

Sent: 03 August 2016 20:16
To: ECS-CRM Sutherland
Subject: Kinbrace closure consultation

I wish to submit my views on the subject of re-opening Kinbrace Primary School. I am a rate and tax payer in Highland and in this time of austerity I cannot see how the re-opening of the school would make any sense.

1) To have a school costing upwards of £130,000 to open for 4 children would be in my view a gross waste of public money, especially considering the financial pressures the Education Department is under. It would be cheaper to send the children to boarding school.

2) I have worked in schools in different regions and in both my training and experience, I have seen the benefits of a diverse group of peers, where children learn to socialise, emotionally and intellectually, by co-operating and sharing activities, resources and ideas. I believe there are 4 children affected here, one of whom is still in the nursery, so that child would be in a solitary situation, while the remaining three would be in the unhappy position of "two being company and three being a crowd" - there would invariably be (given human nature) one child left out, regardless of the best efforts of the teacher. Also with this number brainstorming ideas is limited to the life experiences of three children in similarly isolated areas, so they cannot benefit from the culture capital of a variety of peers from different socio-economic backgrounds.

3) I have heard the argument that the children, if travelling to Helmsdale, may miss out on education in the winter months due to the road being closed in bad weather - in fact, unless the teacher was living in Kinbrace the school would still be shut, since if children could not get to Helmsdale then a teacher driving to work would, in all likelihood be unable to reach Kinbrace!

These are just a few limited arguments for the closure of Kinbrace Primary School, and I have to say, the greatest in my view is financial. I have seen the devastating effects of austerity in the form of cuts to services affecting the elderly and those in ill-health, particularly in my experience the Patient Transport Service and public transport in this area, and while I am well aware that these are different budgets, it seems to me that the funding of Kinbrace would undoubtedly have a knock-on affect elsewhere.