Your Views

ABOUT YOU

Governing Body of: Allendale Primary School_____

We are a small, rural Primary School who converted from a First School in 2013.

We think that the formation of a Primary School has been very successful as confirmed by Ofsted, who rated us as good in September 2014.

Our KS2 results are at least on a par if not better than local Middle Schools and our community have given us great support.

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum for all age groups, with a great deal of extra-curricular and enrichment activities and experiences. Our Year 5 & 6 pupils have their needs fully catered for by fully trained 'Primary' staff.

The protracted uncertainty surrounding HBHS which the RSC has facilitated, has had an adverse effect on our school, in that parents are looking to the Hexham system at the end of year 4 so that their child can attend QEHS which then impacts on pupil numbers and budget.

One of our Governors feels 'whilst everyone in this consultation process will be considering the needs of their own schools and communities I do feel strongly that we all have a moral obligation to take a wider perspective and consider the possible needs of everyone involved. Ultimately this is about the education of all children and young adults (and potentially adults) throughout the West of Northumberland and its impact on families and communities for many years to come. This approach might also lead to a consensus although whatever the final decision some will be perceived as winners and others as losers!'

The following information is provided from Allendale Primary School Governors and is a collation of individual and whole Governing body thoughts.

YOUR VIEWS (continued)

1) How do you think surplus places can be reduced in schools in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships? *Please note your thoughts and ideas below (use a separate sheet if necessary).*

- Rural schools are always going to have surplus places due to their locations.
- Fluctuating numbers between cohorts.
- given the pupil numbers presently on roll, and those projected for future years, there needs to be a reduction in the number of schools in the area
- this would be best achieved by adopting the two-tier system
- How will 3 tier schools survive as the new funding formula, being per pupil is not helpful at all for small rural schools.
- The mix of two tier and three tier systems combined with academies and church schools does not bode well in terms of surplus places or financial demands. The one aspect in this mix that can be changed is the 2 / 3 tier systems. Someone must make the decision to change this and current trends seem to suggest **changing to a two tier system**. This might also help relieve the problem of surplus places and be more effective financially when the new funding formula is implemented
- Rationalising the mix of 3 and 2 tier systems – middle schools benefit from enhanced funding of yrs 7 and 8 which places first and high schools at a financial disadvantage. Moving all to 2 tier would reduce the overall number of schools and distribute money more evenly.
- and usefully between primary and secondary schools.
- First schools should become Primary schools - where appropriate from a geographical perspective - with some of those schools to amalgamate
- the resulting smaller number of schools would each have a greater number of pupils on roll, which would be advantageous with the introduction of the National Funding Formula
- The remaining schools would be more financially viable and have the opportunity to share resources.
- Finance difficulties limit the opportunity for children when budget is spread too far as something has to give, with the funding formula as it is, smaller schools in rural catchments will never have enough money.
- Extending the age range for Hadrian Learning Trust will give parental choice, so long as HBHS still has a viable educational purpose.
- Combat by amalgamating schools. Geographical locations could make this difficult, but it could be done where schools are close together and would reduce surplus places and improve finances by making schools larger in numbers
- Rationalising schools by federating/sharing heads and increase staff expertise.
- Settling the uncertainty surrounding the future of Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships would give parents more confidence in local schools to be able to make a more informed choice. This would hopefully reduce the concern over limited places in schools out of catchment and stop taking their children away from local/feeder schools. this is an issue in particular for the two tier schools as some parents are taking children out of primary schools early (Yr 5) in the Haydon Bridge Partnership in order to secure a place in the Hexham system which is 3 tier. This is based on the inaccurate belief that the QEHS is at capacity and moving early will help their child get in there if they have previously attended another Hexham school. Obviously QEHS also has surplus places so this is not necessary.
- Creating certainty around good and financially sustainable education across the West would keep some children in the state system who currently chose private education because they do not believe the local schools are good enough or that they are worried about disruption.
- Changing parent perception and supporting schools to offer wrap around care.
- 1 new purpose built school for the Hexham area.
- only one Secondary school would be required; given the situation at Haydon Bridge High School

(HBHS), this school should be Queen Elizabeth High School (QEHS).

