

STEDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher
Mr Malcolm Meaby

30th January 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you know, when West Sussex County Council officers made the recommendation in December to consult on the closure of three schools, Stedham Primary was given a “lifeline”. Provided that we could produce a detailed plan to federate with another school or schools, the consultation would halt, or not begin, depending on when such a plan was available.

We are very pleased to be able to tell you that we have now federated with Harting C of E Primary School. Harting is a strong school, which, like Stedham has a “Good” Ofsted rating and with whom we share an ethos of “nurturing every child, enabling them to flourish and be the best they can be”. Our Governors and Malcolm Meaby have formed an excellent working relationship with the senior leadership team at Harting. We are extremely excited as to what the future will hold for our school.

There will be no change in our school’s staffing structure and we will continue to be two separate schools with our own budgets and leadership and our own distinct character. The federation will, however, enable shared training opportunities and stronger collaboration for staff which will benefit the children. Federation will enable the schools to share best practice across a number of areas and to explore opportunities to make optimum use of specialist resource available. We look forward to sharing our knowledge and developing our skills alongside our partner.

This positive step forward is the culmination of a very thorough process of assessing all our possible options. During January we contacted 14 primary schools in the local area; followed by face to face meetings with head teachers and governors at 8 of these schools, with the purpose of discussing possible federation. On 23rd January, Stedham’s governors met to assess the available options and were unanimous in deciding to partner with Harting. A comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding was signed by both schools and delivered to West Sussex County Council on 28th January.

In agreeing the Memorandum of Understanding, we have also met the County Council’s requirement that we demonstrate a formal commitment to federate. We now await confirmation from the County Council as to whether the consultation on closure will be removed. As you are aware, the consultation on closure is due to start this coming Monday (3rd February). We anticipate that we will therefore hear from the County Council shortly.



A University of Chichester
ITT Partner School

Responsibility Confidence Motivation Creativity Independence

We have been overwhelmed by the positive support we have received from every one of the schools we have visited. There is real support for our school, not only at Harting, but in the wider community of schools which surround us. We are continuing to explore opportunities to collaborate with several of these schools and, in particular, one local school has expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of their joining Stedham and Harting in a three way federation. Those further discussions are at a relatively early stage. We will keep you updated as those discussions progress.

Despite the consultation, pupil numbers at Stedham are stable and no pupils have left as a consequence of the consultation. Our finances are healthy and the energy in the school is very positive. We hope that these are compelling reasons, along with our newly formed federation, to lift the planned consultation on closure. As ever we are particularly grateful for your steadfast support through this process. We very much hope that in the not too distant future we will be able to focus on our positive future as part of a federation of excellent small schools.

We will, of course, update you as soon as we have definitive news to share but in the meantime, please do email any queries to governors@stedham.w-sussex.sch.uk or come to the office if you would like to speak to Malcolm Meaby or any of the governors.

Kind regards

The Governors of Stedham Primary School