

# BYRON WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Headteacher  
Mrs S Ashton

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Dear Parents/Carers

Earlier this year the Sarah Draper, Chair of the Interim Executive Board, attended the Parents' Forum with Mrs Ashton, to explain that the IEB was exploring the opportunities offered through becoming an academy and to explain that because the school at its last inspection was judged as "requiring improvement" the Department for Education expected the school to become an academy. As part of the discussion parents were asked to express their views on what an academy sponsor should be able to offer to Byron Wood.

The views collected, added to those of the IEB and headteacher, were then used to research and find the best possible sponsor for the school. When looking at possible sponsors the IEB was therefore seeking one which would build on what is best at Byron Wood School, but also one which would help the school to improve even faster and make it outstanding for pupils.

The key priorities were that the sponsor should:

- *Want to build on the inclusive ethos of Byron Wood Primary School and its commitment to enabling all children in the local community to achieve their learning potential, to be successful and have the highest aspirations.*
- *Understand that Byron Wood Primary School pupils must have the best quality learning experience and the highest quality teaching. To do this the academy sponsor should have a strong track record in the training and development of all staff and also a clear strategy for the recruitment of the best staff.*
- *Show commitment to maintaining and developing the beneficial partnerships the school has already established. The sponsor should see:*
  - *Parents and carers as partners in the learning, social development, care and nurture of their children.*
  - *Continued value in working with local schools through the Family of Schools (the secondary schools and other nearby primary schools)*
  - *Byron Wood Primary School as part of the city of Sheffield specifically by engaging with Learn Sheffield in city wide school improvement, by welcoming community representatives on to the school governing body and allowing staff the right to trade union membership.*
- *Recognise what Byron Wood does well and build on it.*

There are many sponsors available and in the end six were looked at in great detail. Finally the IEB have taken the decision to seek sponsorship from a multi-academy trust called REACH4 because they match the school's priorities and share the same values and principles.

Together with their partner organisation REACH2 they have a strong track record of delivering high quality education, having high aspirations for children and a commitment to meeting local community needs. IEB members and some staff have visited a REACH academy and were impressed with what they saw. REACH4 have visited Byron Wood, met some staff, the headteacher and IEB; they are very positive about sponsoring the school. Final approval has now been given by the DfE for this to go ahead.

The IEB together with REACH4 have agreed that the school will not change its name and neither will school uniform change. The experience of other schools which have become REACH academies is that the changes experienced by pupils, families and staff have been well-managed and beneficial.

As an IEB we believe that this step presents exciting opportunities for the future of Byron Wood School and its community. At the same time we understand that you will have questions about the future so REACH4 along with IEB members will meet parents during the next half term and answer the questions you may have. You will have the opportunity to submit questions you would like answered before the meeting.

*Sarah Draper*



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