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Chair of Governors: Mr Haydn Rees Jones

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians

### **School Academic Year 2016/2017**

It is the end of another academic year which has both been very challenging and has also seen a great deal of change for the school.

Our children and staff have worked very hard this year. We have invested in new teaching resources to help with termly assessments at each year group and continued to monitor pupil progress throughout the year. This has resulted in improvements for achievements against the SATs this year.

Our new classroom has now been in operation for the last year and has proven to be a great addition to the school. The new classroom provides an exciting and stimulating environment for our Reception and Year One children.

We always listen to the views of our parents. One of the things we were told last year was that many parents felt the need for a before and after school club. We listened to your views and at the beginning of the year we opened our new before and after school club. The club is used by many of our children and has proven to be very successful with children and parents providing very positive feedback.

Financially the Governing Board has continued to monitor the school budget to ensure that we are obtaining the best value for money and the school, like many all over the country must look at ways to make savings over the coming months. This is an increasingly challenging issue for the school as budgets are squeezed and we have felt it best to remain at 4 small classes for the benefit of the children and giving us the option to grow throughout the year as the new housing estate in the village gets established.

This year has probably been one of the most challenging years the Governors have ever had. Following a meeting with the diocese the governors have debated the long-term future of the school and whether we should convert to an academy.

The academisation programme was originally conceived by the Labour Government and introduced in the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Since then successive governments have



refined the programme and until recently only schools requiring improvement were required to convert to an academy. While the Government is not currently forcing schools to convert this does not mean that the issue will go away.

As a “good” school we were not concerned that we may be forced into academisation in the near future, as the government pushed this agenda; however, with many services previously provided to the school by the Local Authority becoming a “traded” or paid for services and a number of the schools with which we work, also “good” schools, considering early conversion to an academy, the Governing Body has had to think long and hard about whether it is best we convert now and have the ability to shape and influence the development of a new multi academy trust or possibly be forced into a trust at a later date which may not match our school’s ethos.

Our recent parent consultation evening did elicit some questions regarding the proposed conversion and answers to many questions have been placed on our website. Your views as parents have been important in our considerations and if you have any questions please see our FAQs page on the website ([http://ainderbysteepleschool.org/data/documents/AS-Stakeholder-FAQs-10.6.17\\_1.pdf](http://ainderbysteepleschool.org/data/documents/AS-Stakeholder-FAQs-10.6.17_1.pdf)) or contact us.

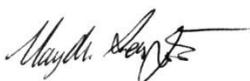
Many of you will be aware that Scruton Pre-School will shortly close due to the preschool which is committee led not having a committee to move forward in September. Many of the children who attend the pre-school later come to our school. It is an essential service which works with our school and the loss of the pre-school will have significant consequences for our school in the long-term. As governors, we are very conscious of this and have initiated consultation regarding the pre-school joining our school.

The next year will be another very challenging year as we look to transfer the school into an academy, joining the Dales Academies Trust. This is not a time for great change in the governing body. I am pleased to inform you that I have been re-elected as chair of governors for the next two years, this will be my third session as chair. We will be holding parental governor elections early in the next academic year and we would welcome applications particularly from parents who have skills in marketing/education and who are able to commit to attending the school on occasion during the day to carry out governor visits.

I would like to thank all the staff for their dedication and hard work, and the commitment and professionalism of the Governing Body in making the school what it is today.

Finally, on behalf of the whole governing body, I also want to congratulate all of our children for working so hard throughout the year and for those pupils who are leaving us this term, wish them every success in the future.

Yours sincerely



Mr Haydn Rees Jones  
Chair of Governors

