

# SOS

## Save Our Schools newsletter

- Write to your Councillor using our easy contact list
  - The myth of falling pupil numbers
  - The LSC – the back door to ending selection
  - Blank petition form for your use

Next page 

## The “Review”

In November 2003 Gloucestershire County Council published the ‘Review of Gloucester Secondary Schools’.

The Review relies on assumptions and the selective use of statistics to present options for change which involve closing and/or merging much improved comprehensive schools, and popular high performing grammar and comprehensive schools in order to disguise under-achievement elsewhere.

Instead of concentrating on the schools which perform least well the review purports to be considering whether there is something “wrong with the system”. This is a catch all phrase to help create the conditions in which **any** subsequent action can be justified, however unpopular.

Gloucester has some of the best performing schools in the country but these are under threat from this biased and ill-considered Review. The Review would

### **Fact!!**

Gloucestershire’s LEA average at GCSE puts it 13th in the country. Gloucester City is 12% above the national average. Bristol is the educational model that the County Council’s Cabinet wishes to adopt in Gloucester – it ranks 144th in the Country and is 20% below the National Average!

have us believe that Gloucester Schools perform badly and that Gloucester performs badly when compared to Cheltenham. Did they compare Gloucester with demographically similar towns? No, they did not. But they did use a scoring mechanism which gave the same statistical weighting to just a handful of pupils in the top quintile of Oxtalls as the 100 pupils in the same quintile at Sir Thomas Rich’s. This helped them to claim that Gloucester schools perform poorly overall. Complete nonsense of course.

We challenge the assumptions in the review and we challenge the way statistics have been used. **Why are we suspicious about the motives?** We know some politicians are opposed to selective and single sex schools because they have stated this publicly.

## How YOU can help

- 1 Return the consultation form and vote for no change. The County Council has invited responses on a form included in the review document (and subsequently reprinted due to many errors), and also available on the council's web site at <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/educsurveys/secondaryreview.aspx> You can use this online form to give your feedback to the Council. Tell them you reject the statement in Para 8 of Section B that numbers are forecast to fall. We advise the rejection of the sixth form college option in section C5 which will damage good schools and fuel closures and mergers.
- 2 The fate of our schools depends on The

### ***Fact!!***

The council plans to close or merge existing city schools because they say there will not be enough pupils for them, yet they have already discussed plans to build a new school and claim a £15 million contribution from central government.

Cabinet's decision on 5th March. The Cabinet comprises [5 Labour and 5 Liberal County Councillors whose contact details you will find on pages 5-7](#). Please write to them and tell them you disagree with the conclusions of the review.

### ***Action!!***

[Write to your County Councillor](#) regardless of their party. This is important because some of them may not be aware of all the issues especially if their constituency is not in Gloucester. Tell them the review options are based on falling pupil numbers despite massive evidence to the contrary of new building and new businesses in the area and massive investment in the local infrastructure.

If you believe that good schools should be encouraged and not closed or merged on the strength of unproven theories and if you believe that under-performing schools deserve inquiry and support about their specific circumstances please support us. ■

### That table!

The Review document contains a table on page 7 which shows that pupil numbers will fall by 672 between 2003 and 2010. The table also shows that the number of pupils in 2010 will still be **more** than in 2000. So what has changed? We still have the same number of schools as 3 years ago so the conclusion has to be that schools are more crowded than they were in 2000. That's no basis for removing places. ■

### Birth Rates

Gloucester County Council tell us that birth rates are falling nationally and they use this as another reason to cut places in the schools under review. Information available on the internet shows us that areas of relatively low cost living buck this national trend which is driven by couples in high cost urban

environments who defer their family until they are older and more established financially, or indefinitely. ■

### Learning and Skills Council (LSC)

You may have seen several letters in the press from SOS supporter Paul Dodgshun. [www.thisisgloucestershire.co.uk](http://www.thisisgloucestershire.co.uk) and search for Dodgshun. They are worth reading because he has unearthed a lot of information which will come as a shock to many. Despite LSC protestations to the contrary they have their well funded and unelected eyes on the sixth forms of our schools. They want to establish sixth form colleges which would have the effect of removing large numbers of places from Gloucester schools, and if you accept that a sixth form is central to the ethos of a grammar school it's clear that their plans fit in "nicely" with those who seek to end selective education. ■

### ***Fact!!***

In Gloucestershire in the year 2000 the birth rate per 1000 women of child bearing

age was 62.8 live births, which was 15% above the national average and 50% higher than neighbouring Oxfordshire.

# Gloucestershire County Councillors

Use this list to contact your councillor and particularly members of the cabinet. Just click on the name of the councillor to send an email.

-  = Labour
-  = Liberal Democrat
-  = Conservative
-  = Independents
-  = Cabinet Member

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