE A

No school closure of any description should be entertained until all of the development for which planning permission has been granted has taken place. This comment applies to all of the schools currently being proposed for closure.

Please acknowledge safe receipt of this letter.

Yours faithfully



To Naomi Carter,
Service Director,
Childrens Services Department,
Floor 3,
County Hall,
Newport,
Isle of Wight, PO30 1UD

By first class post and hand delivery

Saved BB file School closures Isle of Wight Lett1Cowes

Cowes Town Council Response to the Statutory Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Cowes Primary School

23 January 2025

Dear Ms Kennett,

I am writing on behalf of Cowes Town Council in response to the statutory consultation regarding the proposed closure of Cowes Primary School (CPS), as outlined in your email dated 3 January 2025. We would like to express our significant concerns about the potential closure and seek further clarification on several key issues before any final decisions are made.

Cowes Primary School plays a vital role in our community, providing high-quality education and essential support services to local families. Its proposed closure would have far-reaching implications, and we believe it is essential to carefully consider all aspects before proceeding with such a critical decision.

Key Concerns About the Closure Proposal

1. Educational Excellence and Community Impact

- CPS has a longstanding reputation for delivering high academic standards, with results that consistently exceed national averages and positive OFSTED inspections.
- The school provides a safe, stable, and supportive environment that many local families rely on, particularly those with additional educational needs.
- The central location of CPS makes it highly accessible, reducing transport costs and logistical challenges for parents.

2. Support for Pupils with Additional Needs

- CPS has built a strong framework to support pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), currently accommodating over 25% of its student population—far above the Isle of Wight average.
- The specialist expertise developed within the school will be difficult to replicate in other local schools, potentially disrupting the education and well-being of affected pupils.

3. Impact on Staff and the Wider Community

- The proposed closure would put the future of 30 dedicated staff members at risk, causing uncertainty and disruption to their careers and financial stability.
- The closure could also have wider economic and social consequences, affecting local businesses and the broader community fabric.

4. Long-Term Planning and Policy Consistency

- The proposed closure appears to contradict previous council policies aimed at maintaining appropriately sized schools and avoiding the creation of overly large institutions.
- Closing CPS may result in increased pressure on nearby schools, potentially leading to overcrowding and diminishing educational standards.

REFERENCE B

Key Questions for the Isle of Wight Council

Cowes Town Council would like to receive further clarification on the following questions, which reflect concerns from both the council and the local community:

1. Rationale for the Closure:

- What specific criteria and data were used to determine that CPS should close, and how does this align with the council's broader educational objectives?
- Why has CPS, a school with a strong performance record, been prioritised for closure over other schools with lower outcomes?

2. Educational Standards and Provision:

- What assurances can be given that relocating pupils to other schools will not negatively impact their educational progress and well-being?
- How does the council plan to ensure that the quality of education currently provided at CPS will be maintained elsewhere?

3. Support for Vulnerable Pupils:

- How will the council guarantee that pupils with additional needs, including EAL students, will receive the same standard of support in alternative schools?
- What measures will be taken to ensure that the transition process does not adversely affect the educational experience of these vulnerable groups?

4. Financial Considerations:

- What financial analysis has been conducted to demonstrate that closing CPS is the most cost-effective option in the long term?
- Given the potential plan to retain the CPS building for future use, how does the council justify the closure as a cost-saving measure?

5. Staff Redeployment and Employment Security:

- What plans are in place to provide job security or redeployment opportunities for CPS staff members affected by the closure?
- Will any additional funding be made available to support staff facing redundancy or transition into new roles?

6. Parental and Community Support:

- What specific steps will the council take to support families during the transition period to new schools?
- Will financial assistance, such as uniform grants or transport subsidies, be considered for affected families?

REFERENCE B

7. Transport and Infrastructure Impact:

- Has the council conducted an assessment of how the closure will impact travel times, congestion, and costs for families moving to alternative schools?
- What plans are in place to mitigate potential transport challenges for families who currently walk to CPS?

8. Long-Term Educational Strategy:

- What contingency plans does the council have in place should future demand for school places increase in the Cowes area?
- How does the closure of CPS fit into the council's long-term vision for primary education on the Isle of Wight?

