

Name: Kevin McDaniel
Job title: Head of Schools and Educational Services
Email address: Kevin.McDaniel@rbwm.gov.uk
Phone number: 01628 683592

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Dominic Du Pre
Chair of Governors
Lowbrook Academy
The Fairway
Cox Green
Maidenhead
SL6 3AR

Dear Dominic

I am writing to you following a number of conversations between our organisations in recent days to secure the expansion of your Outstanding school. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead recognise the Academy's very high levels of attainment and consistently high levels of demand for places from residents and want the expansion to two forms of entry to go ahead.

In May 2016, the Council agreed to provide £1.6m to add four classrooms, a staff room, additional hall space of circa 167m² and support for some immediate internal remodelling to allow the Academy to admit 60 pupils in September 2016. This decision of the council is an investment of local resources in excellent education to support parental choice, in addition to the investment in sufficient school places funded through national government grants.

We remain committed to that expansion which is in line with national school building guidelines. The Academy committed a capital sum of £50k to the project as well. The initial stages are underway and the design of the remaining block has evolved to include a 300m² hall. This has put financial pressure on the project which now has an estimated cost of £2.35m so there is a need for financial certainty before the scheme can progress further.

We understand that the Academy believe that a single hall of 300m² is necessary to accommodate all of the pupils in one space and allow the school continue to achieve the highest levels of attainment and retain its Ofsted judgement of Outstanding. These facilities are desired by all schools but not present in any primary schools in the Borough. The council has a duty to ensure that local resources, in this case capital money, is appropriately allocated.

The Council believes that the initial capital commitment to support classrooms and an additional 167m² of hall space is a viable school configuration, and one that is comparable to many existing schools in the Borough. Our first offer is therefore to support a 167m² hall in the proposed block and to approve and meet the capital costs for such a scheme. The costs would include the £50k contribution from the Academy while shifting all of the financial burden to the Council's capital programme.

Alison Alexander - Managing Director and Strategic Director of Adult, Children and Health Services
Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1RF
W: www.rbwm.gov.uk E: customer.service@rbwm.gov.uk T: 01628 683800

Should the Academy firmly believe that a hall beyond that size is essential for their operation then the Council is prepared to support that desire by offering an interest-free loan facility to enable the Academy to provide the facilities for the pupils of Lowbrook Academy.

Our second offer therefore is to increase our contribution to the current scheme recognising the likely costs of the commitment to a 167m² hall, lifting the Council contribution by £200k to a total of £1.8m. Taking into account the Academy's existing commitment of £50k, that leaves a budget shortfall of £500k.

The Council is willing to provide an interest-free loan over 25 years to the Academy, with a variable repayment schedule to match the Academy's annual revenue position and any grants the Academy may be able to secure from the Education Funding Agency. This would be an indicative £20k repayment each year for the Academy to meet.

We believe that these offers represent a transparent and fair commitment to all schools, the local taxpayers and the range of services that the Council invests in for all residents.

I look forward to hearing how the Academy wishes to proceed.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. McDaniel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'M' and 'D'.

Kevin McDaniel
Head of Schools and Educational Services

Cc:
David Rooney (Executive Principal)
Cllr Dudley, Leader of the Council
Cllr Airey, Lead Member for Children's Services
The Rt Hon Theresa May
Alison Alexander, Managing Director
Cllr McWilliams, Ward Member for Cox Green
Cllr Brimacombe, Ward Member for Cox Green
Cllr Bullock, Ward Member for Cox Green