

Buxton Primary School

Aylsham Road, Buxton, Norwich, NR10 5EZ

Telephone: 01603 279357 Fax: 01603 279296

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Headteacher: Miss Deborah Leahy



January 10th 2011

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Changing to Foundation School Status and Acquiring a Charitable Trust

Dear Colleague,

Buxton Primary School is considering becoming a Trust School and the Governing Body has passed a resolution to consult about changing from a Community school to a Foundation School and acquiring a charitable trust – The Aylsham Cluster Trust. This letter is to explain our ideas and proposals as part of our consultation process and to ask for your views. We have also included within this letter details of the consultation process as well as full details of our proposals.

Our Proposed Trust

Trust schools are a new kind of maintained state school - part of the Local Authority system, but supported by a charitable Trust that will appoint some, but not a majority, of the governors. The Governing Body will continue to run the school and be responsible for its performance and Miss D Leahy will continue as Head Teacher. We shall still maintain our strengths as a primary school, serving our local community and as part of the Local Authority family of schools. Our Governors are proposing to establish, through a Trust, a long term partnership that will bring together the Aylsham Cluster Schools, City College Norwich, The National Trust, The Sainsbury Centre, The Benjamin Foundation, the East of England Co-operative Society and Norfolk County Council Childrens Services. The long term nature of these new relationships will provide continuity and stability for the Trust.

Why should Buxton consider acquiring a Trust and changing to Foundation status?

The current partnership between the schools has been built up over a number of years, gradually becoming more and more complex and providing increased benefits for staff and pupils. It would be possible to continue this collaboration on an informal basis but it is very much dependant on the philosophy of individual heads / schools. The schools have begun to discuss a greater degree of involvement and can see much potential in the future. However, in order to reduce the risk of some schools 'opting out' in the future and to continue to build long term strategies, a means of formalisation is essential. For schools to increase their commitment, build further networks and commit head teacher / staff time to something that might not come to fruition as head teachers move on would seem very shortsighted. There is also a limit to the kind of partnerships / strategies that can be developed for the benefit of children across all schools without a formal agreement being in place.

The Trust will help to:

1. Raise Aspirations, by

- Raising standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT
- Embedding learning for all
- Increasing opportunities for all
- Extending outdoor learning
- Meeting the needs of all our students (especially SEN and the Gifted & Talented)
- Improving links with Higher Education



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2. Work with Families, to create

- Healthy and Safe Communities
- Community Cohesion

3. Ensure Professional development for all, to

- Increase leadership capacity
- Continue workforce development
- Equip us to face any new challenges

4. Develop Sustainable Schools, by

- Working co-operatively to prepare for the challenges and opportunities for schools and pupils in a rural context
- Ensuring effective procurement, commissioning and Value for Money

What does this mean for employees?

It is important to appreciate that the Governing Body, not the Trust, will continue to run the school and to be responsible and accountable for its performance. The school budget will continue to be delegated to the Governing Body by the LA under the same fair funding arrangements. The existing rights of teachers will be fully protected if the school acquires a Trust. We will still be bound by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 provide for all rights, powers, duties and liabilities to transfer existing staff from the Local Authority to the Governing Body. Employees will be employed by the school's Governing Body instead of the Local Authority and we will continue to recognise the same unions.

The school will set terms and conditions for support staff. However, terms and conditions will be safeguarded as per the prescribed regulations for existing staff and they will maintain the same employment rights as Local Authority employees. Governors have no intention to alter any Conditions of Service which would disadvantage any existing and new support staff against those of the Local Authority. Any support staff wishing to continue to be part of the Local Government Pension Scheme will be able to do so.

Employees will still be represented on the Governing Body, as elected by their colleagues, as well as there being representatives from parents, the community and the Local Authority as is the case now. Governors appointed by the Trust to the Governing Body will be a minimum of 2 and always in a minority.

How can I find out more information?

The School has produced two booklets that provide further information:

1. **Booklet 1 'Changing to Foundation School Status and Acquiring a Charitable Trust'** (This booklet is included with this letter).
2. **Booklet 2 'Changing to Foundation School Status and Acquiring a Charitable Trust - Questions & Answers'** (This booklet is included with this letter).

All information is also available on the school's website – www.buxtonschool.co.uk/



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Consultation Process

Please let us know what you think about the proposal. You can:

- Talk to the nominated staff governor – Mary Stevens
- Send back the consultation questionnaire which is included with this letter or write to us at the school;
- Come to the open meeting for staff on **Thurs 27th Jan 2011 at 3.15pm** to discuss the proposals with the Head Teacher and Governors.

You can comment at any time until **Monday 7th Feb 2011**. The governors will then review all the comments and will decide whether to go ahead (and whether to amend the proposals to reflect your suggestions and concerns). Staff will be given an opportunity to view the feedback to our proposals, a summary of which will be posted on our website and there will be another chance to comment on any formal proposals which might be made during the spring or summer term, before a final decision is taken.

Yours Sincerely,

Mike Jackson

Chair of Governors

