

Cabinet – 18 April 2007

King Charles Primary School: Progress towards Federation

Portfolio: Councillor Zahid Ali, Children's Services

Service: Education Walsall

Wards: Bentley & Darlaston North

Key decisions: No

Forward plan: Yes

Summary of report

This report provides an update on the good progress towards establishing a federation between King Charles Primary School and Bentley West Primary School.

Recommendations

That Cabinet supports the direction of travel as shown by the good progress made towards a federation between King Charles Primary School and Bentley West Primary School.

Resource and legal considerations

On 17 January 2007, Cabinet considered a report on the outcome of consultation on the future of King Charles Primary School.

As part of the consultation, all Walsall schools had been invited to consider entering into a hard federation with King Charles Primary School and a positive response was received from Bentley West Primary School. In the light of all available information, the need to secure improved education provision for the children attending King Charles Primary School and the strong support from the governing bodies of King Charles and Bentley West Primary Schools for federation, Cabinet decided to give the schools an opportunity to explore this further and requested a further report on progress towards establishing a federation.

Federation of schools can only take place with the agreement of the governing bodies of the schools which are to be party to the federation. Schools in a federation continue to be individual schools and retain their existing status. The process of establishing a federation necessarily takes some time, generally in the order of six months, and includes a period of consultation with parents and staff and also with other stakeholders.

Following initial meetings in December 2006, the governing bodies of King Charles Primary School and Bentley West Primary School decided to enter into a partnership agreement. This agreement, which was signed on 24 January 2007, was brokered by Education Walsall and provides for Bentley West Primary School to support King

Charles Primary School in bringing about the changes needed to address the issues identified in the Ofsted report. Education Walsall has continued to support King Charles Primary School through a Progress Team and the headteacher of Bentley West is now a member of this Team.

Following the Cabinet decision in January 2007, there have been detailed discussions involving the governing bodies and headteachers of both schools regarding the detail of a formal Federation Proposal under the terms of the statutory instrument governing federations between schools (2004 SI number 2,042). These discussions culminated in a formal federation proposal for public consultation which was considered by a joint meeting of both governing bodies on 8 March 2007. In separate votes on the federation proposal, both governing bodies agreed to proceed to consultation which is the next stage of progress towards federation.

It was evident at the joint meeting on 8 March 2007 that the partnership agreement is working well and is supported at every level in both schools by governors, headteachers and staff. It now envisages a more wide-ranging interchange of ideas and staff between the two schools.

Consultation on the federation proposal is taking place between 19 March and 14 May 2007. Consultees include:

- Walsall Local Authority
- Education Walsall
- All staff paid to work at the school (includes staff on the schools' pay rolls and those on contract)
- Parents of registered pupils
- Such other persons as the governing bodies consider appropriate (might include community associations, unions, PTAs etc).

As soon as practicable after the end of consultation on 14 May 2007, both governing bodies will meet jointly to consider the outcome of the consultations and will then separately make a final decision on whether or not to proceed with federation. If the decision is in favour of federation, a new federated governing body will be established from September 2007.

In view of the good progress towards federation, there will not be a further report to Cabinet unless the situation changes.

Citizen impact

The quality of education offered to pupils at King Charles Primary School is improving. Everyone at the school is fully committed to addressing the issues raised in the Ofsted inspection and support by Bentley West Primary School and the Progress Team has contributed to the improvements.

Community safety

There are no community safety considerations arising from this report.

Environmental impact

There are no environmental considerations arising from this report.

Performance and risk management issues

Action taken to address the issues identified in the Ofsted report has resulted in improved performance.

Equality implications

All children are entitled to receive a good standard of education and the progress detailed in this report outlines steps to secure that for the pupils at King Charles Primary School through federation with Bentley West Primary School.

Consultation

The Governing Bodies of King Charles Primary School and Bentley West Primary School are consulting the school communities and other stakeholders on the proposed federation between the two schools.

Vision 2008

These arrangements would contribute to "Making Our Schools Great" by taking action to improve the quality of education provided for children resident in the area served by King Charles Primary School.

Background papers

Ofsted Report for King Charles Primary School, October 2006

Cabinet Report: King Charles Primary School, 29 November 2006

Cabinet Report: Outcome of Consultation on the Future of King Charles Primary School, 17 January 2007

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Signed:




David Brown
Executive Director
Date 20 March 2007

Signed:



Managing Director, Education Walsall
Date: 20 March 2007

Signed:



Councillor Zahid Ali
Portfolio Holder
Date: 3 April 2007