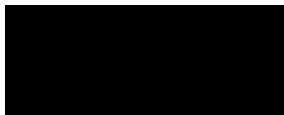
Conclusion

Cowes Town Council urges the Isle of Wight Council to reconsider the proposed closure of Cowes Primary School, taking into account the significant educational, financial, and social implications of such a decision. We request that all options be fully explored in collaboration with the Department for Education to ensure a fair and sustainable solution for the future of primary education in Cowes.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage in further dialogue on these matters and look forward to receiving a detailed response to the questions raised. Please provide your response no later than **15 February 2025** to allow for meaningful consideration and consultation with our community.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely



Cowes Town Council



REFERENCE C

Cowes Primary School

Right to Learn Right to be Safe Right to be Respected

Headteacher: Mrs Stephanie Praetig

Edinburgh Close, Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO31 8HF

Tel: 01983 293261

email: admin@cowespri.iow.sch.uk

website: www.cowesprimarieschool.co.uk

To contact the Governing Body:

Email clerk@cowespri.iow.sch.uk

Ashley Whittaker
Director of Children's Services
Strategic Development
Floor 3
County Hall
High Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1UD

Sue Cox
Chair of Governors
27th January 2025

Dear Ashley Whittaker,

I am writing to provide the official response of the Governing Body of Cowes Primary School to the Isle of Wight Council's statutory proposal to close the school. Whilst we are extremely disappointed with the Council's decision to push forward with the proposed closure, we are grateful for the opportunity to comment on the matters raised in the statutory proposal and related documents.

Our response is structured as follows:

1. Our comments on the proposal to close Cowes Primary School.
2. Our feedback on the way in which the consultation has been carried out.
3. Wider observations on place planning in England.
4. Our questions for the Council.
5. Conclusion



REFERENCE C

1. The proposed closure of Cowes Primary School

The school community was extremely disappointed with the decision by the Isle of Wight Council to announce the planned closure of Cowes Primary School in the statutory consultation document. As the school's Governing Body, we feel that there are good reasons to keep the school open which have not been given full and appropriate consideration in the place planning process. These reasons are outlined below.

1.1 Cowes Primary School is an excellent school

Cowes Primary School is a very successful primary school at the heart of the Cowes community. The school's most recent statutory tests results were above national in all areas. We also have had very positive feedback from staff who have joined from other schools around the level of support provided to teaching staff. The school was also rated 'Good' in the most recent Ofsted inspection. The school's staff have delivered these excellent results in the context of continued financial challenges and under threat of closure. Further information on the school's favourable performance relative to other primary schools in Cowes is contained in the Council's own analysis:

Data category	Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals	Previous Ofsted Rating	Current Ofsted Rating	Phonics			Key stage 2, combined measure at the expected level		
				2024	2023	2022	2024	2023	2022
National average				80.3% ¹	79.0%	75.0%	61.0%	59.0%	59.0%
Local authority average				78.3%	74.7%	62.6%	51.5%	52.2%	46.2%
Name of school									
Gurnard Primary	6.9%	Good	Good	86.4%	81.0%	83.3%	71.2%	69.5%	70.7%
Cowes Primary	10.3%	Good	Good	87.5%	81.0%	78.3%	70.0%	42.9%	47.8%
Lanesend Primary	45.1%	N/A	RI	63.5%	80.7%	57.6%	37.5%	41.7%	41.8%
Northwood Primary	16.2%	Good	Good	72.0%	64.0%	59.3%	20.7%	55.2%	45.2%

Key: Ofsted

- Good – good;
- Requires improvement – requires improvement.

Phonics and KS2

- Green – above national average;
- Yellow – below national average;
- Red – below national and local averages.

Source: Isle of Wight school place planning proposals 2024 to 2030, page 14

Given some of the issues that exist with the standard of education being provided across the Island, we would once again ask the Council to think very carefully about closing a school that is delivering such good results. As a Governing Body, we are confident that the school could achieve even more if the threat of closure was lifted and the Council committed to providing an appropriate level of financial support going forward.

1.2 Children with English as an additional language

Over 25% of children at the school have English as an additional language ("EAL") (based on October 2024 data). This compares to around 4% across the Island (based on February 2020 data from Department for Education¹). The staff at Cowes Primary School have the skills, knowledge, experience to provide for the additional support that many of these children need. It would be

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e55205d86650c10e8754e54/English_proficiency_of_EAL_pupils.pdf

REFERENCE C

extremely challenging for other schools in the area who do not have such a well developed capability in this area to provide an equivalent level of support for this number of children with EAL. Moving a small number of experienced teachers across to another school would not be sufficient as there would be a loss of leadership, culture and infrastructure required to deliver good outcomes as well as the good relationships the school has with the families of the EAL children. We raised this point in our original place planning response but we have yet to receive a satisfactory response from the Council.

2. The way the consultation has been carried out

We have a number of comments on the way in which the Council has carried out the place planning consultation and the statutory closure notice process.

