

Dear Mr Ward,

My name is Christopher Park and I am the council candidate for the Scottish Liberal Democrats standing in Giffnock and Thornliebank.

Thank you for your email regarding St Ninian's High School. St Ninian's High School, as you rightly state in your email, is a fantastic success story and gives East Ren its reputation as having the best schools in Scotland.

I know this myself because I left Mearns Castle High School in 2012 and received a fantastic education with so many opportunities that allowed me to grow as an individual. Therefore I am personally determined to build on the already outstanding success we have in our schools because I know the transformative effect that the quality of education we provide has on young people.

I am running in this council election as an up-and-comer (I've not been a councillor in the past) and I am really excited to get to grips with all the issues, and education is really important to me because I do have the recent, direct experience of being a pupil in one of our schools.

In terms of party policy, the main thrust of the Lib Dem education policy is the 'penny for Scotland' modest 1p rise on income tax to create a £475 million investment for education in Scotland. Nonetheless this really pertains to the Scottish parliament as opposed to councils, but it could be worth noting for parents that this is the long-standing Lib Dem policy on education in Scotland.

However the Lib Dem local election manifesto puts emphasis on empowering local communities and individuals, and we're not proposing any broad policies for councils in Scotland.

So in effect what this means is that I will be working for the people rather than the party. As far as I am concerned, if elected, my job will be to represent the views of teachers, staff, parents and pupils in St Ninian's. The first thing I will do is meet with you and the parent council, as well as teachers and staff, to find out what it is exactly you want me to be saying and doing in the council.

For example you raise the issue that St Ninian's is oversubscribed. It's clear to anyone that a school with more pupils than what it is designed and resourced for is not sustainable and will have knock-on effects, as you highlight. So this will be on the agenda for me straight away if elected and as a councillor I will represent the views of parents and teachers and do everything I can to make sure your ideas and opinions are put into practice by the council so that this issue can be resolved.

Being new to the council, and representing a party that believes in localisation of power and decision making, has the advantage that my agenda will simply be to speak for my constituents and judge issues based on what's right for them. So I want you to be confident that if elected I will work for parents, pupils and teachers of St Ninian's to advance their ideas and interests; I want to find solutions to problems based on what you want, and not adhering to any personal agenda or party manifesto.

Thank you.

All the best,
Christopher.

Liberal Democrat candidate in Giffnock and Thornliebank.