



TIPTON ST JOHN
CHURCH OF ENGLAND VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

16th June 2016

Dear Parents,

The Governors wrote in March 2015 to advise you, and the wider community, of the news that our application for funding for the relocation of the school under the Priority School Building Programme had been unsuccessful. Since then, we have kept you informed of the actions and initiatives we have taken in response to that very disappointing decision.

We commissioned a hydrological report into the nature of the flood hazard which threatens the lower site of the school, and we submitted this report, together with a request last November to Lord Nash, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools, for the funding which would enable us to relocate the school.

After a six month wait, the Governors have now been notified that there is no funding available which would enable the relocation of the school within Tipton.

Our school faces many challenges, as you know. These include:

- The existing buildings on the lower site are temporary, small, deteriorating and have a limited life.
- There will not be planning permission for replacement buildings on the lower site due to flood risk.
- The school has operational and safety issues arising from a split site partly on the floodplain.
- Tipton is a small rural school with an intake of approximately 15 per year and the majority of the pupils come from outside our catchment area.
- Tipton St John is not a location in which significant housing development is anticipated and the demographics make it impossible for the catchment alone to sustain our school.

Devon County Council, the Diocese of Exeter, together with our local MP, County Councillor and other concerned parties agree that we cannot maintain the status quo and, as governors, we are continuing to explore ways to secure the long term future of the school.

We now believe that, having exhausted every option to relocate the school within the village, the only remaining possibility is to move the school to a new build on a site in the vicinity of The King's School in Ottery. This option would ensure that the school would remain open, retain its VA status, and would move to new buildings whilst retaining absolute continuity in terms of staff, curriculum and ethos. The new buildings would provide the space and facilities our pupils so desperately need, away from the floodplain.

This would not be a decision governors would make lightly and consideration of this option is still at an early stage. However, we want to share this with you, and convey the disappointing news from the Department of Education as soon as possible. We would like to invite you to a meeting with the Governors, the Executive Head, and other interested parties to listen to your views at 2.45pm in the Village Hall on Wednesday 29th June. If you are unable to make this meeting but have some urgent initial concerns to raise, there will be an opportunity for some parents to meet senior staff and a governor on a one to one basis next week by booking, at the office, a 15 minute slot between 8.30 and 9.30 am on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, and from 3.30 to 4.30 pm on Thursday. There will be other opportunities to you to meet with governors and senior staff in in due course.

Executive Headteacher: Colin Butler B.Sc. (Hons) PGCE Head of School: Mr Michael Tuckett B.Sc. (Hons) PGCE
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Please be assured that the welfare of your children, and our commitment to provide them with the best possible learning environment remains, as always, our highest priority.

Yours Sincerely,

John Sherwood Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Governing Board

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