2.1 Failure to answer the specific points raised by the school community

Whilst the Council has provided additional information in response to matters raised during the original consultation, there are members of the school community who responded to the consultation who feel that their specific concerns and comments were not adequately addressed during the process. For example, one of the members of the school's governing body responded to the original consultation in a personal capacity and was advised by the Council that *"A member of the Strategic Planning team will respond to your questions as soon as they are able to."* As of 26 January 2025, they had yet to hear back from the Local Authority.

The responses provided by the Council remained largely at a high level, covering broad themes but without engaging meaningfully with the majority of the detailed feedback individuals submitted during the consultation. Consequently, some members of the school community now believe that the consultation process was run in such a way as to support a predetermined course of action rather than seeking to fully incorporate the school community's input into the decision-making process.

If the proposed closure goes ahead, it is the Council's responsibility to ensure that the decision is made and implemented in a way that is compliant with all applicable laws and regulations including employment law.

2.2 Lack of clarity on the practical aspects of how the proposed closure would work

The lack of clarity on certain practical aspects of how the proposed school closure would work, if it goes ahead, have added to the workload of and pressures on the leadership team at Cowes Primary School. For example, the school's leadership team needs to begin to plan for the possibility that the proposed closure will go ahead and as part of that consider the handover of the site, assets, records, relationships with suppliers etc. There are however some key practical questions that remain unanswered. We would urge the Council to provide as much support as possible to the school's management team, staff and Governors during this challenging period. This should include providing clear and specific information on the Council's plans for the school and the school site in the form of a detailed project plan indicating timescales and who is responsible and accountable for each activity.

2.3 Lack of clarity on the position with respect to academies

While we recognise that the Council is subject to certain legal constraints with respect to academies, we feel that the position with respect to academies should have been set out clearly and transparently at an earlier stage in the place planning process. The fact that this did not happen casts a shadow over the fairness of the place planning process and is particularly troubling given that members of the school community sought clarification from the Council on this specific point.

REFERENCE C

Based on the place planning material published by the Council, we cannot see any evidence of the Council having asked the Department for Education to take steps to bring about the closure of academies where appropriate which would have been the logical course of action given that this falls outside of the Council's powers. The school raised this point in its response to the place planning consultation but the Council has yet to provide any additional evidence on this point.

2.4 The impact of previous decisions taken by the Council

Prior to being named for closure in the place planning consultation and the subsequent statutory notice, Cowes Primary School was named for closure by the Isle of Wight Council on two previous occasions. This resulted in a very substantial reduction in the number of children at the school and consequently a significant reduction in the school's income. Whilst the Council staff did apologise to the school for the way the previous communications in relation to potential school closures were carried out, the school received no financial compensation or additional funding of any kind from the Council to make up for the loss of income resulting from the Council's handling of this issue.

In the statutory notice, the Council put forward reasons for proposing the closure of Cowes Primary School including the school's projected financial deficit. We feel that it was inappropriate for the Council to make any comments on the school's projected deficits in official documents without explaining that decisions taken by the Council have contributed significantly to the financial challenges the school currently faces. The school is now in a position where it would require substantial additional funding from the Council in order to be financially viable in the event that the proposed closure did not go ahead.

3. Wider observations on place planning in England

As Governors, our main focus is on promoting the education and wellbeing of the children at Cowes Primary School. As holders of public office, we recognise that we have a duty to act in the public interest and we therefore feel it is right to highlight lessons that can be learnt from the place planning exercise on the Isle of Wight which may be relevant to future place planning exercises on the Island and in fact throughout the whole of England.

Given the declining birth rates across the UK as a whole, there are likely to be an increasing number of place planning exercises and school closure consultations and in that context it is vital that any structural issues with place planning in England are addressed quickly. We recognise that in some cases this may require legislative changes which are not within the Council's control. Accordingly, we have copied Richard Quigley MP, the Member of Parliament for Isle of Wight West.

3.1 Community schools are at a clear disadvantage relative to academies

As stated on page 15 of the original place planning consultation document, *"the local authority do not have the legal ability to propose the closure of an academy"*. This has placed the community schools across the Island at a clear disadvantage in the place planning process. The school community feels that that is unfair given that the academies are also state funded. Plainly, the current situation means that the Council does not have power to secure the best outcomes for the children living on the Island.

This cannot be right. There needs to be a legal mechanism for local authorities to propose the closure of academies. If necessary, this power could be made subject to prior consultation with or approval from the Department for Education.

3.2 Local authorities have no statutory duty to avoid an excess of school places arising

REFERENCE C

While local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available, there is no equivalent obligation to prevent an excessive number of empty places arising. While a small number of spare places is helpful for parent choice and people moving into the local authority area, a large proportion of excess places has a very damaging effect on school finances under the current 'per pupil' funding model.

