

I have taught in a beautiful, light, top floor classroom in Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School since 2002, situated in Chatham Street, central Ramsgate.

In November 2004, I flew from Barcelona to Manston and was amazed to be able to see, through the windows, the mess of papers I'd left on my desk. That is how close the plane flew across the school. When at work, the classroom would suddenly become dark as the shadows of the planes passed overhead with the accompanying ear-splitting, high-pitched screech and the crushing low –pitched roar of the engines, followed a short time later, by a second huge noise as the aircraft put its engines into reverse thrust to land. Teaching was interrupted and it created an overwhelming distraction which meant that students and teachers had to refocus their train of thought. As anyone who has taught teenagers knows, maintaining concentration is essential if good learning is to take place.

Increasingly teachers are dealing with students who suffer from stress, anxiety and special educational needs. These adverse classroom conditions only exacerbate these problems and the loss of concentration can be impossible for them to re-establish once it has been interrupted, leading to poorer learning for the rest of the lesson.

The sound of aircraft is particularly unhelpful when it breaks the studious hush of the exam hall where students are trying to achieve grades which will affect the rest of their lives.

There is considerable evidence that students who's sleep is interrupted, and so arrive at school tired, are clearly disadvantaged. What is perhaps less obvious is that tired and distracted students have a knock-on negative effect on the others in the room, taking up more of the teacher's time and creating a less focussed and productive learning environment.

A recent report has demonstrated that air pollution (increased by fuel dumping, burnt jet fuel and increased road traffic), not only has a serious, in some cases fatal, effect on peoples' health, but also inhibits their cognitive capabilities, putting them back by more than a year. (The Guardian 27th Aug 2018)

There are often occasions when it is important that I am able to open the classroom windows (to get fresh air; to reduce room temperature or when using materials such as latex or white spirit). Therefore, any amount of sound-proofing would be irrelevant.

As teachers, we are encouraged to use outdoor space as a valuable learning resource. To manage students safely and effectively, it is very important that they can hear instructions at all times. A plane flying overhead would seriously impede the value and safety of these activities.

My school has made great efforts in recent years to deliver a great educational experience to a diverse community. It not only educates students, who have the

potential to make huge contributions to society in the future, but also greatly enriches the character of the town and helps to draw people in from outside.

I am proud to stand up on Open Evenings to sing the praises of Ramsgate in general and of Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School, in particular, as a wonderful place to bring up and educate children. How can I get this message across to parents when I am interrupted by the sound of giant cargo carriers flying overhead and what parents are going to want to send their children to a school that is blighted in such a way?

██ and I know that good quality sleep and time spent out of doors in a safe, calm environment is of the greatest value in providing them with a healthy, happy and productive start in life.

RSP describe their project as a 'cargo hub'. A 'hub is the central part of a wheel from which spokes radiate. When one looks at where Manston is situated within the U.K, it would seem to be most un 'hub-like'. Is it really in the National interest to make such a great sacrifice of all these children's education and well-being for such an ill-judged location for a busy, noisy, polluting airport?

A concerned teacher and parent.