

## CHURCH LAWFORD C of E FIRST SCHOOL

1. Church Lawford First School is housed in an excellent modern building with spacious grounds, a playing field at the rear, and first class facilities. The buildings have been extremely well maintained. The accommodation was designed for 96 pupils but the one spare classroom is fully used for a thriving Pre-school Playgroup and Mother and Toddler Group. These are both closely integrated with the school, the children coming together for various activities to the mutual benefit of all.
2. Numbers on roll have increased steadily in recent years. Currently there are 32 pupils on roll, with sufficient definite enrolments already for September 1990 to take numbers to 35. Names of children down to start each September up to and including 1993 ensure that numbers on roll will remain at that level until July 1994, and the Governors are aware of a number of additional children whose parents plan to start them at the school once its future is assured.
3. Based on these numbers, rather than the erroneous ones originally supplied by the Council's officers to the Primary Development Working Party, L.M.S. formula funding will give the school at worst an annual budget less than £600 short of the current funding, and this deficit can easily be made up from the educational trust fund which exists for the sole benefit of the children of the village. Numbers on roll for September 1990 actually give an increase of more than £2,000.
4. Planning permission has recently been granted for some 10 or 12 new houses in the village, and there are a substantial number of 'Airey' houses in the village all of which are scheduled for rebuilding. These developments are likely to bring more children to the village, thus further swelling future numbers.
5. The school is providing an excellent standard of education. Children receive considerable individual attention and the benefits are seen in the high standards of numeracy and literacy which are achieved. Parents whose children have transferred from other schools (in one case from a private school) all comment upon the rapid progress their children make in comparison with their previous schools. The full range of the curriculum is covered while the children are taught to play the recorder and to read music as well as singing. Computer assisted learning is used throughout the school. The current stages of the National Curriculum are being met in full and plans are well in hand for meeting the remaining stages by the relevant dates. The 2.2 staffing level gives us 3 skilled teachers whose efforts are supported by regular input from a variety of volunteers including 2 ex-teachers, a trained gymnast and a variety of other parents. This is the same staffing level as in many of Warwickshire's First schools. Active participation in the COSSFOSSE cluster of small schools amply makes up for any possible lack of professional stimulus and INSET in the small staff room.

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6. Class sizes at Church Lawford are small and of mixed age groups. In our experience mixed age classes foster co-operative behaviour between the children. Brighter young pupils benefit from the stimulus of working alongside older children, while slower-learning older pupils work alongside the younger ones without the sense of failure so commonly engendered by peer group competition in larger schools with single age classes. Visitors to our school frequently comment on the delightful family atmosphere which prevails. The children are happy to be at school and so learn better. The disciplined, positive and co-operative attitudes which they form towards their school, their teachers and each other serve them well in their later education and careers. They go on to middle school confident and well-adjusted, with a flying start on many of their contemporaries.

7. There is active community support for the school. The Friends of the School undertake voluntary fund-raising which ensures that the school is well resourced with an excellent range of teaching materials and equipment. They also organise a number of extra-curricula activities for the benefit of the children, while the rich rural environment is extensively used for visits to farms, rivers, woodlands and ponds. Indeed pupils from town schools come out to Church Lawford, so that they too can participate in these benefits.

8. The school is a keystone of community life. In addition to the Playgroup and Mother and Toddler Group the school accommodates adult evening classes two nights a week. It is used for a wide range of social events such as fashion shows, jumble sales and the Christmas Fayre. In summer it hosts the village fete, and the school Sports Day and Christmas play attract a wide variety of people, not just parents. The children have close ties with the over 60's group in the village; they give a special performance of the Christmas play for them, and entertain them to tea. At Harvest Festival the children distribute fruit, vegetables and flowers to the old people.

9. Church Lawford is a church school. The Rector visits the school several times each week and gets to know the children well. The children are a vital part of our religious festivals at Christmas, Easter, Mothering Sunday and Harvest festival. Without the school the church festivals would be desperately impoverished. Without the church the religious and moral education of our children would be impoverished.

10. Closure of our school would be a mortal wound to our community, and the loss would vastly outweigh the small savings that might accrue to the Education Authority. For all the undoubted merits of Long Lawford school, where it is intended that our children should be sent, it cannot equal the quality of the educational experience which our children already enjoy. Long Lawford is not a church school and it plays no part in our community, even though it is the designated middle school for our village. Classes are large and would be larger if our children transferred there. We understand that the headteacher of Long Lawford is concerned at the size of reception class which would be forced upon him if Church Lawford children went there from 1991.

11. The proposal to close Church Lawford First School cannot be justified on educational, financial or community grounds. We ask the Education Authority to reject it.

Friends of Church Lawford First School  
February 1990