3.3 Accountability of governors and headteachers for matters outside their control

In cases where the local authority has failed to prevent excess places arising, it is the headteachers and governors who are held to account for the deficits in school budgets that inevitably arise. It is clearly unfair to hold people to account for factors outside their control and can only add to the difficulties in finding people willing to serve as governors and to the already substantial pressures on headteachers. The school's October 2024 response to the place planning consultation explains the limitations of Isle of Wight Scheme for Financing Schools (April 2024) as it applies to schools in deficit.

4. Our questions for the Council

We would be grateful if the Council could answer the following questions which take account of our concerns as Governors and concerns we have heard from the school community and other stakeholders. We would ask that the Council responds as soon as possible and no later than 17 February 2025 to provide greater clarity about the Council's plans and to reduce the uncertainty faced by Governors, staff and parents.

No.	Question
1	How is closing a good primary school whilst leaving open schools which require improvement consistent with the Council's stated strategy to <i>"build a world class education system for children and young people on the Island"</i> ?
2	In the event that Cowes Primary School closes, how will the Council ensure that the excellent level of support currently provided to children with English as a foreign language is maintained in the new schools?
3	In the event that a school in the Cowes area closes, will the Council make specific additional funding available for the school's taking on new pupils to support the transition and integration of children in the new school community? If so, please provide details of these financial support arrangements including the total budget for the Cowes area and how it will be allocated.
4	In the event that Cowes Primary School is closed, what additional support will be available for those children at the school currently who are happy at the school but have struggled to settle in and make friends at schools they have attended previously? Will this support be funded by the Council?
5	In the event that a community school on the Island is closed, would the Council provide financial support for parents with the costs of buying uniform for the new school? Whilst we recognise that some headteachers may allow children to continue to wear the uniform from the previous school this could make it harder for children from poorer families to integrate into the new school community. We note that part of the reason for having a school uniform is to promote equality, inclusion and a sense of belonging.
6	What efforts will the Council take to ring-fence jobs for school staff placed at risk of redundancy

REFERENCE C

No.	Question
	as a result of place planning?
7	Can you confirm that all staff in schools facing closure be guaranteed employment until at least the end of August 2025?

5. Conclusion

In making any further decisions in relation to place planning, we would strongly encourage the Council to base the decision on what is best for the children in the Cowes area in the long term and in doing so to take account of their varying circumstances and needs. In cases where the Council does not have the legal power to act, we would urge the Council not to pick what it sees as the least worst option available within those constraints but rather to work jointly with the Department for Education to get the right answer from the full range of options. Please acknowledge receipt.

Yours sincerely,



Chair of Governors

CC
Richard Quigley MP
Cllr Paul Fuller JP
Cllr Jonathan Bacon
Naomi Carter
Department for Education

County Hall
High Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1UD

Dear Cabinet Committee,

To say I have lost faith in the Isle of Wight Council and Cabinet is an understatement. I have been working in Isle of Wight Primary schools for over [REDACTED] years; starting as an MSA and LSA, training to become a teacher and progressing in my career [REDACTED]. I have [REDACTED] years teaching experience, I have dedicated my life to Cowes Primary and by default my own family's lives too. I have never felt so undervalued and surplus to requirement as I do right now. Our whole school community has become a pawn in the place planning debacle. If even you, the council, cannot agree on the integrity of the process, how can it be carried out with integrity. How can the council vote on such matters when certain councillors, in the extraordinary meeting didn't even have the same information on which to base their opinions.

It has been apparent that the 'goal posts' have been moved throughout the consultation process and it is very clear the Cabinet are working on a TBC basis, giving stock answers and never really clearly explaining processes and future plans; to the point where we only found out about the utilisation of our primary school site in the initial cabinet meeting. Surely this would have been a vital piece of information to have known before this public meeting. Our community were therefore submitting their consultation view without having all the facts. So obviously, the proposal to close Cowes Primary now extends beyond the original consultation scope, which mainly engaged Cowes Primary families, while Gurnard families were largely uninvolved. The potential closure might result in Gurnard children being transferred to Cowes, creating a split-site arrangement, which could impact more families than the closure itself. This shift deviates too much from the original consultation and warrants further involvement of all stakeholders.

Gurnard parents this week received a letter from Mrs Yardley, stating that this proposal had not been discussed and was not an option. So, who is correct? And why are both communities not receiving the same information? Again...inconsistencies.

