

**Notes from staff meeting - Bedlington West End First School
9th May 2019 3:45 p.m.**

PRESENT:

24 members of staff, including Headteacher

NCC HR representative:

Wendy Stewart

2 Trade Union representatives:

Alison Martin - UNISON

Elizabeth Thompson - NASUWT

NCC Officers:

Head of School Organisation and Resources - Sue Aviston

School Organisation Manager - Lorraine Fife

Project Support Officer - Jacqui Pearson, notes

Sue Aviston presented the powerpoint to the group.

Questions which were raised following the presentation were:

1. Catchment area - how does this work?

- A. The LA uses this for allocating a viable number of pupils to each school
- B. The catchment area is used for home to school transport calculations.
Parental choice will still remain to choose a school but pupils may not receive transport.

2. I'm confused about transport. What do you mean?

- A. If pupils live more than 2 miles away from school, they can be eligible for home to school transport.
- B. If there is no safe walking route from home to school, pupils could be eligible for home to school transport. For example, if a pupil is on the edge of an existing catchment and no suitable walking route is in place yet following a new housing development.
- C. The transport aspect ties in with admissions, hence why pupils are allocated places following admissions policy criteria, e.g. catchment.

3. Has Meadowdale asked for a catchment area?

- A. No
- B. We have offered both through across partnerships for example, Ponteland Middle has no catchment when we moved the First schools to Primaries. Richard Coates did receive a catchment area when they became a primary to retain a church offer in the village.
The catchment areas are divided on the number of pupils attending school to give an acceptable number of pupils per school.

4. Why 4-11 and not 3-11 Primary school for us?

- A. That is due to you not being a maintained nursery as you are running as a community power nursery.

5. ...and if we want to be a maintained nursery?

- A. You will need to state this in your response.

6. Staffing restructure - if ½ FE less (therefore 1FE), what happens?

- A. In a school staffing restructure there are in number of stages. If posts in the 'new' structure are exact matches, e.g. headteacher where only 1 person will be offered the post then they slot in. You next look at groups of staff, e.g. same job title, description, pay all match then they slot in.
- When the roles start to show differences to current roles, i.e. not a match for colleagues, you then move to Phase 2 where existing staff are not an exact match or if there are not enough posts for the remaining staff. Where there are new posts or promoted posts e.g. if HLTA was offered and there is not a current HLTA post, then this could be ring fenced to existing TA's. The standard internal appointment process will then be followed in this situation. Any remaining staff who have not been allocated a post will be offered remaining posts to fill in the gaps and if these roles are not deemed suitable alternative employment, then the school will need to look at redundancies.
- It is possible to have a restructure in the Autumn Term and this would potentially include a consultation on redundancies in January 2020 (depending on what the structure is).
- Ultimately, the school is reducing its PAN but it is retaining the upper years of pupils in the school so it may not be necessary to make staffing reductions if overall pupil numbers remain the same or increase.

7. In terms of a falling birth rate, is this equal across the area?

- A. There is some variation but generally across the partnership this is the pattern.

8. When the staff are looking to put their response in as a consensus view, can the Headteacher sit in on the meeting too?

- A. Yes the Headteacher can be part of that consensus as a member of staff. You will be looking to give a response as a staff group.
- B. You can also submit individual responses, which will reflect any differences that you do not agree on as a whole staff view.

9. Reducing the PAN to 1.5, I'm struggling how to manage this, is there anyone who can give help with this?

- A. We will ask School Improvement colleagues to sit down with both Headteachers and support you through the process.

10. When you are talking about catchment areas, does this take into account distance or socio economic deprivation?

- A. No, just the area.

11. When looking at the map and the Choppington area, has the housing development been taken in to account for pupil numbers?

- A. The housing developments are taken into account when the planning application is actually approved (not just proposed)
- B. The area involved here would sit out of the school catchment so is not included in this consultation detail.
- C. In terms of housing developments, you usually have a ratio of 3 pupils per 100 houses per year group, so not necessarily huge impacts and they can also take years to build, again, not an immediate impact on pupil numbers.

13. Looking at the catchment - can it be split into 3?

- A. Yes, it could be 1FE for Meadowdale, 1.5 FE for First Schools and this would be drawn on equal pupil numbers per school catchment.

14. Ian Lavery's comments on facebook have been very concerning.

"In recent weeks I have been contacted by parents in Bedlington as well as some of the schools involved.

I have met with representatives of the County Council and written to the department of education. The situation is complex as it involves academies and council maintained schools which are governed by wholly different rules. Whilst this consultation is important the wider proposals and declining birth rates in the Bedlington area give me a great deal of worry that the solution will end up with at least one of the schools becoming unviable.

The governments drive towards academisation and willingness to overlook huge issues leaves local good rated council maintained schools at risk. It is very important that local people have their say on this issue.

Facebook Ian Lavery MP 7 May 2019 12:29

- A. The RSC states that it is about parental choice, it's market forces.
- B. As the LA we can support maintained schools to ensure they have the resources and facilities..
- C. Equally as a parent, one child's best choice isn't necessarily the same for the next child.

15. Superficially, parents can look at nice facilities in the converting Middle to Primary Academy, e.g. nice playing fields etc.

- A. That's the job of the Headteacher and Governing Body.
- B. As the LA we can support the school if you move to Primary and look at your options.
- C. Parents need to know what you are doing.
- D. As a LA, we usually try to make changes to your front door so the change is visible to the community.
- E. Marketing - Early Years partnership, Headteacher's meetings and joint working need to be highlighted.

16. 1.5FE each - can this be 1 FE or can 2FE happen?

- A. Yes, anything is possible. It depends what comes back from the consultation responses.

- B. The difference to the LA is that we need stability and to invest wisely. However this looks in terms of 1FE or 2FE will come out the consultation responses.

17. When do we get to know about your desktop study exercise?

- A. We will be discussing this with your Governing Body for suggestions. Our elected members make the decision and if they approve to move to Primary school then they will find the funding to provide the appropriate facility for a primary school.

5:15 p.m. close of meeting