

Dear Parents,

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As you know, since October we have been in constructive discussions about the potential for future partnership arrangements with other schools.

I am now able to share that the potential partner school is Foston and Terrington Federation.

The Chair of Governors at Foston and Terrington has written to their parents today:

"As you are aware, the joint working of our two schools is proving extremely successful in providing an excellent education for our children, a wider skills base for our staff and promoting rapid school improvement. The Governors believe it is the way forward for sustaining small rural schools, which play such a vital role in their communities. As a federation of Church Schools, we see supporting communities as an important part of our vision.

We have recently been exploring options for widening our federation to further strengthen our sustainability. We are currently in discussion with the Local Authority and Stillington Primary School about offering school-to-school support to their school for the remainder of the school year, with a view to future collaboration. We feel this is an exciting and positive development for all three schools and will keep you informed about further developments as they happen."

We are grateful that the Local Authority (LA), following their deferral of the decision to consult on possible closure, has given us the opportunity to explore this collaboration with Foston and Terrington.

We should be mindful however, that as we have a Directive Academy Order (DAO) in place, the Regional Schools' Commissioner (RSC) could 'veto' the LA's decision and order closure ... or ... she may choose not to exercise that power and let the DAO lie dormant (there is no precedent for a DAO being revoked for a school in our circumstances ... but I would never say never!)

The RSC, in the pre-election period, would not comment on the situation or on the DAO. In order to progress things at the earliest opportunity, we shared our proposal documents before Christmas so her team could begin review. We anticipate a response in the next week or so.

The NYCC Forward Plan entry (which would allow approval to start closure consultation for Stillington School) has now been advanced to 11 February 2020, which is the latest date this could be actioned to allow a closure at the end of this school year. The LA have assured us that they hope requesting consultation will not be necessary and that the discussions in the coming period, by all parties, will deliver a positive outcome; but the forward plan is a necessary step in case that isn't the situation for whatever reason.

As always, I will let you know of any further developments as soon as I can.
Have a great weekend!

Corinne Cross
Chair of Governors