



Directorate for Children & Young People

School Organisation and Planning Team

Second Floor
Kirkgate Buildings
Byram Street
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD1 1BY

Tel: 01484 221000

Date: 29th May 2019

Dear parent/carer

We are pleased to bring you an update on the possible changes to school provision in Almondbury and the surrounding area. The members of Cabinet (the council's main decision making body) met today - Wednesday May 29th - and considered whether or not the proposals you have seen should move to the next stage.

The report to Cabinet stressed that our absolute priority in bringing forward these proposals is to help children and young people have the best start in life. We want all children to enjoy a broad curriculum in a setting which is secure and sustainable for the long term. It is widely recognised that this has a major impact on achieving good outcomes which, in turn, increase future opportunities for young people. This priority remains at the forefront of the proposals for Almondbury Community School.

As you are aware, the school faces major challenges with its breadth of curriculum and standards of education. These were highlighted in a recent Ofsted inspection which judged the school to be 'inadequate' and requiring 'special measures'. Low pupil numbers at both primary and secondary level have also placed the school in a position where it is very difficult to be financially viable, restricting the curriculum and meaning some students are unable to pursue certain subjects and career paths.

Lengthy consideration was given before the proposals to close the secondary phase of ACS and retain a primary school on the site were put forward to Cabinet. A full summary of the possible changes, along with a wide range of further information, is available by visiting www.kirklees.gov.uk/schoolorganisation

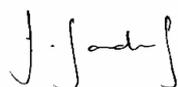
Cabinet members have decided to move to the next stage in the decision-making process, which is to publish legal notices in June. This is another chance to express your views.

Cabinet members recognise the depth of feeling in the community and listened and considered concerns about children in the ACS secondary phase potentially needing to change schools. We want to assure you that, if the proposals are agreed, we will work closely with all affected families to ensure any transitions are handled in a way that minimises stress on pupils and their families. Those affected by the change will gain a place at another local school to complete their secondary education in a way that helps them fulfil their potential. We appreciate that this ongoing process can cause uncertainty and we are doing all we can to reach a decision as quickly as possible.

Whether or not the proposals are finally agreed, ACS must convert to academy status due to requiring 'special measures'. This is a national policy and means the school will no longer be maintained by the local authority. The Regional Schools Commissioner will select a 'sponsor' to operate the school in future and they are taking into account that ACS would be viable, both financially and educationally, as a primary school with up to 30 children per year group. Their letter states: *"The Secretary of State has the power to revoke this academy order. This would only happen in exceptional circumstances, predominantly where, following due diligence, a school is judged to be financially unviable. Where this is the case, the expectation is that the local authority will take steps to close the school"*.

We expect that the next report to Cabinet will be published in a few weeks' time and we will, of course, contact you with the details and with any further updates in the meantime. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your patience and understanding whilst we go through this process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Sanders', written in a cursive style.

Jo-Anne Sanders
Service Director for Learning & Early Help