



17 September 2012

Dear Parents,

### **Berkhamsted Schools Re-organisation**

We refer to our letter dated 20 July and to the letter sent to you by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) dated 14 September and thought that it would be helpful to update you on the stage reached following the end of the statutory notice period on 31 August.

We have had a number of queries in relation to HCC's letter dated 14 September in particular with regard the application that is being made to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator to reduce the published admission number (PAN) from 60 to 30 in September 2013.

We appreciate that the vast majority of parents will be well versed in the background to the proposed re-organisation but, for those nursery parents who do not have older siblings in the school, we thought that it helpful to provide a brief recap on the stage reached with the town-wide re-organisation of long term education provision for Berkhamsted's children. All relevant documentation is of course on the school website at [www.greenway.herts.sch.uk](http://www.greenway.herts.sch.uk).

### **Background**

- A public consultation took place between 6 February and 27 April 2012 relating to the future provision of education within the Town due to the fact that there is a deficit of reception places.
- The Governing Body of Greenway sent a response dated 20 April 2012 to HCC supporting a change from the current three tier system of education to a two tier system of education which would result in the school becoming a one form entry primary school on 1 September 2014. However, Governors raised a number of concerns within their response.
- At the stage the response was sent to HCC there were a number of uncertainties as to the number of Reception places at Greenway for September 2013 which were identified at paragraph 2.3 of the response: "Clarification is being sought from HCC as to whether Greenway will have changes made to its published admissions numbers for September 2013. Currently it is unclear whether Greenway would have one or two classes of Nursery and one or two classes of reception children commencing in September 2013....."

- Having set out a number of concerns Governors noted at paragraph 4.17 of their response that: "Very real concerns have been raised by parents revolving around admissions and in particular how the school will cope with the siblings of those children entering Reception in September 2012 bearing in mind the school may be reducing to a one form entry Reception class in September 2013. Following the drop-in sessions, Governors are immensely concerned that due to the large increase in Reception places for September 2012 at Greenway there may be many instances where families have very young children at two different schools. **Should Option A be adopted Governors hope that HCC will address their attention to this specific issue as a matter of high priority."**
- Following the end of the consultation period a report was prepared by Schools Planning at HCC and submitted to the Education and Skills Panel of the Council on 10 July. All members of the Panel supported a change to a two tier system of education within the Town as set out within Option A of the consultation documentation. Recommendations were made in this respect to Cabinet on 16 July where the proposed change was endorsed.
- At the end of last term Greenway was served with a statutory notice with regard the proposed change to a one form entry primary school effective from 1 September 2014.
- Following discussions that we had had with Schools Planning at HCC we advised parents within our letter dated 20 July that it remained unclear as to whether or not Greenway would have one or two classes of Nursery and one or two classes of Reception children commencing in September 2013. We reported that no decision would be taken until after the Education and Skills Panel had met on 19 September 2012 and then Cabinet had met on 24 September 2012 at which point the Schools Adjudicator would be asked to consider the issue. We advised you within our letter that you would have an opportunity to write to the Schools Adjudicator.
- Following the end of the statutory notice period a further report was prepared by Schools Planning at HCC and submitted to the Education and Skills Panel of the Council for their consideration on 19 September 2012. Cabinet of the Council will consider the Panel's findings on 24 September 2014. This report is available on the Herts website: [www.hertsdirect.org/your-council/civic\\_calendar/edskillcp/17446812/](http://www.hertsdirect.org/your-council/civic_calendar/edskillcp/17446812/).

### **Current Status**

Until such time as the Cabinet make their decision, the Schools Adjudicator cannot make a decision as to whether or not to reduce the PAN for Greenway – to do so would be seen as pre-empting the Cabinet's decision. However, once Cabinet have formulated their opinion, it will be necessary for the Schools Adjudicator to make a speedy decision because of the tight timescales for schools admissions. For this reason HCC have set the ball rolling by submitting an application to the Schools Adjudicator to vary the PAN which will be

considered immediately after the Cabinet decision on 24 September. Should Cabinet reject a change to a two tier system of education the application will be withdrawn.

The letter sent by HCC dated 14 September sets out how to contact the Schools Adjudicator should you wish to do so. You should bear in mind that the decision is that of the Schools Adjudicator and **not** HCC or the school. The Schools Adjudicator is completely independent of HCC and therefore any concerns should be raised with him/her.

In order to establish the full extent of the issue we will be working with the school's parent forum shortly to identify the numbers of children who may be affected.

The Governing Body of Greenway met on 12 September and discussed the application to the Schools Adjudicator. It was acknowledged that there will be a great deal of stress and uncertainty caused by a reduction in PAN for some parents. Governors and the school have immense sympathy for those families who will be affected. However, should the PAN for Greenway remain at 60 for 2013/14 there will be a surplus of places in the town of approximately 1.5 forms of entry - it is important that places should be matched as closely as possible with demand thus limiting uncertainty for all schools in terms of pupil numbers.

Governors agreed on 12 September that they remain in support of a change to a two tier system of education within the town, the success of which is dependent upon a reduction in Greenway's PAN to 30 for September 2013.

Should you have any queries that are not answered by this letter please feel free to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

**KATHARINE WESTON**

**Headteacher**

**LORNA GINN & ELIZABETH O'REILLY**

**Co-Chairs of Governors**



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and Paralympic Values



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