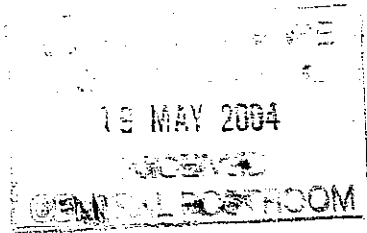


10th May 2004



Dear Sir

Re: **Proposed Change in Age of Admission at Bourton Meadow Combined School, Buckingham**

I write in relation to the Notice in the Buckingham Advertiser dated 07.05.04 regarding the proposed Foundation Class to be commenced at Bourton Meadow School, Buckingham from September 2004.

I am a mother of three children. My eldest son is already at the above school and my four year old daughter is due to start there in September 2004 in the Reception year. I also have a two year old son.

I have several concerns regarding the above proposal. It saddens me that by the school taking 3-year olds it will have a knock-on detrimental effect on the already well-established playgroup, which uses the adjoining Bourton Centre. As a Committee member of this playgroup I am aware that the future for the playgroup remains very uncertain. We have been told by the Headteacher that our rent will increase dramatically to £20.00 per hour for the hire of this facility, when we are now only paying around £23.00 per day. I understand that steps have been taken to determine if such a price increase can occur and we know that this is being looked into. We will obviously lose children whose parents choose to send them to school.

The playgroup is extremely well run and the last Ofsted inspection reflected this. If the playgroup is unable to function due to the commencement of the Foundation Class, there will be a lack of facilities for children aged 2½ years. Obviously there are other playgroups in the area, but it is always more suitable if your child can go to a playgroup nearest the school he/she will progress to, especially if other siblings are already in attendance there. The other playgroups in and around Buckingham are situated near to the primary schools.

I personally would not want to start my child at another playgroup for 6 months and then, so that he would mix with children whom he would go to school with, disrupt him and move him into the Foundation Class. This would be very unsettling.

I personally feel that children are being pushed too quickly and are losing their childhood. Obviously this is a personal opinion and every parent should have

the right to choose where and how their child is educated. This foundation class will, to some extent, take away this right. I think it is unfair on children to be expected to go from being at home with their parent/s all week to going to school every day at the very young age of 3.

My children have enjoyed going to playgroup where the emphasis has been on "play". They have learned to socialise with other children and interact with adults. They have also been able to choose activities.

Very little information about the foundation class has been given out, apart from a letter which came home from school asking if we had children who would be 3 in September. It also stated that research had shown that 3 and 4 year olds learned better together. **Does this therefore mean that the 3 year olds will be taught with the 4 year olds?**

Another point I would like clarified is what would happen if I chose not to send my son to the Foundation Class. Obviously those children who had already been there for a year would be far more advanced than those new starters. They would already know the school routine. How would the school accommodate new children?

I personally would prefer the school intake to remain the same.

Yours sincerely



Bourton Meadow School

Burleigh Piece - Buckingham - MK18 7HX

Tel: 01280 823374 / Fax: 01280 823988

Headteacher: Mrs G Race



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

7th June 2004

Dear [REDACTED]

Proposed alterations to Bourton Meadow School

The County Solicitor as sent your letter to me for response.

I feel it is important to point out that this decision was made by the Governing Body of the school and not by myself; similarly the charges. Decisions such as those outlined must be discussed fully and ultimately agreed by the body as a whole.

Bourton Meadow School, just as very many other schools, wishes to extend the foundation stage of learning to three year olds. This does not imply that the playgroup is not well run.

There is no question of children being "pushed too quickly". Quality provision for very young children (including four year olds) is all "experiential" and "hands on" and this curriculum is quite different from the "National Curriculum".

There is much research to show that both three year olds and four year olds learn better when they are together and at Bourton Meadow we are always trying to improve the provision for our children.

Finally, we all hope that the Playgroup will be able to continue and we are in discussions with Mrs McAndrew. We want parents to have more choice, not less. It will be for those parents to decide if they want the provision in our foundation stage class. Parents of four year olds equally can choose not to send their child to school until they are five and, of course, we would make all practical provision for any child joining us as a new member of the group.

