
28th February 2024

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Dear Parent/Carers,

You may be aware that on the Island we have too many primary school places. What this means is that we have too many primary schools for the number of children on the Island, and this situation is getting worse due to fewer children being born. This means we have to take action to address this situation as otherwise our school system won't be financially viable.

We already have schools who are struggling to manage their budgets causing deficits to start across our schools. The funding provided for schools is based on a class size of 30 children. Any less than this causes the school to be creative as places not filled are approximately £4,200 per pupil, meaning it becomes more difficult to fund the broad and balanced curriculum that enables children to thrive, fund additional support and offer enrichment activities.

Having really small classes causes additional workload for teachers as they have to plan and teach across a potential mixed age or key stage class, which can have a huge range of needs. This affects the standards the children can achieve and the ability to extend pupils even further.

Very small schools have to share multiple leadership responsibilities and as schools decrease in size, they still have the same overheads as a larger school, such as building costs, energy costs and maintenance costs.

As a council, we need to take action to ensure our school system can support all of the children on the Island for generations to come. We are due to launch a number of public events across the Island where we would like to hear your views on the future of our school system. Your views will then form part of our strategy to address the rising number of spare places eventually leading to a formal consultation next academic year considering all of our schools, and the potential to close some of them.

We will be supporting schools and families during this time with regular communication, and eventually transition plans for the affected schools and children. We want to ensure children retain their friendship groups as much as possible and realise this will be a period of uncertainty. However, we are working closely with headteachers and urge all families to join us at some of the events and make your voice heard. We have set up an email address to capture people's questions and concerns. It is strategic.planning@iow.gov.uk

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I hope this reassures you that we are planning the process out and are listening to all stakeholders. We look forward to meeting you and discussing the future of our education on the Island.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Naomi Carter', written in a cursive style.

Naomi Carter
Service Director – Education, Inclusion and Access