



Department
for Education

Rebecca Clark
RSC for the South West
2 Rivergate
Bristol
BS1 6EH

Steve Taylor
Chief Executive Officer, Cabot Learning Federation
(via email)

Professor Jane Harrington
Chair of Trustees, Cabot Learning Federation
(via email)

19 January 2017

Dear Mr Taylor and Professor Harrington,

Bath Community Academy closure

Having sought the views of parents and other interested parties, and considered carefully their responses, Department for Education Ministers have now made a final decision to close Bath Community Academy (BCA) at the end of the summer term 2018. Ministers thereby also agree to the termination of its funding agreement, by mutual agreement. This follows Ministers previously giving their in-principle agreement to the closure of Bath Community Academy, as requested by the Cabot Learning Federation (CLF).

Since BCA joined the CLF Multi-Academy Trust in 2012 as a sponsor-led academy, pupil numbers have remained extremely low. There are only 240 pupils on roll at this time, meaning that the school is considerably less than half full. As school budgets are largely determined by the number of pupils in a school, such low numbers make it very challenging to provide a sustainably high quality education for all pupils. Projections for the Bath area indicate that it is unlikely that pupil numbers will increase sufficiently at BCA over the next five years to make the school viable in future. In addition, the capacity available in other Bath schools will enable BCA pupils to transfer to local schools.

We were pleased that a number of parents/carers of pupils at BCA took the opportunity to inform us of their views on the proposed closure during our listening engagement. We lengthened the listening period to receive responses by two weeks to ensure parents/carers had time to respond, and have since taken careful account of the views expressed. While we understand the concerns expressed by parents, on balance we believe that the children at BCA will receive a more sustainable and high quality education in a neighbouring school with an assured future.

Our shared priority must now be to ensure that all children have access to that high quality education in a school with a sustainable future. **With this in mind, we look to you to provide immediate and on-going support to parents/carers of pupils at BCA in progressing their children's education at local schools. We understand you will work in cooperation with officials at Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Local Authority, between now and the end of the summer term, 2018.** We agreed that CLF will make a per pupil contribution to new school uniform costs for those students moving schools.

We appreciate this is an unsettling time for BCA pupils, their parents and the school's staff. We will continue to work collaboratively with you, your team and B&NES officers to ensure that the transition to new schools for BCA pupils is as smooth as possible over the next eighteen months.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rebecca Clark', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rebecca Clark
Regional Schools Commissioner for the South West
Email: RSC.SW@education.gov.uk

Copied to:

- Ben Howlett MP
- Ashley Ayre, Chief Executive Officer, Bath & North East Somerset LA
- Parents/carers of pupils at BCA