Yours sincerely

MRS G R RACE
HEADTEACHER

Email: office@bourtonmeadow.bucks.sch.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL
14 MAY 2004
RECEIVED
CENTRAL POSTROOM

Dear Mr Popat,

I am writing to you to outline my concerns regarding the notice in the Buckingham & Winslow newspaper about the change to 3-11 year olds at Bourton Meadow School.

As my daughter will be attending the school from sept 04 I would like to know if your plans are to include 3 year olds in the same class as 4 year olds? If this is the case then I have serious concerns as she is at nursery school with 3 year olds and as I hope you are aware there is a lot of difference in abilities in the ages and I don't see how this is going to help my daughter's education!

I would like to know why you are

wanting to change the age from 4-11
and what your exact plans are.

I await your reply.

yours sincerely



Bourton Meadow School

Burleigh Piece - Buckingham - MK18 7HX

Tel: 01280 823374 / Fax: 01280 823988

Headteacher: Mrs G Race



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

7th June 2004

Dear **[REDACTED]**

Proposed alterations to Bourton Meadow School

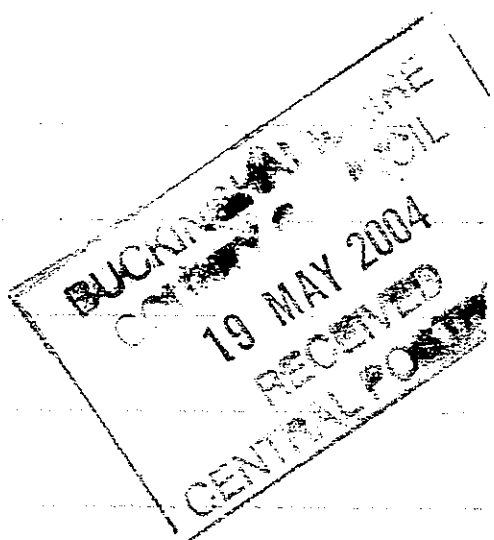
The County Solicitor has passed your letter on to me for response.

The Governors of the school, after considering many issues, have decided that just like many, if not most other schools, we should extend our Foundation Stage class to include three year olds.

There is much research to show that both three year olds and four year olds learn better when they are together and at Bourton Meadow we are always trying to improve the provision for our children.

Yours sincerely

**MRS G R RACE
HEADTEACHER**



16.05.2004

Dear Sir

In connection with the legal notice placed in the Buckingham and Winslow Advertiser dated 7th May 2004 concerning Bourtton Meadow School in Buckingham.

Firstly, Bourtton Meadow School has two entrances and at this time of writing there is only one copy of this notice displayed at the Burleigh Piece entrance and none at the entrance which leads

into Bowden Park, which is used by many parents.

Secondly, Section B states that the premises is to be 'enlarged' to accommodate 3 year olds from September 2004. My child, and approximately 90 others, in a year one class, are currently being taught in two temporary buildings which have no toilets. These have been in use by the school for at least 6 years as classrooms. Surely any new buildings should be used to replace these temporary buildings (first, before even thinking about an extra intake of children).

Thirdly, the Headteacher has

been asked many times by prospective parents about her plans for these 3 year olds she intends to take in :-

1. What will the structure of the sessions be?

2. Will they be mixed with the 4 year olds?

and many more questions

The Headteacher has told them that she will not divulge any information until the six week period for the notice has passed

How can these parents make up their minds to agree or object to these proposals when they do not know what they are agreeing or objecting to. Surely all these details should be available before this notice is issued.

Yours sincerely,



7th June 2004

Bourton Meadow School

Burleigh Piece - Buckingham - MK18 7HX

Tel: 01280 823374 / Fax: 01280 823988

Headteacher: Mrs G Race



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Dear [REDACTED]

Proposed alterations to Bourton Meadow School

The County Solicitor as sent your letter to me for response. I would like to correct some misunderstandings on your part if I may.

A copy of the notice is displayed in the Buckingham Library and on the school website - www.bourtonmeadow.bucks.sch.uk. Thank you for pointing out that a copy was not previously on display at the other entrance, and I can confirm that this has now been rectified.

There are currently 73 children in Year One and they are in three classrooms. Not approximately 90 in two classrooms as you state. The two terrapin buildings that they do use are modern and have been on site only three years. There is an older terrapin that has been on site since the school opened. The school must work with the Authority to provide this accommodation on a permanent basis and the Governors and LEA are discussing these matters as quite a separate issue.

