

15 March 2023

FAO: William Fieldhouse
Inspector to the PforE Independent Examination

Dear Mr Fieldhouse

OD20 – Letter from St Johns CE Primary School regarding JPA2

You received and published a letter from members of the Governing Body of St Johns CE Primary School dated 2nd February 2023.

I attended the Stakehill examination hearing on 19th January 2023 as an individual resident of the local area Thornham and introduced myself as such at the start of the proceedings. I declared no representation of any organisation or group in both my published written statement and personally at the hearing.

At a relevant point in the hearing where school places were discussed you approved my request to make comment. I stated from written notes that "I've been a Governor of the school for 18 years" which was meant in all sincerity in the past tense and in no way intended to mislead the hearing, which was attended by numerous professionals and a KC, which from experience, would not be an environment to misrepresent myself. The hearing was a very pressurised formal environment for a member of the public to make comment and also streamed live on the internet which would be retained on the streaming platform forever. Having known this, why on earth would I offer a statement that was not truthful.

It would appear the school, instead of contacting me for an explanation direct, has formally reacted and written to you and others that I had no authority to speak on behalf of the school. In further comments about local education, I offered my own individual observations on the size and structure of school and school places and the potential effect of proposed new development, based on factual, publicly available information and knowledge gained from local residency.

The principle of the hearing was to investigate the soundness of the PforE plan and as a member of the local community I had every right to attend and speak on my own behalf as a local resident, which I did.

When I read the published letter to you from the school, I was deeply hurt by their suggestion I had deliberately lied to the hearing. I find the accusations from those individuals personally offensive and very disappointing. Their letter to you is published and remains as an accessible document on the internet and therefore my character and honesty brought into question to a worldwide audience, which I will address privately.

If you and your colleagues feel I had misrepresented myself at the hearing, then I apologise unreservedly as it was not my intention at all and assure you that it was simply a wrong term to use to indicate the past tense. For the avoidance of doubt, I apologise if you feel my unintentional phrase misled the formal hearing process in any way and therefore redact any comments I made concerning the school that may have been misinterpreted.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Wright