Collaborating for Success

14th January 2019

Dear Parents

Information from Avonreach Academy Trust Regarding the Implementation of the Change of Age Range

Many thanks for your support over the past few months, particularly whilst awaiting the final decision from the RSC and West Midlands Headteacher Board. We are of course delighted that our application to **change our age range was successful and we will be able to take Year Five Pupils from September 2019 and Year Six in 2020.**

We are very excited that so many of our pupils will be staying at NJK as we look forward to giving them the very best Upper Key Stage 2 curriculum provision from September 2019. This will ensure that every pupil who remains with us will be Secondary ready. As a Trust, we are passionate about providing our young people with high quality education from the beginning of their school career to the end and to be accountable for every individual, on every step of their journey.

During the consultation period in December 2017, many meetings were held and documents shared to enable stakeholders the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. We appreciate that is some time ago and indeed it has come to our attention that this week, there are several areas of confusion about change of age range in the public domain. The following key points are intended to clarify these:

- our fundamental objective is, and always has been, to give our parents the choice of placing their children through a two-tier approach which we firmly believe will improve their educational outcomes. It was, and is, categorically NOT financially motivated.
- the RSC has granted approval such that our three First Schools will be able to offer year 5 places this September. The only condition stipulated is that stakeholders attend facilitated meetings to ensure a coordinated implementation, meetings in which AAT will actively participate. No further "plan" or "stakeholder agreement" has been requested.
- the National Curriculum for Years 5 and 6 is specifically designed so that it can be effectively delivered without specialist teaching or facilities and is done so in thousands of Primary schools across the country
- the agreed admissions policy for Pershore High School that will be in effect for a Year 7 intake (of 90 pupils maximum) in September 2021 will give priority (second only to Looked After Children) to children who will be joining from the three Avonreach First Schools.

As this is a significant change in the local education landscape there are many practical issues that have had to be considered. Prior to the consultation and whilst waiting for the decision, the Avonreach Schools have been busy writing the curriculum, meeting school uniform providers, completing resource lists for necessary equipment in upper key stage 2, planning for additional staffing and carrying out building work. The First school head teachers have also been working with a team of senior leaders who implemented the same changes to their school, in Bedford in 2017. Although the delay in the outcome has been frustrating, we at least know that thorough due diligence was carried out by a team of education specialists.

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This change has been brought about by the Trust because of our belief in the two tier system and its proven successful outcomes for pupils. It is understood that a fear of change will always reduce the initial uptake of any new system and therefore the schools have already budgeted for smaller than normal class sizes as a result. Early indications show that the predicted pupil numbers are likely to be exceeded, especially with out of catchment parents wanting to take advantage of our new Year 5 offering, so we can assure parents that a Year 5 class will be in operation from September, with the benefit of a smaller than average class size giving advantageous teacher-child ratios.

Finally, the Trustees and staff of the Avonreach Schools have worked hard to give our parents the choice of placing their children through a two-tier system. We firmly believe this will improve the educational outcomes and build on the high quality education that is already being implemented in our **good** and **outstanding** schools in the Avonreach Academy Trust.

Regards

Mrs J Dean	Mr J Hurley
Headteacher	Chair of Governors