

## **BISHOP THORNTON C. OF E. PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **PROPOSAL TO MOVE PREMISES TO OCCUPY VACANT SCHOOL PROPERTY AT BURNT YATES**

Bishop Thornton Church of England Primary School has been invited to move to the vacant school premises, formerly Burnt Yates Primary School. We would very much like to know the views of parents and other interested members of the community, as we recognise that this is a significant proposal.

#### **Why is the School making this proposal?**

The vacant Burnt Yates school building and grounds would enable and provide:-

- more space and facilities for children and teachers, to enhance the learning experience
- spacious outdoor facilities, with a garden, sports field, woodland and wildlife areas and disabled access including an outdoor toilet
- a designated Early Years outside learning space for physical development and exciting learning opportunities along with child-friendly storage provision
- an outdoor classroom for children of all ages
- all teaching areas at ground level providing disability access for children and visitors alike
- a school hall with greater flexibility of space for indoor activities
  - A space for dance, gymnastics and indoor PE sessions with equipment in place
  - A dining facility saving classroom dining and valuable teaching time each day
  - Drama opportunities would be enhanced within the hall area, with space for whole school activities, Collective Worship, productions and events
  - A large indoor space for play during break time on wet days
  - Opportunities for family and community events
- a class 1 teaching space which is self-contained, with no interruptions from 'through traffic' for the kitchen or toilets
- a classroom for the younger children with a folding partition enabling separate learning areas for all abilities and ages
- extensive indoor space providing areas for 1:1 and small group learning, quiet time and support for individual needs
- meeting room space for personal and confidential meetings and for staff breaks
- opportunity to develop on-site wrap-around care
- more space for and safer off-road parking

Bishop Thornton's staff and Governors are considering a move to the former primary school building at Burnt Yates at the invitation of its owners, the Trustees of the Admiral Long's Foundation. Whilst other parties have expressed an interest in occupying this building, Bishop Thornton School is the Foundation's first choice and has therefore been given the first option on it.

Obviously this would be a big decision for the School family and so the Headteacher and the Governors have, since the offer was made, conducted significant research into the viability of such a move, including consulting with the Local Educational Authority and the Church of England Diocese before feeling able to come to parents with this proposal. We now think that this is a very attractive proposition to put before parents and the wider community. Understandably you will have questions and we hope that the following will provide some answers.

Q1: Does this mean Bishop Thornton School would close?

A: No, this is not a school closure. The School would move and continue to exist in exactly the same way, with the same head teacher, teachers, staff and governors, but just on a different site.

Q 2: But would it be the school for Bishop Thornton village?

A. Yes, it would still be the school for Bishop Thornton, as well as for Shaw Mills and Warsill, as it is already, and now also for Burnt Yates all of which are already in Bishop Thornton's extended catchment (though Burnt Yates catchment is also currently shared with Ripley Endowed CE). The School already serves these areas and would also continue to attract children from further afield, just as it does now.

Q 3: Would the move into a larger building mean that numbers will grow a lot?

A: Not really, and definitely not in the first few years. The Burnt Yates building has the same admission limit as Bishop Thornton: 8 reception children per year, with a maximum school size of 56. The Local Authority expects the School to grow gradually towards 40, whether it moves or not. This is due to house building and previous local school closures. A modest increase in pupil numbers would help in terms of friendship groups and peer-relationships between children, helping them both socially and academically.

Q 4: This is a lovely, small, friendly school; how will you keep the school as it is now? Wouldn't we lose the family feel of the current building? Many parents and children love Bishop Thornton for the way it feels more like a home than a school.

A: The School is its people, and that warmth and specialness will stay with our wonderful teachers and staff wherever they go, as they generate the ethos of the School.

Q 5: Isn't the Burnt Yates building much bigger and more 'school-like'?

A: Yes - but it comes with all the positives we have already mentioned, and an admission level no larger than ours. It is still a quirky building with an intimate feel and a definite personality. By most standards it is still a very small village school and it can acquire those same happy associations that people have for the Bishop Thornton building.

Q 6: Wrap-around Care

A: Mrs Sonia Virr plays a pivotal role in the life of many parents and the School, so the Headteacher and Chair of Governors have discussed various options for her continued involvement if the move were to go ahead. Mrs. Virr has welcomed the proposal to move and she has confirmed that she would like to continue to work with the School.

