

Buxton Primary School

Aylsham Road, Buxton, Norwich, NR10 5EZ

Telephone: 01603 279357 Fax: 01603 279296

Email: head@buxton.norfolk.sch.uk

Headteacher: Miss Deborah Leahy



January 2011

CONSULTATION ON AYLSHAM CLUSTER TRUST

- should Buxton School be part of this Trust, and if so why?

Please find attached information relating to the proposed change of Buxton School to a Foundation School and part of the Aylsham Cluster Trust.

I appreciate the whole topic of Trusts and the attached documentation may be confusing to some, and that understanding the whole proposed change is difficult - but at the heart of everything we do is always the desire to improve our school for the good of our children. **This is the fundamental reason for undertaking this exploration of Trusts.** I believe changing our status to Foundation and becoming part of the Aylsham Cluster Co-operative Trust is the way to achieve this. Our school has been through a 'rocky' time and is now in a period of stability and improvement - this is wonderful for us all, as we work together to build a School which we and our community can be proud of. We will not compromise on our schools uniqueness or specific aims - we value our individuality greatly. Buxton school has become such a major part of my life - I want it to succeed and be highly regarded and will explore all opportunities that will enable this.

The schools in and around Aylsham have worked collaboratively for many years in the best interests of each and every child and family. This support and shared expertise has had a significant impact on children's achievement and enjoyment of school. Their talents have been developed and their weaknesses supported. The examples below illustrate how this collaboration has benefited our children at Buxton School:

- *cluster maths teacher to support pupils in year 6 (SATs booster sessions)*
- *Additional Science Teacher to help us raise standards in Science last year for our year 6 pupils.*
- *Cluster inter-school sporting events for all key stages (we took part in tennis, dancing, football and tri golf last year).*
- *Staff networks to share expertise; Special needs teachers, Reception teachers, year 5/6 teachers as well as subject leader meetings in Literacy and Numeracy.*
- *Headteacher network in place - cluster Heads work very closely together sharing a range of strategies and documentation*



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- *Pupil assessment network - ensuring quality assessment of pupils progress in all schools.*
- *Family Learning Co-ordinators to support/organise our Family Learning events which ensures all families have the opportunity to become involved in school*
- *Cluster training school at the High School offering quality training for ALL support staff - enables all staff to support children in our school more specifically and effectively.*

This 'working together' ethos within the cluster is totally dependent on current staff valuing this shared approach, and committing delegated funding to cluster initiatives. For the benefits outlined above to continue, and to be further developed and extended, our collaboration needs to be more formalized - and not so dependent on individual good will and preference. Formalising our work together sustains it, and ensures future generations of children receive an education which meets the Every Child Matters Agenda - something we would struggle to do alone. I am excited by the prospects this can offer the future of our school and our children.

In the current financial climate, there is the potential for school budgets to be significantly reduced. Place this alongside the reduction in service provision for schools from the Local Authority and we are facing a situation where schools are going to have to seek many services themselves. Purchasing these services as a group of schools will be more cost effective and enable service delivery to become more localized and so accessible. Formal collaboration will also enable us to rethink some of our school staff roles - shared site, special needs or finance staff will free up headteachers to do what they do best - lead the teaching and learning within their school. This will inevitably improve outcomes for children across the curriculum and ensure quality and equality of provision for all children across the cluster.

At Buxton, we see staff expertise as our greatest resource. Each class has a full time teacher and teaching assistant - some have more than this. We believe that for children to achieve and experience success they need support from an adult; an adult who can teach new concepts, model good practice, is well trained, scaffolds pupil's learning, enables constructive home/school links and knows your child so well that when something goes wrong they are quick to act and resolve the problem or offer support. Maintaining this staffing structure is going to be extremely difficult when budgets are cut. However, if we are purchasing common school resources as a group of schools - the deals will be better and free up money to be spent on staffing or whatever else we choose.



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So, what do you need to know...

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 Children's Services. The long term nature of these new relationships will provide continuity and stability for the Trust.

What will this mean for parents/carers?

The school will remain part of the Local Authority's family of maintained schools - this means that we will still teach the National Curriculum and we will continue to be bound by the School Admissions Code (like all other schools).

It is not envisaged that the number of parent governors will change. The Governors appointed by the Trust will be a minimum of two and always in a minority on the school's Governing Body. The current situation of appointing Community Governors, Local Authority Governors and Staff Governors will be maintained.

Even though on a day to day basis the school will appear and function in the same way as it does now - the proposed change will ensure better outcomes for children, best value for public funded expenditure, sustainable quality education and a professional body of staff who are better able to support you and your child.

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 available on the school's website or on request from the school.)
2. Booklet 2 '**Changing to Foundation School Status and Acquiring a Charitable Trust - Questions & Answers**' (This booklet is available on the school's website or on request from the school).



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The school's website address is- www.buxtonschool.co.uk

Consultation Process

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

- ✓ Send back the completed 'Your Views' questionnaire which is included with this letter or write to us at the school (the address is on the front page of this letter);
- ✓ Come to the open meeting for Parents at the school on Thurs 27th Jan 2011 at 2pm to discuss the proposals with the Head Teacher and Governors
- ✓ Talk to the nominated parent governor (Matthew Fruish). In order to arrange this, please contact the Head at the school;

You can comment at any time until 7th February 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). Parents and 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 term, before a final decision is taken.

Kind Regards

Mike Jackson (Chair of Governors)

Deborah Leahy (Headteacher)

