

# Northumberland

## County Council

### HEDDON-ON-THE-WALL ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Mr A Wheatley: Headteacher



Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Dear Parents

We are now well established in the new academic year and therefore thought it would be useful to provide an update on a range of issues within our school and the wider partnership.

#### **Multi Academy Trust (MAT) plans**

As you will be aware, Heddon-on-the-Wall St. Andrew's CE Primary School has been in discussion with a number of schools including Belsay Primary, Darras Hall Primary, Ponteland Primary, Richard Coates and Ponteland High School about the prospect of forming a MAT. We carried out a consultation that ended in late June. Since then all Governing Bodies have signalled their intention to proceed with the plans. To that end each school has now submitted a formal application to the Department for Education (DfE) and we understand that these will be considered by the Regional School Commissioner and Headteacher Board in the near future. As soon as we receive feedback on our application we will inform you of our next steps and time scales for formally converting.

#### **Year 5 primary working**

The new Year 5 cohort in each primary school will be the first Year 7 intake to the High School in September 2019 when they move into the new, state of the art school building. There are currently 145 Year 5 students enjoying their experience in the primary schools, which has included a range of opportunities to engage in activities with other schools. Recent highlights include:

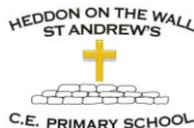
- Year 5 pupils in all primary schools attending the same 3 day residential experience at Dukeshouse Wood where they got to work alongside children outside of their immediate school;
- Joint PE and sport activities with children from smaller schools visiting Ponteland Primary every week to take advantage of their facilities and provision;
- The full Year 5 cohort across all primaries participating in a shared unit of work on Shakespeare, culminating in two productions, scheduled to take place at Northern Stage in November.

All of these opportunities enable all children to experience activities outside of their usual school, breaking down barriers and ensuring friendships form long before they attend the Secondary School in Year 7.

#### **Primary-Secondary transition work**

We are keen to build on our strong working relationships with our partner schools and ensure that children in Years 4, 5 and in time, 6 have regular contact with High School staff and students. Some examples of ongoing work include:

- High school staff taking assemblies at primary schools and attending key events such as parents' evenings;
- Year 4 pupils forming a choir to sing at our annual Christmas Concert at the Sage, Gateshead on Monday 11 December. In preparation the children will attend High School for a day of practice and experience some lessons;



Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.

Colossians 3:23



- High achieving instrumentalists in primaries joining ensembles at the High School and rehearsing regularly with them;
- Year 5 pupils will be experiencing 'immersive days' in the High School whereby they will follow a modified timetable of lessons to enhance their primary curriculum. This will enable them to meet a range of teaching staff and 6th form students building their confidence ahead of their transition to the new school in September 2019.

### **Progression to High School**

Recently I have spoken to a number of parents who still seem unsure of the situation so I thought it would be useful to repeat some key information that was shared in a letter to parents in July 2017:

*During the MAT consultation a small number of parents raised questions about progression to Ponteland High School from September 2019. I thought it would be helpful to clarify the situation and dispel some myths.*

1. *From September 2019 Ponteland High School will officially take students across the 11-18 age range meaning that the year of first entry to the school will move from Y9 to Y7.*
  - a. *In September 2019 the High School will take in students for Y7, Y8 and Y9;*
  - b. *From September 2020 the main point of entry to the High School will be Y7.*
2. *The new school will be built to provide 240 Y7 places, which the School will aim to allocate before the start of the academic year.*
3. *Students reaching the end of Primary School (Y6) will then feed directly into the High School for Y7.*
4. *Parents who do not have children in Primary Schools are also eligible to apply for a place in Y7 - this is the most appropriate time to apply as leaving an application until the end of Y8 brings a degree of uncertainty, as outlined in the example below:*

### **Example**

*If Ponteland High School accepts the 145 students (currently in Y5) directly from the feeder primary schools at the end of Y6 there will be 95 additional places available. It is not possible to hold these places until the end of Y8 as Admission rules dictate that a place must be given to a student if a place is available in the requested school.*

I trust this provides a useful update on a number of fronts. Should you wish to discuss any of these matters further then please feel free to contact me at school.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. A. Wheatley,  
Headteacher

