



## Oatlands Community Junior School

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Headteacher: Miss Estelle Weir

26<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Public consultation meeting on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April at 6.30pm at Oatlands Junior School regarding a proposal for Oatlands Junior School to become a two form 60 intake 5-11 age full through primary school**

For some time now the Governing Body at Oatlands Juniors has been considering the option of becoming a 'full' primary school and admitting children from reception upwards. There has been a move away from two tier primary provision across the country as Local Authorities, schools and academies have recognized that the additional transition is not beneficial to children. The transition at Year 3 comes at a mid-point in the primary curriculum and creates a range of challenges for the schools in terms of curriculum continuity, assessment practice and teaching and learning. It can also be challenging for children who have to cope with the upheaval of moving schools and coping with changes in routines, procedures and culture. Research indicates that children who do not have to cope with this additional transition are able to do better as a result.

Although we have worked hard to overcome the issues at transition we do have concerns for the small but significant number of children who each year don't get a place at the Juniors but have attended Oatlands Infants. The heartache and upset this causes each year is something we would very much like to avoid. Sadly, this is likely to get worse in the short term as the Infants Pupil Admission Number (PAN) has been raised to 90 per year whilst the Juniors remains, at the advice of the Local Authority admissions team, on 75. If our school remains as it is, we cannot increase that number because we cannot accommodate a material number of additional children.

We are very fortunate at Oatlands Juniors to have wonderfully green and extensive school site that could easily accommodate a two-form entry 'full' primary school. With lots of accessible outdoor space we could provide a brilliant location for the much younger children who we would welcome to the school in due course. Being a two form entry school will allow us to avoid having to have mixed age classes and some of the discontinuity which, although manageable, does arise from this.

The Governing Body and Headteacher at Oatlands Juniors and the Red Kite Learning Trust all feel that becoming a Primary school will help our school become an even better place for children in the future. We are excited by the prospect but now want to consult with our parents, staff and community before we decide whether to put our plans to the Regional Schools Commissioner who would ultimately make the decision.

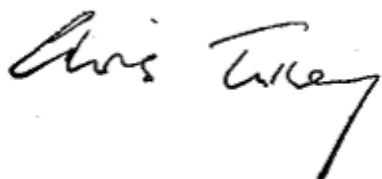
We do not in any way want to damage provision in other local schools as a result of our proposed change. We have tried to work with Oatlands Infants and the Causeway Trust to ensure a smooth transition by suggesting that they become a 'full' primary too and give parents a real choice in the locality. However, the Causeway Trust have decided that they would prefer their school to stay as an Infants school and we must respect their decision. Having reflected on this outcome, and consulted with the Local Authority and the Regional Schools Commissioners office, we still feel we must consider



this further. The educational case is so strong that we would not be acting in the best interests of our children and community if we were not to give the plan careful consideration.

We plan to hold a public consultation meeting on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April at 6.30pm in the school hall at Oatlands Juniors. In addition we have published the attached 'frequently asked questions' document on our website that we will update as we get feedback from the consultation. The Local Authority will also be consulted as will other local schools. The consultation period will run until May 7<sup>th</sup>, at this point the Red Kite Learning Trust and Local Governing Body at Oatlands Juniors will decide whether to submit a business case to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and seek their approval for the plan.

If there was a decision to go ahead with the plan and it received approval from the RSC the intention would be to begin admitting children into reception at a re-named Oatlands Junior School in September 2019. However, that might have to be delayed until September 2020 dependent on the time taken to gain approval and the completion of any alterations and additions to facilities on site to accommodate the extra children.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Tulley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.

Chris Tulley  
Chair of Governors