Your Address:

Dear Councillor Williamson

Stop the Cuts at Woodchurch Road Primary School

I write with concern with regards to the proposal to reduce the hours of Teaching Assistants by up to 20% at Woodchurch Road Primary school.

I understand that the this proposal is a cost cutting measure designed to reduce the school’s significant funding deficit and wish to express my alarm to you as our borough’s political leader that the school plans to address this deficit by making these cuts.

The school sits on the boundary of Oxton and Birkenhead & Tranmere and you will no doubt be aware that the latter ward is one of the poorest in Wirral with at least one in three children living in poverty and around 40% of children growing up in low income families. The children attending this school therefore need the support and learning opportunities offered through high quality education which is often provided through and supported by the provision of teaching assistants. The plans as laid out by Woodchurch Road primary school to axe support staff hours seem in complete contradiction to the pledge set out by the council in its school strategy to “ensure pupils from low income families achieve their full potential.” The strategy states that there is a strong commitment from school leaders to improve the attainment of disadvantaged children but again these plans undermine this commitment and children will suffer as a result of the cuts proposed by the school.

In a recent report looking into the impact of school shutdowns nationally, Ofsted found that amongst the youngest children returning to school some had regressed to the point that they returned wearing nappies and children who had previously been able to, could no longer use a knife & fork. These basic developmental milestones are crucial for children to have the ability to learn. Without the provision of teaching assistants, who is going to support children to regain these skills and to catch up developmentally in order that they can thrive socially, emotionally and educationally in school, so that they can reach their full potential?

There has been so much coverage in the media during this pandemic of the absolutely crucial work that school staff do and the importance of school, not just for education but also for children’s social emotional and mental health and wellbeing and it is often TA’s who provide this support to children in school. The school has suggested to parents that their children’s education will not be affected, how can that possibly be correct when they are making up to a 20% cut in support staff hours?

**Woodchurch Road Primary school is a well-established, valued and much-loved part of our community. The children in this school need their teaching assistants and I worry that if these cuts are made, the staff will not be able to meet the needs of all of the children in the school and this could lead to poor performance by the school and worse outcomes for children**.

**I call upon Wirral Council to step in and take action so that these cuts can be stopped.**

Yours

Name: