



Headteacher:
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13th December 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

As you know, a period of consultation on the proposal to close the sixth form at New Mills School has been drawing to a close. Reductions in Central Government funding, rising costs and a continuing fall in student numbers were the primary reasons behind the proposal to close the sixth form put forward by the school's governors earlier this year.

This morning, Derbyshire County Council Cabinet met and its members supported the recommendation that the school's age range from September 2018 would be 11-16.

This marks the end of a long and thorough process. The recommendation to close the sixth form to new intake after this year was one the governors made very reluctantly, but it was motivated by our responsibility to protect the best interests of *all* the pupils in the school. The number of sixth form students had fallen from 180 in the 2007/08 academic year to 87 in 2015/16 and with numbers so low and many class sizes as small as 3-4 students, the cost of sixth form provision was very high. The governors recognised that this was placing significant additional pressures on the school's budget and proposed that changing the age range of the school could help relieve those financial pressures and allow the school to focus on improving teaching and attainment for local children between the ages of 11 and 16.

Ever since the closure of the sixth form was first proposed the leadership team and governing body have been acutely aware of the impact that this would have upon the local community, but the continuing challenge of rising expenditure without corresponding increases in funding from Government led the governors to feel that they could make no other choice. Members of the school's governing body will continue to make themselves available for an open discussion on the process of closing the sixth form now that the decision has been made.

We truly recognise the significance of this decision and we understand the value the local community places on the post-16 provision we offer. It has been heartening to hear from many local people, and from our students past and present, who have expressed their support for retaining a sixth form at the school.

Nonetheless, despite the difficulty of the decision, we believe that this is the right outcome for the school. All of our current sixth form students, including next year's Year 13, will continue to receive the best possible teaching and support from our staff right through to their A-Level exams. Meanwhile, the leadership team, all the staff and the governors will continue to focus on continually improving the educational provision for children aged 11-16 in New Mills and the surrounding villages for many years to come.

Yours faithfully

D McGloin
Headteacher