

## Response from St Cuthbert's Catholic First School Staff

Dear Members,

We at St Cuthbert's first school wish to put forward our reasons for supporting the two-tier model of education. This response sets out clearly why we wish to adopt the two-tier model of education and become a primary school, educating children until the end of Year 6.

- We want to be able to provide Catholic education to our children for longer. We know that our families cherish the deep spiritual side we provide in prayer, liturgy & the catholic life of our school and that at present there is no provision for this after Year 4.
- The education system in England is set out as follows;
  - Early Years; ages 3-5 years; nursery & reception
  - Key Stage 1; ages 5-7 years; Years 1 & 2
  - Key Stage 2; ages 7-11 years; Years 3 - 6
  - Key Stage 3; ages 11-14 years; Years 7 - 9
  - Key Stage 4; ages 14-16 years; Years 10 & 11
  - Sixth Form; ages 16-18 years; Years 12 & 13

We feel children should complete full key stages in the same school, with minimum points of transition during their school life. This would minimise any disruption to progress during a key stage and give teachers a greater opportunity to develop and nurture the children throughout the particular stage they are in from beginning to end, getting to know the children really well. This is also particularly important when it comes to preparing children for key assessments such as SATS which occur in a primary school at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 - it would be beneficial to children to have the same teaching team from the beginning to the end of these journeys without having to adjust to a new school mid-way through. Likewise for GCSE preparation from Year 7 onwards in secondary education with specialist teachers in each subject from Year 7 upwards, giving our children 2 extra years of GCSE preparation (Year 7 & 8) with trained secondary teachers in the same school as they will sit their exams in.

- Teachers are trained to teach in either; the *primary* phase or the *secondary* phase of education. Becoming two-tier would give teaching staff the opportunities to teach across the age range they have trained to teach in and ensure at secondary school, children received specialist teaching across all subjects by teachers trained to teach their specialist subject.
- As a school we are ready for two-tier and have the space and capacity to accommodate a year 5/6 class.

- Transition to a secondary school at Year 7 would have to be well planned, as it is across most of the rest of the UK, but we are a dedicated team of staff who would ensure that this move would be carried out very carefully and work closely with Berwick Academy. The benefits of children beginning a new school at the start of key stage 3, supports forming new relationships, getting to know new staff and having consistency throughout the following key stages in terms of teaching and learning.

We also support a real investment into an expansion of the Grove special school which is over-subscribed and needs to be part of the plan for the local authority moving forward in order to continue and enhance the outstanding provision they provide for families across Berwick and the support they offer all of the partnership schools, including the support they are always willing to give to St Cuthbert's.

We realise we are fortunate in that St Cuthbert's is not at risk of closing - we remain stable in both models but as this vitally important decision looms we feel for the reasons set out above, the two-tier model will secure better outcomes for the children of Berwick for years to come.

**St Cuthbert's Catholic First School**

*Part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust*

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