Q 7: Transport - It is not easy for me to get to Burnt Yates to take my child to school. Will there be any help with transport arrangements?

A: Assistance with transport has been discussed with the Local Authority and their statement of responsibility is as follows:

*"We provide free school transport to the catchment school or nearest school to your home if it is over the following walking distances:*

- *two miles for children under eight years of age;*
- *three miles for children aged over eight; or*
- *where the route to the catchment or nearest school is not safe to walk accompanied by a responsible adult."*

We have requested that the road between Bishop Thornton and Burnt Yates be assessed by the Council Highways Department as to its safety and we will continue to consult with the Local Authority on the question of transport, appreciating that this is a very important issue. Any views expressed by parents will be helpful to our discussions.

Q 8: What do the Burnt Yates Trustees do, and what is their attitude concerning the move?

A. The Trustees are fully in favour of the proposal and have shown their 100% support by welcoming all our pupils to use the facilities most Thursday afternoons.

They own the building and a substantial endowed fund and over previous years have provided grants for the Burnt Yates school building, and resources for the children. The Trustees have made it clear that they would like to continue to provide these benefits to Bishop Thornton School and its children if we move into their premises.

They accept that we are our own school, and that we would move into the Burnt Yates premises with our own identity.

**Q 9: Do the Headteacher, Teachers and Teaching Assistants think the move would be a good thing?**

A. The Headteacher and Teaching staff have been part of the conversation regarding a premises move right from the beginning and greatly welcome the opportunity to expand their ideas and creativity within the more flexible space that the building at Burnt Yates would allow.

We realise that this is a significant proposal for us all to consider, but as pupil numbers grow we have to reflect on what is in the best interests of our whole school community, not just now but also in 10+ years time. It is not difficult to see that the plot on which the present Bishop Thornton School sits is already fully developed, and the paddock used for summertime play is only available for use by the School due to the kindness of its current owners.

In making this proposal the School leaders are seeking to give our School and our children the best opportunities going into the future. It is extremely unlikely that we will ever have another opportunity such as this on our doorstep again and the Governors feel that it must be fully explored by everyone, with an open mind and an eye to the future of this beloved School.

**What will happen next?**

The four week period of consultation following this meeting, during which we hope as many of you as possible will comment on the proposal, is in preparation for a Statutory Consultation process.

The obvious time for the School to move would be during the summer holiday, so the timetable for consultations and the formal process (outlined below) is designed to be completed during the summer term. Should the move be approved, the children will then have opportunities to visit and use the new site before the school breaks up for the summer.

We would like comments on the proposal by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Comments received from this consultation will be considered by the Governing Body during the week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, at which point they will decide whether or not to proceed to the period of Statutory Consultation.

If the School decides to progress to Statutory Consultation, there will be a formal consultation period of 4 weeks and the final decision will be made by the Local Authority on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

**How do I make my views known?**

Your views are important and we very much value your opinions. Please complete the attached comments sheet and return it to the Office at the School or return via email to [admin@bishophthorntoncofe.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:admin@bishophthorntoncofe.n-yorks.sch.uk)

**Comments should be returned by 30th March, 2019**

**An Invitation**

**Everyone associated with the School and its children are warmly invited to visit the Burnt Yates premises on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March between 9.00 and 10.00am to see more fully what the site has to offer.**

**If you have any further queries, these should be addressed to Mrs. E. Bedford (Headteacher) and/or Miss Caroline Smith (Chair of Governors)**

**BISHOP THORNTON CHURCH of ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO MOVE PREMISES TO THE VACANT BURNT YATES  
SCHOOL BUILDING

Do you consider it desirable that Bishop Thornton C. of E. Primary School should move to the vacant Burnt Yates' site?

Yes

Undecided

No

Any further comments you would like to make:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick the category you represent:

Parent

Governor

Other

Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to the school office at Bishop Thornton C. of E. Primary School, Colber Lane, Bishop Thornton HG3 3JR  
**The closing date for receipt of responses is 30th March, 2019**

*We are collecting this information for the purpose of gathering views on the proposal. Your personal data will not be published or passed to any other organisation unless a legal obligation compels us to do so. We may contact you to discuss your views further.*