



Grasvenor Avenue Infant School

Kindness Unity Honesty Resilience Respect Courage

6 May 2022

Dear parents and carers

Update on the Future of Grasvenor Avenue Infant School

I am writing to you as we start the summer term with an update on the closure process of Grasvenor Avenue Infant School.

A meeting was held for parents and careers on 25 February and a letter was sent to you all, explaining that we were now entering a listening period, where we were seeking your views on the proposed closure process in relation to the effect on the children at the school and where they go from September and the impact on staff.

The listening period ran from 25 February to 25 March and we had 34 responses: 31 from parents/carers and 3 from staff.

The questionnaire asked for a response to the following:

1. The school closure process. 33 responses were given; 45% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the school closure while just under 30% agreed.
2. The information provided on the school closure process is all you need: 32 responses were given: over 80% agreed that the document did give all the information required.

The questionnaire also asked for comments on the proposed school closure. There were 10 responses to this question, mainly from parents/carers and the comments can be summarised as follows:

- shame for the school to close as some parents preferred to send their children to a small school.
- Children who have started at the school so should be given the opportunity to finish at the school.

A member of staff commented that it was a shame that the Local Authority hadn't done more to support the infants school, especially as the site would remain an educational setting, and that the local residents and community are saddened by the school closure but their knowledge of this proposal has only been by word of mouth. The respondent felt that more information should have been imparted earlier in the process for the local community to be more aware.

In response to this last comment, the Local MP Theresa Villiers was aware of the proposed school closure at a virtual meeting with Ian Harrison the Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning for Barnet in July last year and was updated by Ian on 23 February and sent a copy of the proposed closure process. Ward Councillors were also sent the document. All the information was available on the school website. Staff were informed by the previous School Trustees in May 2021, that the decision had been made to contact the DfE to ask that school closure be considered given the financial viability of the school.

A member of staff has commented that the school could be developed for use as a community centre/youth centre and develop a nursery to raise funds to keep the school open.

In response to this comment, the Trustees have explored different options to keep the school open and these are outlined in the closure process document along with a breakdown of costs for running the school. The school's total budget for the current academic year is £600,246 and the school faces a deficit budget next financial year.

Responses from the Parent/Carer Meeting 25 February 2022

The meeting on 25 February gave a brief overview of the proposed closure, with the opportunity for parents to speak to the Barnet Admissions Team about their child's future education destination from September 2022. No questions came back and all those attending indicated they would like to take the opportunity to meet the admissions team on a 1-2-1 basis. All comments were captured through the questionnaire presented.

Closure Confirmation

Following the listening period, the Department for Education (DfE) has considered the responses and decided to go ahead with the termination of the Funding Agreement between the DfE and Grasvenor Avenue Infant School Trust Board. The termination of this contract means that the school will cease operating as Grasvenor Avenue Infant School as of 31 August 2022.

Next Steps

As Trustees, we are now required to start the processes to close the school, which includes allocating all pupils a school place for September (in consultation with the Local Authority), beginning a redundancy process for all staff, emptying the building and preparing all the records to be archived.

We have also been made aware that the Local Authority will be beginning a consultation in early May to consider the proposed use of the building, which must remain for educational use, in the future. We understand the plan will be to create a satellite site to Northway Special School on the Grasvenor Avenue Infant School site. More details to follow.

I should like to thank you for your continued support the school during these uncertain time and to recognise your commitment to ensuring the children at Grasvenor Avenue Infant School are happy and provided with a high level of education and support to our children.

With best wishes



Ian Phillips
Chair of Trustees