- The building of a new school in Hexham would deliver financial savings in the long term, providing first class facilities for the education of pupils from 11 to 18 years.
- A new school which was designed to cater for the wider catchment 11-18 age range. This must offer the variety of academic, creative and vocational avenues for which HBHS and QEHS are well known – an advantage would be that this could be achieved in one school thus overcoming the current need for parental choice and segregation early on so would result in wider choice and therefore greater opportunities for students. Consideration should be given to future changes in pupil numbers linked to increase housing provision as Hexham is subject to substantial additional building to the East of family properties and a new school site may free up land for housing on both QEHS and HBHS sites which could in turn increase the population and pupil numbers in the catchment.

2) Will the current structure of schools in the west of the county remain financially and educationally viable for the next 25 years? *Please note your thoughts and ideas below (use a separate sheet if necessary).*

- No, too many small schools will be a financial drain on the LA budget. If schools are geographically close enough there is a case for amalgamation to ensure they are sustainable.
- The retention of too many small schools would mean they could not remain financially viable. Nor could they remain educationally viable with the difficulty inherent in mixing two-tier and three-tier systems, especially with the three-tier system so ill-matched to the modern curriculum.
- Any closures or amalgamations of **schools must take into account the distance young children will travel to school.** It could become an increasing drain on finances but more importantly it is not acceptable for children to travel long distances at the beginning and end of a school day.
- Whilst the information provided seems to be suggesting that the west of the county cannot sustain two high schools '**I have concerns about one 'super' high school meeting the educational, pastoral and emotional needs of all children successfully'.**

3) Should schools in the west of the county receive additional capital investment and if so, how should this be invested? *Please note your thoughts and ideas below (use a separate sheet if necessary).*

- Money spent in the west of the county full stop! There has been a lot of investment in Blyth, Cramlington areas previously and yet nothing at all in west.
- If schools do close how much money will be available e.g. from selling the land for housing development, where will this money be spent – reinvested in education?
- Fluctuating numbers reflects the necessity to invest in small schools.
- Favour a new school as it would take more money in the long run to prop up old school buildings, which due to the lack of investment have fallen into a poor state or repair, more valuable to invest in a new build.
- Capital investment in existing schools is needed as is ongoing maintenance work, it is false economy not to maintain serviceable buildings and not to do works until they become a far more costly emergency job.
- particularly for the provision of a new secondary school in Hexham but also for the conversion of First schools into Primary schools
- Funding for HBHS so if the actual school closes, the site is retained and used in some way for educational purposes.
- If this is indeed 'an exciting opportunity to update the schools estate in Haydon Bridge and Hexham Partnerships' as stated in the consultation document could the **current site in Haydon Bridge have some investment and be used to house an educational establishment that provides for a broad range of young adults. A college meeting the 21st century demands of a wide range of educational needs; academic, vocational, business, SEND and community** (in the 60's and 70's Haydon Bridge Technical School met the needs of children in terms of both academic and vocational education very successfully). This could work in partnership with the suggested new high school in Hexham. **Whilst Priory School provides excellent education for many children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities we lack provision for adults.**
- In the past, there was flexibility between QEHS and HBHS for some subjects and pupils moved between campuses whilst belonging to one school or other. This would allow Haydon Bridge to retain its community links to education which are long standing and an integral part of the village. There are concerns amongst local residents and those in the catchment about the impact of losing the high school as it is a focal point and influential in housing choices.

4) Do colleagues see any merit in the establishment of a local authority Multi-academy trust and would your school want to join such an entity? *Please note your thoughts and ideas below (use a separate sheet if necessary).*
• Unable to make any significant comments as insufficient information available.

5) If you have any other ideas or proposals that do not fit with the questions above please attach them as additions to this document.

PLEASE RETURN THIS REPONSE FORM AND ANY OTHER COMMENTS TO:
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