LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE NON-DOMESTIC RATES (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM EMMA RAWSON

I am writing to provide evidence from my own personal experience as a parent of three children attending St Mary’s School, Melrose and as a teacher looking after the pastoral care of children aged 8-13.

- I know that each of my sons are being educated in an environment that meets their individual needs.
- They have the support and care they require by being in a small class with a high teacher to pupil ratio.
- I am happy to exercise my choice to pay school fees knowing that they will each reach their full potential in such a stimulating environment.
- I know that each teacher here is aware of my sons’ strengths, weaknesses and abilities inside and outside of the classroom.
- I am confident that the school is able to cater for individual pupils within their classes with behavioural needs that need extra care and attention daily.
- Support for learning and assistance is available every day at school from staff that have a high level of expertise and experience tailored to the needs of the individual child whether it is independently, within a small group or as part of a small class.
- The local Melrose play group takes part in St. Mary’s Kindergarten each Tuesday morning, attended by my youngest son. This playgroup would have otherwise closed down if it was not for the opportunity to use St. Mary’s facilities.
- Each child has healthy and nutritious food throughout each school day, morning and evening.
- Child who have suffered bereavement have access to pastoral care that crosses from day to night providing them with a safe and secure home from home, continuity and support from a team with a high level of expertise.
- With a boarding set up we are able to provide accommodation and routine for children in the evenings that may not be available at home.
- Activities for boarding children in the evening include outings to local swimming pools in the Scottish Borders and Born in the Borders.
- Students from Borders College run evening activities as part of their work experience.
- Boarders participate in events that run as part of Melrose Festival along the high street.
- Senior plays and performances are attended by members of the public and money is raised for local and national charities.
- St Mary’s hosts large scale events: the Farr Out Challenge attended by fourteen local primary schools and Bang Goes the Borders which is a free educational
Science Day available for anyone to attend and attracts over one thousand visitors.

- St. Mary’s was the first plastic free primary school in Scotland and continues to lead the way towards educating other schools and organisations in a huge range of environmental initiatives in the Scottish Borders and across Scotland.

- The Scottish Borders Council are being assisted by St. Mary’s School to put together their new waste Review Strategy.

This letter lists the wide range of contributions from St. Mary’s School to Melrose and the wider community. I hope that this letter highlights the very strong case for the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill to be overturned.