

Dear parents and carers

RE: Consultation on the closure of the Sixth Form and reduction in the published admissions number (PAN) at Bridgnorth Endowed School

It is with a sense of regret that I am writing to inform you that the governing body at Bridgnorth Endowed School have taken the difficult decision to consult on the closure of the Sixth Form. A continuing fall in student numbers in the town of Bridgnorth, reductions in funding, rising costs and the availability of alternative high quality 16-19 provision locally are the primary reasons for this decision. Given these challenges, the Sixth Form at Bridgnorth Endowed School is not financially viable and we are unable to provide a range of study programmes that are likely to make the Sixth Form attractive to young people.

Although I feel somewhat sad to be consulting on this, as the end of an era is always bittersweet, I feel very optimistic that this is the right decision to take. An average sixth form college has approximately 1000 students, while an average school sixth form has approximately 200. The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that sixth forms with fewer than 200 students are at risk of not being financially viable, meaning that small schools with sixth forms may be required to divert funds from their 11-16 budget in order to subsidise their small sixth form. I believe that, whilst difficult, the decision to consult on the closure of the sixth form is the right decision to take because the 11-16 funds being used to subsidise the sixth form could be put towards improving provision across Years 7 to 11. As you will know, Bridgnorth Endowed School is making significant progress towards becoming outstanding, as evidenced by the recent positive Ofsted inspection. It is our ambition that the school is in a position to be rated outstanding in the next Ofsted inspection, and in order to do this we would like our full focus and budget to be on improving provision across Years 7 to 11.

We recognise that some of our students, particularly those in Year 11 this year, may be disappointed by this decision. Fortunately there exists a wealth of very high quality provision in the local area. I have held meetings with the Principals at King Edward VI College in Stourbridge, the Shrewsbury Colleges Group and at Kidderminster College. I am hugely impressed with what is on offer at these institutions for our young people and I am excited about how we may work with them in the future. I realise that some of our Year 11 students may have missed open evenings at these institutions, however all three Principals have offered their support in ensuring our young people receive the very best information, advice and guidance and have offered to work with us to ensure this happens. I look forward to discussing this with our Year 11 students in the near future.

At Bridgnorth Endowed School we have seen increasing numbers of our young people opting for 16-19 provision in Shrewsbury and Stourbridge; however students wishing to remain in Bridgnorth to study can apply to The Oldbury Wells School Bridgnorth Sixth Form. The Oldbury Wells School Bridgnorth Sixth Form is offering a wide range of A-level courses, and is introducing a number of new vocational courses for September 2019. The Oldbury Wells School Bridgnorth Sixth Form is part of the Bridgnorth Area School's Trust and the Executive Headteacher has made it clear that applications from students who have been taught in other secondary schools are welcomed.

It is important to note that students in our current Year 12 will continue into Year 13 with no changes and no disruption to their studies.

Clearly, your views are very important to us, so please take the time to read our consultation document which includes our rationale and the data underpinning our decision. There are details in the consultation document about how to share your views.

Obviously the decision to consult on the closure of the Sixth Form has been made reluctantly; however I see a bright future for our school. Bridgnorth Endowed School has a clear vision focused on high expectations, traditional values, a challenging academic curriculum and high standards of academic achievement for all. This underpins our mission to ensure that every student we teach has the opportunity to go to university. I know that the decision to focus entirely on 11-16 provision will enable us to push towards becoming a truly exceptional school.

Yours sincerely

Mr B Worth
Headteacher