

Dear Parents,

On behalf of the staff at Northburn 1st School, I am writing to let you know of our extreme disappointment at the Council's about turn on the decision to reorganise our school to 'two-form entry'. As you will already have read in the January 2006 Newsletter 'Putting the Learner First', it is now proposed that we will continue our current practice of operating as a '1.5 form entry' school.

What this means in 'parent-speak', is that your children will continue to be taught in mixed age classes. Though this has implications for teachers workload (because we must ensure a wider range of learning opportunities to address the needs of all the children in each class), we have worked successfully in this way for many years and so we can promise without question that teaching standards will continue and grow.

Staff and governors have expressed their regrets and concerns to the Council about their revised re-organisation plans and we are very disheartened by the responses we have received so far.

Our most pressing concern, however, is whether we will receive a budget which will enable us to provide equality of opportunities for the children who attend Northburn 1st School. (2 form entry would have guaranteed this). We need to be certain that we are allocated enough funding to make improvements to both our buildings and our resources, which will enable us to give Northburn children the same opportunities as children in other primary schools in Cramlington.

I am writing to you now to urge you to support us in our endeavours to maintain the highest possible standards of education at our school, by writing to Northumberland County Council to add your concerns. Staff and parents in our neighbouring schools have seen positive responses when they have put pressure on the decision-makers, but large numbers of responses are needed, in order to sway opinion. We all need to urge the council to ensure that funding is fair and equal across the primary cohort (this shouldn't be such an unrealistic demand on a council who profess that 'Equality for All' is their primary aim!!) however, this is definitely not a certainty.

There is a response form on the back of the 'Putting the Learner First' newsletter, though in our past experience we have found that individual formal letters seem to carry more importance. The new closing date for your comments/views/protests etc., is January 31st 2006, so we must act promptly, if we are to make an impact. Staff will be happy to help you if you are unsure how to get started.

The education of your children is vitally important to us and I am sure that you will want to join with us to ensure that we do all in our power to obtain the best possible opportunities for all our pupils.

The address for correspondence is:
Northumberland County Council
Putting the Learner First Team
Children's Services
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland NE61 2 EF


Mrs. S Brown.