

From:
Sent: 01 March 2023 21:59
To:
Subject: Berwick school partnership consultation

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Dear Deborah,

I hope you don't mind me emailing you directly. I started to fill out the online form regarding the consultation of the Berwick school partnership, but got quite frustrated as the responses required were more definitive than I am able to give.

I do have thoughts that I would like to share though.

As background I live just outside of Wooler and my kids attend Wooler first school and little acorns nurse in wooler.

I have a very strong preference for my children to attend Alnwick high school, and therefore Wooler to be in the Alnwick catchment. Personally this is because I went to wooler first school / Glendale middle and then Duchess high. All our family and social lives revolve around alnwick, for such things as sports clubs, activities, doctors, dentists, friends etc and we feel much more connected to the Alnwick community rather than Berwick. My husband also commutes to Newcastle so having involvement in school would be much harder for him if our kids went to Berwick.

I like the three tier system and would like to keep that but I understand the reasons why that might not be possible going forward.

I feel that the school building / site currently housing wooler first school, Glendale middle and the nurse is in need of significant repairs and has substantial running costs. (It was in need of repair 30 years ago when I was there!) It would be amazing to have a new purpose built facility. Or at the very least a good look at how the building could be improved in terms of efficiency and how the spaces could be used more effectively.

The wooler area also has an issue with provision for under 2 year olds. I think it's great to have the nurse, first and middle schools so close to each other, especially as parents often have several children of different ages for drop offs and pick ups. But also I feel it reduces anxiety for the children going between settings.

I think the wooler and Glendale schools (regardless of the building) are run really well and the teachers are brilliant, as is the head. It would be a real shame to switch this and risk losing such talented staff who are connected to the area.

I hope this can be taken into consideration.

Kind regards,

From:

Sent: 24 February 2023 21:13

To:

Subject: Berwick school consultation

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Deborah,

This is my submission for the Berwick school consultation. I started filling in the online submission form but felt it would be easier to put my views across this way so am sending you an email with my thoughts.

I am a school governor at Wooler First school and Glendale Middle school and we have submitted our collective view as governors. This is my response as a parent, I have one child at Wooler first school and one who will start in a couple of years. Both will be impacted by any changes that take place. My postcode is .

Ideally, we would have loved to continue to have our local middle school so our children are not spending a large portion of their day travelling at such an early age. I understand that with falling pupil numbers that it is not a realistic option. It therefore seems sensible that we become two tier and convert to a primary school and I support this.

Our school building is no longer fit for purpose. Our building was designed as a middle school for 250 pupils. With falling pupil numbers and wear and tear on the building we are at a stage where it is prohibitively expensive to run the school as it is. Ideally, if we convert to a primary, a new sustainable build on our wonderful site would be ideal. Alternatively, the existing building could be altered and parts of it moth balled or used for other purposes within the community. We are very lucky to have both a forest school and a swimming pool at our school which are huge assets to our pupils (both noted by Ofsted) and am keen that we keep these.

There is a lot of development currently going on in Wooler with imminent opening of Ad Gefrin and new housing, a new school would be a good way to attract new families to our town and community.

Given the large distances children in our rural location have to travel it would be ideal if children from the potential new Wooler Primary could still access the SEND facilities in the Berwick partnership, even if we move to Alnwick high school catchment. If a purpose built school was to be developed in Wooler perhaps we would be able to incorporate SEND facilities here to reduce travel distances for local children with SEND.

It is very important that we continue to provide the early year services that we do, this is such a valuable asset to our local community. There is a real lack of early years care in our area and I regularly hear from other parents that they are having to travel to Alnwick or Berwick to find care for their under twos. Whatever plans we make for the school I feel strongly that the nursery should remain on site.

With similar Ofsted reports for both Alnwick and Berwick it is very difficult for parents/carers to make a decision which school is preferred as a high school unless they already have a child at one of the schools and have direct experience or already have a preference. My husband and I have a preference for Alnwick and would prefer that our children should have places there. However, even if we move to the Alnwick catchment, I do think that it would be beneficial if children in the north of our area have the choice to choose Berwick as their school of choice so they do not have to travel undue distances.

The sooner a decision is made either way the better for our staff. The uncertainty is not good for mental health and wellbeing. There is a real risk that we lose good staff members and then struggle to recruit when the time comes. The longer the process takes the more likely this is.

I feel very lucky to have such a lovely school locally that really cares about each of the pupils. I hope that you will make significant investment in our school so it will continue to provide a wonderful start for local children in the years to come.

Kind regards,

Consultation on future structure of education in the Berwick Partnership

I would offer the following:

This is a once in a generation opportunity to shape the educational provision in the Berwick Partnership. I would like to concentrate on provision linked to High School age range.

It is clear that for many the traditional curriculum does not meet the needs of pupils and students at secondary level. I would advocate that any new structure takes heed of this and consider:

- a greater emphasis on technical and vocational education. Courses at both KS 3 and KS 4 and beyond.
- greater links with local business and enterprise whereby local people are more actively engaged in curriculum and work placements
- increasing work placements as students progress through school to underline the importance of key skills and practical application of learning
- state of the art facilities to support such technical and vocational courses
- status given to these courses and the students engaged
- specialist provision in identified areas that would attract students from outside the immediate catchment including cross border
- showcase of provision linked to outcomes in community
- a comprehensive mentoring programme that includes school, local business, parents/ carers
- local business and enterprise looking to promote and reward successful students