Vale of White Horse District Council,

Abbey House,

Abbey Close,

Abingdon,

OX14 3JE

June 10th, 2013

Dear Sir or Madam,

**Re: Consultation on the proposal to expand Watchfield Primary School**

Watchfield Parish Council has the following comments regarding the proposal to expand Watchfield Primary School.

* Traffic around the school both prior to and at the end of the school day has been a source of concern for many years, exacerbated through the increase in pupil numbers over the past few years. This is clearly a child safety issue as there have been a number of near misses as pedestrians, cyclists and car drivers converge on the North Street entrance. This is particularly so in wet weather when more parents decide to drop off or collect their children. Despite a long-running campaign by the school to urge more responsible driving and the introduction of the new walk to school policy, it remains a major safety concern. This issue must be addressed before any significant increase in pupil and teaching staff numbers are permitted and will involve improved liaison between OCC and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation of the MOD.
* Watchfield Primary School was designed and built as a ‘village school’. At the time, recreational and sports facilities were no doubt deemed appropriate for lower pupil numbers than the current pupil roll. Already, the nursery has been built on land that used to be part of the playing field; we have therefore seen a growing number of children needing to use a smaller facility. Before increasing school numbers and reducing the playing field further by erecting additional classes on the land, consideration should be given to how sufficient sports and recreational space will be made available. Obesity is affecting an increasing proportion of children in the UK. Physical activity plays an important role in the prevention of becoming overweight and obese in childhood and adolescence; and reducing the risk of obesity in adulthood.

It is difficult to make any further comments at this juncture as no details have been made available of a) how the increase in pupil numbers will be accommodated and b) building plans showing changes in facilities and transport arrangements. An ‘in principle’ agreement to expand without the detail of how this will impact on the school and local community is not possible, therefore, Watchfield Parish Council objects to the expansion plans as they stand.

Watchfield Parish Council is very mindful of the likely increase in the number of children of school age coming into the village from new housing developments and has a clear interest in ensuring a satisfactory solution to their schooling is found.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Cindy Matthews,

Clerk to Watchfield Parish Council