The building extension is to be funded from school money and is therefore our own project.

It is not true to say that I "... will not divulge information." I have to date been approached by only three parents. Two of these asked about matters that have yet to be agreed and finalised and one parent asked about provision in the foundation stage. In a 15 minute discussion with this parent I was able to describe the kind of setting and activities that his child would receive and as a result I understand that he felt quite happy and able to make a decision.

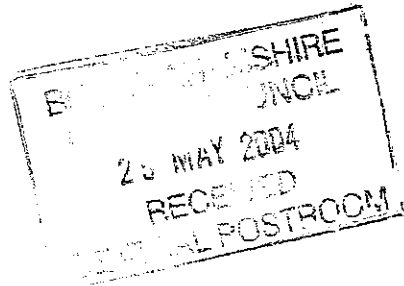
Whilst I understand any change is unsettling, I understand that there are far more parents giving us positive feedback than negative towards the proposals.

Yours sincerely

MRS G R RACE
HEADTEACHER

School Organisation Committee
C/o Mr R Popat
Secretary to SOC
County Hall
Aylesbury
Bucks
HP20 1UA

23rd May 2004



Dear Sirs,

I would like to express my concern with regard to the recent proposals to extend Bourton Meadow School and take 3 year olds from September 2004.

I have a 4 year old starting in September and my concern is where are they planning to put an extra building and cater for more children. Currently Reception children have the Courtyard to play in as well as the small playground but I feel space is already limited in the cloakrooms, toilets and classrooms. If they were to extend the building, surely the existing children in the school should also benefit. The hall is completely packed full in assembly's now.

Another major concern I have is: Are the 3 year olds to be in the same classes as the 4 year olds starting in Reception?. Some 4 year olds will be turning 5 shortly after starting school and have often already had 12 -18 months in a Nursery environment. I feel having 3 year olds in the same classroom will be disruptive to their start in education.

I am slightly annoyed the way this announcement has been made, mainly because my daughter is due to start in September and suddenly with only a few months notice we as parents our unaware how the Reception children will be included into the School. If the way of teaching Reception children is to be changed from previous years, surely we should have been told prior to applying for a place at the school.

Obviously I do not object to improvements to the school, but certain points must be taken into consideration. The fact that on the same site as the school is very well supported playgroup that prepares the children for school wonderfully. Why overcrowd the school any further, class sizes seem to be growing rapidly as it is.

Yours sincerely,





Bourton Meadow School

Burleigh Piece - Buckingham - MK18 7HX

Tel: 01280 823374 / Fax: 01280 823988

Headteacher: Mrs G Race



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

8TH June 2004

Dear [REDACTED]

Proposed alterations to Bourton Meadow School

The County Solicitor has sent your letter to me for response.

The current Reception accommodation is to be extended and is to include toilets and a further cloakroom for the dedicated use of children in the Foundation Stage. This is an improvement since, as you rightly point out, cloakroom and toilet space is limited in the school. With regard to play areas, there will still be ample space left in the courtyard and we hope to create a covered outdoor play space which will make possible more outside play opportunities.

With regard to the hall - we are very lucky to have a hall that is built to a larger scale than most schools. However, it is certainly full when all the children and an audience of parents is in there.

With regard to your child starting school, there is much research to show that both three year olds and four year olds learn better together and we are always trying to improve provision for our children.

I would also like to correct a misunderstanding on your part. It is not true to say that class sizes are growing rapidly. All classes, apart from a Class of 30 and a Class of 31 in Year 5, are under, or well under 30. The school is not overcrowded, but we do need some permanent accommodation to replace our terrapins. This is being discussed as a separate issue.

Parents and the community were notified of the Governors' decision's regarding these changes on the very next day. Unfortunately, this has meant unavoidable short notice to this year's cohort of parents. I would like to reassure you that any changes to the way we do things now will only be for the better.

