



The BAWB Federation
Bainbridge, Askrigg, and West Burton Primary Schools
Mid-Dale Excellence in Education
Executive Headteacher: Miss Charlotte L. Harper

22 March 2018

Dear Parents,

Last night we held a meeting of all the governors. Two senior representatives of North Yorkshire County Council, and the Deputy Director of Education from the Diocese of Leeds also attended the meeting. We had all read beforehand the responses arising from our Community Engagement, and we discussed them fully at our meeting.

We previously put forward five options for internal reorganisation of the schools. These did not involve closure of any of the schools. We also put forward five models involving closure of one or more of the schools. These possibilities formed the basis of discussions with you at all three sessions of our Engagement Day on 26 February. Thank you to everyone who gave feedback about the future of our schools at or following the Engagement Day.

The option provisionally recommended by the governors ("Option 7") was an option for internal reorganisation of the schools. Option 7 did not have sufficient community support to proceed. Some people who responded were in favour of this option, but many had very strong reservations about it. There were three other options for internal reorganisation of the schools which were projected to deliver a budget surplus by 2020/21. One of these ("Option 3") also attracted both some support and equally strong opposition. The other two did not have any significant support.

We took your views fully into account and so we will not be proceeding with any of these options. We have now a much clearer picture of your concerns and the concerns of our wider community.

Once she had received your feedback, Maxine Price, our Head Teacher, reflected on the impact of the various options on the children's education and wider well-being. The governors are very grateful for her work. Maxine, supported by Operational Headteacher Eleanor Harrison and the Governors are looking for a way forward that takes into account the situation of each individual child and has effective education for all our children as the key principle. Our discussions yesterday were about much more than just finance. As a result, there may be a way of adjusting the internal reorganisation of the schools in a way that addresses your key concerns; in particular that Option 7 involved too many children in too much transport between school sites, and that Option 3 resulted in very unsatisfactory class size and structure at Askrigg.

What we did yesterday could only be done after we had heard from all our communities about concrete options and the problems each of them has in your opinions. We have responded to what we heard, and not just "gone ahead anyway". But before we can put a firm proposal to you arising from our discussions yesterday, some further work needs to be done by Governors, Headteachers and the Local Authority. The forthcoming Easter Holidays also affect our timetable: in the past, some parents had reservations about receiving information just before, or during the holidays. But we will work as hard and as fast as we can within these constraints. We hope this will produce a way forward that commands sufficient support. If not, it is very hard to see an acceptable way of reorganising the schools that is financially viable.

So, we intend to write to you with the results of our work in the first week of next term, on Thursday 19 April 2018. We will provide a feedback form for your comments. Your comments will need to be returned no later than 4pm on Thursday 3 May 2018. That gives two full weeks for your comments. A governors' meeting is fixed for Wednesday 9 May 2018 when your views will be taken into account and a decision made.

Derek Walpole
On behalf of the Governing Board.

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