The options now seem to be:

- 1) All children move to Gurnard (as firsts promised)
- 2) All children stay on the Cowes Primary site (thrown in without consultation)
- 3) Key Stage 1 children go to Gurnard and Key Stage 2 children stay on site
- 4) A mix of Gurnard and Cowes on both sites

To move all children, with staff to the Gurnard site is the best option. To support, for example, FSM, PP, SEND, LAC, EAL and CIN children, staff members should be moved with these children to ensure a consistent approach. No amount of transition meetings would support these children as well as having adults who know them. Keeping children on the Cowes Primary site, in any combination is a majorly flawed

REFERENCE D

suggestion and will result in lower standards. To make Cowes Primary staff redundant, to then reemploy other teachers to do the same role on the same site is illegal and will be met with union representation. There are so many negative elements to splitting the Gurnard/Cowes Community:

- 1) Gurnard's curriculum is not achievable on two sites
- 2) Inconsistencies in skills and knowledge
- 3) Moderation of teaching and learning
- 4) Disjoined community – the children at Cowes primary will be the poorer relations
- 5) Lack of friendships and support
- 6) Disjointed event activities
- 7) Moral and mental health of the children will be damaged
- 8) Gurnard parents do not want their children on a site the council has allowed to deteriorate

I am in support of the place planning process, if, it was to be carried out in a fair whole-island way. So that ALL schools are included in the process. We were told all schools were considered. They weren't, not really. So, by default Cowes Primary closes, with the reduced numbers that we were left with after the council's incompetence in the first round of proposed closures.

You say that this is all about improving educational standards on the island; I have dedicated my life to providing outstanding educational standards to all the children I teach. Yet you propose to close a successful school, who has achieved 'good and outstanding' for over 20 years. B default, you close a successful school, over-crowd another good school and keep open two other schools which have not proven themselves to be successful. You are making the wrong choice and you are choosing the easy option, not the right option.

What really upsets me are the comments made by Mr Bacon. Twice he has had very little regard or respect for the staff in Cowes and Brading Primary school. He has made insensitive comments to parents about the benefits of closing our schools, stating that it will result in their children receiving a better education than the one they receive currently. This makes it seem like the schools are closing because the teaching is inadequate and that we, the staff at Cowes and Brading are the reason the schools are closing. He did this to Brading in a recorded public Cabinet meeting and in our (Cowes Primary) school library; this was face to face in a meeting with our parents. How dare he put the blame of closing school onto staff? Whether intended or not, this was the result of his insensitive comments.

I would like to also mention Councillor Fuller, who from face-to-face meetings has supported Cowes Primary School, which we are thankful for. But when it comes to representing his ward in the cabinet meetings, he has let us down. We have been left with no representation even though he has told parents he will fight to keep us open. When it comes to it, he does not speak for us and votes against us. I am ashamed to call him my ward representative.

It's the common theme in this whole process, "Tell them what they want to hear, tick a box and throw in a red herring here and there to keep them guessing."

[REDACTED] We have given over [REDACTED] years of service to Cowes Primary School, only to be wiped aside and made out to be the problem. Did you know that staff members from Vestas who have 7 years of service, will receive more redundancy than someone who have 20 years of teaching skills. Says it all really. Save money at every opportunity and carry on regardless. To have some job reassurance is vital. [REDACTED]

██████████ The threat of not being able to pay my mortgage and bills is a real concern which affects us greatly as a family. But as Naomi said to me, there's nothing she can do or guarantee. I'm glad I have worked up to 60 hours a week for 20 years, for nothing, no recognition, no support, no guarantees, no care.

REFERENCE D

I had the absolute pleasure of sitting with [REDACTED] – Rights, Diversity and Social Education Advisor for HIAS and [REDACTED] – Education Manager, Early Years/Transitions, Children's Services Isle of Wight to hear our children's views. I've added them here as I believe they will just be placed as an appendix at the back of the report, where they may not be seen. Please feel free to read all the children's comments. I have highlighted some of the most prominent comments

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Cowes Primary School

Pupil Voice

What do you enjoy about your school? – think about the building / the grounds / the location / the staff / the pupils / the lessons / the trips / the opportunities / the atmosphere / the food / the books / the afterschool activities.

We are given lots of different opportunities: The Horticultural Show, International Day, Christmas Fair, the discos.

I was able to teach a Japanese lesson (the details of this were discussed – lesson structure and him being able to speak and read Japanese

Lunches are really good, so are the Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparent's lunches. (inviting our families into eat lunch with us was discussed)

We have a new adventure playground – he discussed the rota of use and when it was installed
I think you have missed something! Nationalities!

