

## Appendix 6

### PROPOSED CLOSURE OF ASTOR OF HEVER SCHOOL AND ITS REPLACEMENT WITH A GOVERNMENT FUNDED ACADEMY Summary of Written Responses To Date

	<b>Support Proposal</b>	<b>Against Proposal</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Parent / Carer</b>	19	2	2	23
<b>Student</b>	1			1
<b>Member of Staff</b>	1			1
<b>Governor at School</b>	1			1
<b>Other Interested Party</b>	5 (2 full GB)	1 (NASUWT)		6
<b>Total</b>	27	3	2	32

#### **Comments in favour of the Proposal**

- A move towards an academy can only bring good to an increasingly strong foundation. With Woodard's experience and general ethos, and of course an injection of funds to provide new buildings and equipment, we are sure they will make Astor THE place to be in future years.
- The one thing I would want to see more of is a push for academic standards. I believe Woodard will help to facilitate this. I hope regeneration is done as quickly as possible, with as little disruption as possible.
- I think it is the best way for the school to go forward.
- My main concern is that my child receives the best possible education, and turns out to be a well-rounded child, that he is safe and that he is well prepared for life after school.
- I agree with the school becoming an academy but hope the proposals are fulfilled, as we were promised fantastic things when Astor became a sports college but the school went from bad to worse.
- We like the idea of the buildings being replaced and giving the pupils a sense of pride and hopefully respect for their new surroundings. The Woodard involvement will have an excellent influence as their pastoral care is well known in other academies.
- The Governing Body of Oakwood Park Grammar School agrees in principle to the proposal. It raised three concerns in its response:
  - i. Whether there is potential for Astor's falling pupil roll to be reversed. (ACSO response: there is currently consultation on reducing another school's published admission number).
  - ii. Whether there would be faith criteria for admission and the existence of another faith school on the Oakwood site (ACSO response: there will be no faith criteria for admission; the co-existence of two faith schools has not generated any concerns).

- iii. Traffic management and consultation with other Oakwood Park institutions about the design and location of new buildings (ACSO response: intensive consultation with site users is underway).
- The Governing Body of Bower Grove School agree with the proposal on the understanding that the Astor Satellite for ASD pupils will be able to continue within the new Academy.
- The only thing that concerns me is the disruption to the children's education whilst the rebuild is going on. If the proposal goes ahead I will be very interested to find out exactly where the school is going to be built and where the students will be taught during the rebuild.
- I hope to see a return to more useful and traditional curriculum subjects. The current hotchpotch is having a disastrous effect on almost all children in England. My hope is that Woodard Schools would turn Astor of Hever into a close copy of a CofE independent school with the associated high standards.

### **Comments against the Proposal**

- I sent my child to the school because it was a sports school and it should build on this.
- A letter from the Kent County Secretary of the NASUWT objects to the proposal. The letter covers, in depth, a number of issues against the proposal. They mostly relate to the Association's general concerns about academies, rather than concerns about this proposal in particular. In summary, the association's concerns refer to:
  - Passing ownership and control of a school to a private sponsor.
  - Alleged lack of evidence that academies raise standards.
  - Whether unions will be recognised.
  - Academies' freedom to vary pay and conditions of service.
  - The possibility that staff may lack information at the point when they have to decide whether to transfer to the academy.
  - Academies not being accountable to the local authority.
  - Admission arrangements.

### **Undecided**

- Comments reflecting suspicion about the Local Authority's motives (eg: is it selling-off bad schools?)