



Colyton Primary School

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Dear Parents,

Over the past year there has been a big shake up in the world of education that has on the whole not been noticed by parents and the world at large. The coalition government have changed the emphasis for funding schools and, in particular, have changed the role of the LEA- Local Education Authority (Devon County Council) in managing the schools in the area. The staff of the LEA has reduced in size and function, the emphasis now is in carrying out statutory duties only. All the excellent support and advisory staff they had have gone and schools are left on their own to 'buy in' this support from elsewhere when this is needed. At the same time, school's budgets have become tighter with the credit crunch and these funds have to be stretched further to enable schools to function successfully. This doesn't look like it will be getting easier in the near future.

In order to combat these changes and to maintain their schools, governors have looked at different options. Some schools have opted out of the LEA altogether and become 'academies', effectively becoming their own education company. Many schools have chosen to work together more closely in a group, becoming 'federations'. Others are standing still and waiting to see what will happen- but the time has come for schools to take action. The time has come for Colyton Primary School to decide where our future lies and take action to continue to offer the best education for the children in our community. Our aim continues to be achieving 'outstanding' in all that we do.

With this in mind the school has been working collaboratively with the local Learning Community and has become particularly close to the primary schools in Kilmington, Seaton and Shute. On Thursday there was a meeting of representatives from the Governing Bodies of the four schools and it was proposed that we use the rest of this academic year investigating and planning for the possibility of the four schools joining together in a more formal manner, as a federation, in September 2012.

OFSTED has produced several reports to show that schools which join together in this way gain many benefits and become better schools. Experience in Devon, where there are currently many federations already in existence, shows that they offer excellent support for teaching and learning, provide the children with broader and better learning experiences, and raise standards in all the schools. Evidence also shows that schools that work together in this way are more cost-effective, allowing their schools to spend their money on the children's teaching and learning rather than administration.

Obviously, declaring an interest in working together more formally is the first step and there is a long journey to be taken before we become a federation. However, I am confident that working together with Seaton, Shute and Kilmington will be a success. The next step is to set up a working party with members from each of the governing bodies. They will carry out all the preliminary work and I will keep you informed about their progress. There will be consultation with staff and parents later this term so that everyone is fully involved in any decisions made.

I am sure it will be an interesting and exciting year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

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N.Harris