One of the things you have missed is asking about nationalities. In our school we celebrate where people come from. We welcome them into our school and help show them around. We have a display board with red string to show which counties they come from (Ella went on to list the countries which are represented in our school).

Oh we have great after school activities.

I might be wrong, but I think we are the only school to have Quest. (Details were asked for) It is run by our support assistants, the scouts come in to do air rifles and archery and Jaydene comes in to run our dance lessons.

"The atmosphere in this school is...well it's amazing!" What would help me more would be to stay with my friends, keeping the same friends and staff with me.

The school food is great and they make food for my dietary needs. They make me special food because I can't have [REDACTED]

Before and after school clubs are good.

We have a breakfast and school club called Crew Club. If you are there until 5 you get a piece of toast.

We've done loads of great trips. We went to London, the British Museum. We went to London to support our learning.

We have loads of books and a great library

We have lots of support, if you have ADHD or Autism, even if you are not struggling – teachers take you out to support you.

([REDACTED] discussed his brother going through this school).

All the teachers are really nice and help you.

In the playground we can play with equipment - Playleaders can play games if you don't have anyone.

All of my friends are here, that's why we have great breaktimes. I have lots of good break times.

REFERENCE D

The food is really good. I have allergies (she holds up her epipen bag) they make me special food, so I don't feel left out. All the food is cooked freshly – they have a vegetarian choice, soups, fresh bread.

Everyone is really kind and no one feels left out.

All the teachers are there to help you.

At breaks we have playleaders; they go around and play with the young ones.

There aren't any competitive activities at break times, the teachers help organise different games.

Our building is really good. In a bigger school it is too overcrowded and there's no space. We have space here to learn.

The staff give help to all children. They get extensions and children go out at the right level and the work is adapted for the right level for each child.

Mrs Gilbraith is there to help with catching up.

Music teachers come in and give us lovely lessons.

We have lots of opportunities – everyone gets the chance to join in.

Smaller schools have more chances and choices to get everyone involved in class assemblies, everyone can come and watch and everyone can participate.

Staff are really kind, no one is left out and no one is made fun of.

The food is really tasty. They have lots of options and very good puddings.

Everyone here in general around us are just lovely and nice.

Trips – when we go on trips we have worksheets to do so it doesn't feel like work.

Our guided reading books are really good. I like the choices made by my teachers

Staff – The staff are all really nice. Teachers give different learning for different children. So someone who might have ADHD will get extra help. They make this extra learning for all of us.

Trips – When we do trips the teachers always have safety involved to keep us all safe.

Building a new adventure playground was really exciting.

Pupils are always kind and support each other.

PE is amazing, we do games, dance, lots of choice and opportunities.

What would you like adults to know about your school? – Why is this school important, what does it mean to me and my family, what does this school do for the community?

That our teachers are kind, we have lovely grown-ups here, we've got helpers who do reading, (through discussion she explained that they are employed staff members and from the local community)

This is my only school – I've grown up here and everyone is so kind. I believe every class should have helpers like Mrs Ward and Mrs Slater. All the adults will always help you. It's my school! It's my first and only school. To my family it is important because they

know my education is safe and that I am safe when I am at school. They trust my school.

We have fire alarm tests because our school knows that health and safety is important.

We have classroom museums for our grown-ups and family to come and look at. (E: it's a celebration of our work and learning) () discussed his homework, poster and artefacts, he talk about all our learning being about Egypt). Preschool are include in our community, they

use our library and the hall for PE I think. They can join in with the horticultural show too if they want to.

This gives the younger children the opportunity to take part in our school activities – being arty and baking. It's nice to see all the smiles on their faces. For my family it is important for

them to know what's going on in our school. I love this place! It's amazing! We have amazing adults to help us...Mrs Godwin and Mrs Dunking.

I'm in year 1 and we are getting lots of help to get us ready for SATs. We do fluency in Maths. Fluency in Maths is very important, Mrs Thoms times us to build our speed and accuracy. We like the challenge. We carry out self-marking so that we can learn where our errors are and we can learn from them. This helps us develop our learning. It's better than a teacher just marking it and giving it back with no help.

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My friends go out to work with Mrs Dunkling and Mrs Gilbraith. I know my friend ■ won't mind me saying this, but that she needs to use a laptop to help her with her writing. So, we sit together and we can support each other. There are always opportunities to help each other in class.

My cousins, mum and uncles have been through this school. If the school closes, we won't see our friends anymore.

First aid is important; we use it to help people who are hurt. But the adults always check if they really need it first.

We are going on a whole school trip to Paulton's park. We have carried out fund raising by school discos to pay for it.

It is important because it's close to where I live. I want them to know about all the great things the school offers us. The teachers check on us and support us always.