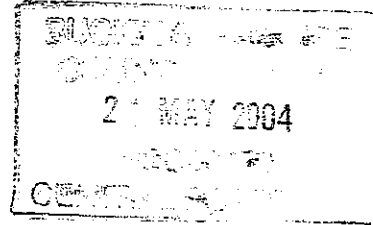
Yours sincerely

MRS G R RACE
HEADTEACHER

88

Email: office@bourtonmeadow.bucks.sch.uk

18 May 2004



Mr R Papat
Secretary to SOC
County Hall
Aylesbury
Bucks
HP20 1UA

Dear Mr Papat

wish to express to you the concerns I felt after reading the public notices in the Buckingham and Winslow Advertiser regarding the proposal for 3 year old children to be joining Bourton Meadow School in a combined environment with the new reception children starting in September.

My daughter is due to start in her reception class in September of this year and I feel she will be both disappointed and disrupted by this proposal, I believe this disappointment will be that we have been telling her she is a big girl and will be leaving all the smaller children at playgroup in order to help with the change and progression only to find them in her classroom and disrupting as to the vast difference in the abilities of 89

3 and 4 year olds, I realise that come September there will be a few 3 year olds who are due to turn 4, but there will also be the longer 3 year olds that can tend to be distracting in a Playgroup environment let alone in the more structured environment of the classroom.

I know myself how much my daughter has changed this past year, I feel the first year of school is very important and do not wish for a disruptive start to her school life.

Yours sincerely



Bourton Meadow School

Burleigh Piece - Buckingham - MK18 7HX

Tel: 01280 823374 / Fax: 01280 823988

Headteacher: Mrs G Race



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

10TH June 2004

Dear [REDACTED]

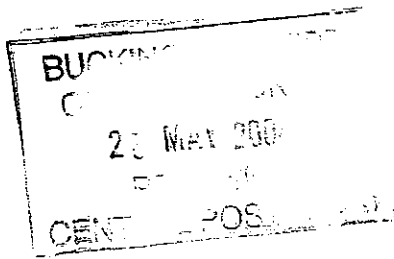
Proposed alterations to Bourton Meadow School

The County Solicitor has passed your letter to me for response.

Whilst I appreciate your concerns, there is much research to show that both three year olds and four year olds learn better when they are together and at Bourton Meadow we are always trying to improve the provision for our children.

Yours sincerely

**MRS G R RACE
HEADTEACHER**



Dear Sirs,

I am writing in response to the recent notification in the Buckingham Advertiser that Bowten Meadows School intends to lower the entry age of its pupils from 4 years to 3.

I feel that over recent years the school has taken in more and more children and is growing too big already. When my children started at Bowten Meadows there was a lovely library area which has since been converted into more classroom space and terrapin huts have been installed on the playground to house the growing number of children. So not only are there more children but less playing area as well. How can it therefore be right for the school to take more children when it needs terrapins to house the ones it already has.

Parking is also already a major problem largely due to the number of children accepted ~~out~~ from out of catchment. - surely this will only get worse if there are to be more children attending.

The school is currently unwilling to inform parents of where these 3 year olds are to be housed ^{and} ~~and~~ what effect it may have on the children who are already there.

All in all I feel that it would be wrong to allow this to happen at a school that is already bursting at the seams.

Yours faithfully



Bourton Meadow School

Burleigh Piece - Buckingham - MK18 7HX

Tel: 01280 823374 / Fax: 01280 823988

Headteacher: Mrs G Race



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

10TH June 2004

Dear [REDACTED]

Proposed alterations to Bourton Meadow School

The County Solicitor has passed your letter to me for response.

I would like to correct some misunderstanding on your part if I may.

The space where the library used to be was inadequate and inaccessible and has now been located in two other spaces outside classrooms so children have easier access.

Over the years, due to several housing developments in Buckingham, the school has had to respond to the growing population. When I was appointed, we were a two-form entry school with many classes of 35 and 36 children. The decision to increase classroom space has been taken to keep class sizes down, as indeed it has. All but two classes are now under or well under 30.

Although there are some children out of catchment at the school the parking problems are, as they are nationally, due to parents driving short distances rather than walking. The school is constantly engaged in trying to educate parents on this matter.

Finally, the school Governors have been quite open about the fact that there is to be an extension to the Reception accommodation and therefore I cannot agree that the school has been ".....unwilling to inform parents of where these three year olds are to be housed."

I hope this clarifies the position for you.

Yours sincerely

**MRS G R RACE
HEADTEACHER**