



27TH January 2010

Dear Parents & Carers

Re: Our plans for the future

As we start this New Year, 2010, our three schools in the Federation are well placed to cope with the changes that may face us. The purpose of this letter is to share with you some of these challenges and our plans to move forward.

Our Federation created one Governing Body for Sharnbrook Upper, Lincroft Middle and Harrold Priory Middle Schools and has been in existence since September 2009. In November Bedford Borough Council made the decision to introduce two-tier schooling as long as sufficient capital funding was available to make the necessary building alterations. As a result, notices to close Lincroft and Harrold Middle Schools have been issued (as well as to all other middle schools in the Borough) with a change of age range for Sharnbrook Upper School to 11-18. These changes would also create an 11-16 base on the Lincroft site therefore accommodating the current intake of Lincroft through to the end of Year 11 with an entry to the sixth form on the Sharnbrook site. The Governing Body of the Federation agreed to these notices as to do otherwise would have undermined the Local Authority's negotiations to achieve 'Building Schools for the Future' (BSF) capital monies. Given the current economic circumstances facing the country, sufficient funding to meet our requirements may not be forthcoming. In those circumstances we have made it clear to the Local Authority that the notices will need to be withdrawn so that we can continue to operate within a three tier structure and give a level of certainty to us all going forward.

Whilst structural issues are vitally important, and we do support a move to two tier with proper funding, we believe that our plans for the Federation are sensible whichever structure we operate within. We are in a three tier structure for the next five years anyway; whether we change thereafter to two tier or not, our plans are the same. It is our intention that standards and opportunities for students should rise and that these are best delivered by ensuring that high quality staff remain in place. Planning for 9-18 or 11-18 students, our plans are compatible. Liaison with the lower schools is integral to that and is ongoing. Our Executive Team, consisting of three headteachers and four deputy heads, meet regularly and are working together effectively.

There are three well thought out strands to these plans for the Federation.

Firstly, we shall enhance student learning opportunities and standards. The curriculum in the middle schools will be brought more closely together ensuring that at Key Stage 3 students have similar experiences and, therefore, a smoother transition to the Upper School.

Secondly, we are placing a very strong emphasis upon professional development for the staff of the Federation. Opportunities for staff to teach within other schools of the Federation will be put in place. We expect to move towards much closer links and for staff to be better prepared for two tier

Harrold Priory Middle School

The Green, Harrold, Bedford,
Bedfordshire, MK43 7DE

Tel: 01234 720346

**Sharnbrook Upper School &
Community College**

Odell Road, Sharnbrook, Bedford,
Bedfordshire, MK44 1JL

Tel: 01234 782211

Lincroft School

Station Road, Oakley, Bedford,
Bedfordshire, MK43 7RE

Tel: 01234 822147



if that occurs. Even if we remain three tier these opportunities for staff (which will create greater continuity for students) will be put in place.

Thirdly, we are already starting to implement operational changes to increase effectiveness. Against a background of impending budget reductions, it is vital that we spend money wisely. We shall move to common budget planning, to an integrated IT policy and practices, to co-ordinated site operation and development and to a single strategy on staff recruitment and development.

We are all aware that some uncertainty will remain for a number of months while negotiations for capital monies are going on. We believe that we are well placed to cope with these as a large Federation made up of three excellent schools. Indeed, it is possible that other schools may seek to join our Federation. For our staff, particularly in the middle schools, this is a difficult time. We must work to minimise any unsettlement as the retention of high quality staff is vital if we are to sustain and improve the education of all students in our Federation.

Yours sincerely

Hugh Carr Archer
Chair of Governors

Janine Waring
Headteacher

John Clemence
Headteacher

Mike Lavelle
Headteacher

Footnote

On February 1st the North Bedfordshire Schools Trust also discussed this range of issues and agreed unanimously with the position taken by the Federation.