If this school wasn't a thing I wouldn't have friends. We do things for charity and raise money and food for the Food Bank (red nose day and sport aid discussed) My family has been through this school, my mum and my uncle. (discussion about family sharing links to the school was had)

This is the first school I've been to on the Isle of Wight. It's an amazing school. The school discos are great. If someone is sensitive to noise, they are given a relaxing quieter room to go to, but they can still take part.

International Day is very special. Parents of children participate in different culture celebrations.

At our school everyone is in one class and we get to be with our friends all the time. We have the same breaks, hang out together and help each other. These are the benefits of a smaller school.

Is there anything else you would like your school to offer – are there things that you would like to do to improve your school? What could be better at the school? What do you know about other schools on the island? Do you have friends that go to other schools?

No I don't think the school could offer anything else. But because the council said the school was closing the first time, loads of my class left. We had two year three teachers, all because of the school closures, it has affected my learning. We were mixed with Year ■ In Year ■ Miss White was so lovely with us. I don't enjoy having two teachers because it's harder with our learning. I know Gurnard is massive.

No, I can't think of anything. Our Year 5 is already big. How will we fit in with Gurnard's Year 5? Gurnard is too far to walk with friends. I'd have to walk with my mum. The road is busy with parked cars. It's not a local school to me, it's so busy with all the cars.

The school could not offer anything else to me I love this school. But I could never walk to Gurnard on my own from where I live – It's too far. Cowes is closer for me. Parking by Gurnard is really tight and squeezed. I'd have to walk into a new school on my own with no support because mum wouldn't be able to park. We wouldn't have a place to park.

We would need to pay more money for the uniform (C's response - "ridiculous!")

No I wouldn't change anything about my school. We don't have a car anymore. This is the only place I can walk to now. So I can't go anywhere else other than this school here.

No nothing.

If we have lots of teachers for each lesson and Gurnard...(S: paused to think) here we make connections with our teachers, they know us all. We won't get that in a bigger school.

We don't know who our friends will be.

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If they are only going to shut one class, the school will still get smaller.

I don't think our school needs to improve.

Closing this school will affect our learning and mental state that might affect our choices in life!

S: "That's deep!"

I need to know more information about what's happening about classes, teachers and friends. I don't know what's going to happen to us.

If we're going to be put in Gurnard school, the teachers need to know all about us.

In our school we do transition days.

I don't think I need anything to change. I know about Gurnard – I know they have a really big field. Their OFSTED rating is 'Good' and Lanesend's OFSTED rating is 'Requires Improvement' They need to do better with their phonics and reading.

There's nothing I would do different – I love it! It's amazing, the staff, children, food.

After the 1st council announcement people would have been putting their children's names down to join our school. Then they didn't want to come. So we had low numbers, this was not helpful. We lost 3 teachers. We lost lots of children in every year. This made me very sad. The closure was then taken back (the word 'revoked' was used and explained) I lost lots of my friends. But then we didn't close so I had friends leave and then we stayed open and it was pointless. Not helpful. Then we were put back on for closure because of the lack of children, and that was because they named us first, so the council named us again. Then we had to mix year groups – 3/4 and 4/5 – Year 4 had to be split up. We are only up for closure because of the council.

I don't want anything different. Gurnard is quite different from our school. Different teachers for each subject. There are also larger numbers there.

This school is perfect.

The teachers are kind.

The only thing we lack is pupils
Everything is amazing...yeah, kind teachers and friends.



PAUL FULLER

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3rd February 2025.

Dear Mr Whittaker,

School Place Planning: Proposals to close Cowes Primary School, Edinburgh Close, Cowes.

As the local Isle of Wight Councillor for Cowes West where Cowes Primary School is located, over several months I have been contacted by a large number of families to provide support over proposals to close the Primary School following the Islandwide decline in children. For this reason, I considered that my relationship with Cowes Primary School was too close for me not to be predetermined, and this is why I am responding as a local ward member, rather than as a member of the Cabinet.

It has not gone unnoticed that Cowes is recognised by OFSTED as a 'Good' school, with a number of families moving within the area given this and the bespoke support provided to our communities children.

In addition, it is noted that Cowes Primary School is an exemplar with its excellent SEND provision and the support given to the families with rich cultural ethnic backgrounds. This is something that I have had the pleasure to witness first hand each year through the school's pioneering International day, which not only welcomes the diversity of our ethnic community, but fully embraces this like no other school.

