



Building Inspiring Caring

CIRCULAR 2017 TL098

To: Parents/Guardians of all enrolled students
Cc: Bursar

May 2017

Pathways

As you may have heard or read in the press the Education Authority have published Northern Ireland's first regional strategic plan for education, and the action plan for 2017-18. As a part of this Blackwater IC is obviously mentioned as are all schools in Northern Ireland.

It has been reported in the press that there are 40 schools that are '*earmarked for closure or amalgamation*' yet nowhere in the document is this terminology used. At Blackwater IC we see the document as a positive way forward for the College due to the '*duty to encourage and facilitate the development of sustainable provision in the Integrated sector*' as quoted in the action plan for 2017-18.

In relation to questions of sustainability enrolment is only one of 6 criteria. With regard to the other criteria we believe the College has many features which make it viable moving forward. Despite the challenging financial climate Blackwater IC will not, unlike many other schools, be making any redundancies and in 2016/17 financial year is expected to operate with a small surplus. Other criteria such as leadership and management and quality of provision have been deemed 'Good' by ETi in the most recent full inspection.

We believe the College offers students high quality teaching and learning in an environment where the individual's needs can be met with a favourable pupil teacher ratio and small class sizes. Our commitment to offering Integration reflects demand in the area but our current building provision on this site falls some way short of supporting this. We would hope through this review that a more suitable site and facilities would provide a positive outcome that will allow for expansion of Integrated provision in the area.

I assure you that the Board of Governors and I have a clear vision for Blackwater's future and look forward to working with EA in order to achieve this. If you have any queries in relation to this or any other matter do not hesitate to contact me and I will be happy to answer any questions. Parental support has always been excellent at Blackwater IC and we trust that we have your confidence moving forward.

Stephen Taylor
Principal