As a Councillor it is so frustrating to see this excellent school again being earmarked for closure when other schools and local academies perform less well are untouched. For a Local Education Authority feeling it necessary to close a Good school really concerns me, given one of our Council's key priorities are to raise educational standards. As a consequence, in viewing the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, it is equally frustrating that at this time our Government does not go far enough to level the playing field to address this. In the short term I consider this will not raise standards for the families of Cowes, as this does not offer the certainty of a Good school given Cowes being selected for closure.

In meeting with parents and listening to feedback, whilst acknowledging that doing nothing is not an option, I have sought opportunities to address falling school numbers and subsequent deficits that our school will suffer, should our school remain open. With respect to this, it is a sobering reflection, as to where we are regarding this. Speaking to others, I know proposals to keep the school site open to lessen the disruption to KS2 children has been welcomed. Ideally, to further ease disruption I favour retaining existing KS2 staff to support these children who were previously impacted during the lockdown.

I still question whether with redundancy costs, the potential to move temporary classrooms to Gurnard Primary School and the physical upheaval of moving will indeed have any positive financial impact upon Cowes Primary or its children?

In the meantime, for me it remains so very important that those brilliant members of staff, who have remained committed at the heart of our schools are provided every possible opportunity to continue to move forward together to maintain and build upon the successes of Cowes Primary. The current uncertainty and the timescales involved with any closure is neither helpful or assuring for our teaching staff at this difficult time. For those members of staff who have safeguarded our children through changes deserve our Council to safeguard them through any changes being considered.

Best Wishes,

Cllr Paul Fuller. Isle of Wight Councillor for Cowes West and Gurnard.

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Response to the Statutory Consultation January 2025

This is my personal response and views to the Cowes Primary Statutory Proposal. These comments are made in the understanding that they will be anonymous, [REDACTED]

Although I would not want the school to close and am very saddened that, due to many factors, it is now non-viable moving forward, I wish to share my thoughts on the future for the children and staff.

The latest Strategy Plan quotes a vague suggestion of possible options for the placement of children: *'This includes considering the provision of temporary accommodation at the Gurnard site and/or utilising the existing Cowes Primary School site'*.

This does not follow the Opening and Closing of Schools Statutory Guidance October 2024, page 29: *'The proposer may use the consultation to consider a range of options for the future of a school (e.g. amalgamation, academy conversion, federation or closure). However, the proposer must then publish **specific proposals** (see stage 2 of the statutory process below). It is these **specific proposals** setting out details of the new school or the school to be closed which can be commented on or objected to during the statutory representation period.'*

As result of the vagueness of the proposals, it makes a response challenging and is certainly causing increased anxiety in the community (including pupils) and within the staff team.

The options that I presume are being considered, following discussions with the LA, are keeping all pupils on the Cowes site; in temporary accommodation on the Gurnard site and variations such as some children transferring if Gurnard has capacity, then a rolling programme of transfer as capacity increases.

My view is if the children were all transferred to Gurnard then they would have a greater opportunity of feeling part of a joined up community and integration would be much easier. Adaption of the curriculum delivery would not be required and fewer staff would need to be employed. The cost involved for temporary classrooms would be potentially considerably less than maintaining the Cowes site with the need for more staff. However, what wouldn't be acceptable to the children's feeling of well being is if they were all housed in the temporary units, creating 'a them and us' situation.

I would also like to highlight the application of your own Restructuring, Redundancy and Redeployment Policy September 2018, which aligns itself with the Employment Act 1996 Section 139 (page 11, 7.1). The Local Authority is the employer for both schools and therefore cannot re-recruit into roles that have been made redundant, even though it would be under Gurnard. If Gurnard need to recruit roles that are 80% similar to those that are potentially being made redundant, then this would meet the criteria for assimilation (page 12 of the Policy). If roles were made redundant and then similar to be advertised, then the LA could face Unfair or Unlawful dismissal claims. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Staff have also raised this with the unions who I understand are taking their own legal advice.

By being able to maintain some of the staff, it not only reduces the cost of redundancy to the council but also supports the transition and well being of the pupils. They know the staff, the staff know the

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children and can therefore be better supported in their new school in terms of education, safeguarding and well being. The Quality of Education at Cowes Primary is not in question; [REDACTED] highly trained and experienced staff that would bring much to the new proposed structure.

Lastly the area of transition is absolutely crucial in making this a success. Not only is it imperative that staff meet and pupils have the opportunity of engaging in transition activities, but the communities must also be supported. This is and will continue to be, a very difficult time for both communities, something that must not be underestimated. This process for them is deeply unsettling, in many cases unwanted from both sides and must be addressed.

Thank you for taking the time to read this response and I hope that you consider the points that I have raised.

3rd February 2025