

Improving Primary Schools for the Future in Cumbria

In his Budget 2005, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a new stream of capital funding for primary schools and primary-age special schools. This is now known as the Primary Capital Programme.

The programme will start in 2009 and will continue for 15 years, with a total expected investment of about £7 billion nationally.

Every council looking to participate in the programme must produce a document, called the Primary Strategy for Change. The Strategy describes the current provision of primary schools in Cumbria, what we want it to look like in future, and how we will make this happen.

This document must be submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) by June 2008.

The full strategy document can be viewed on the County Council's School Organisation website and is summarised overleaf:

www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrenservices/school-organisation

The Government wants to make this country the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. The Children's Plan sets out how the DCSF is going to achieve that – by putting the needs of families, children and young people at the centre of everything we do.

The Government is committed to renewing at least half of all primary school buildings by 2022/23 through the Primary Capital Programme. The aim is to create primary schools that are equipped for 21st century teaching and learning, and are at the heart of their communities with children's services in reach of every family.

The primary capital investment should support a wide range of policies with the Children's Plan at its heart. The investment will support the transformation of education, including raising standards and improving the life chances and well being of all children, the removal of surplus places, inclusion, Every Child Matters, and the provision of extended services for the local community.

A range of providers and agencies involved in delivering primary education have developed 'A Strategy for Cumbria's Primary Schools' through discussion and working together. The document sets out the context, vision and planned implementation of future capital investment in primary schools in the county.

The strategy focuses on:

- standards
- the *Every Child Matters* agenda
- diversity, choice and responsiveness
- buildings

The strategy identifies eight underlying strategic principles:

- giving priority to learners
- inclusive planning
- serving the community
- diversity and parental choice
- buildings and environments that are fit for purpose
- efficiency and viability
- effective ICT
- effective leadership

The range, diversity and needs of areas and communities within the county have shaped how we identify possible models for schools in the future. Different models are needed in:

- large urban areas
- smaller urban / semi-rural areas
- geographically isolated settings
- other rural areas

The process of change is often controversial and challenging. To improve primary schools in the future, as communities and as a county, we must recognise that we need:

- to consult at community, area and county levels
- strategic decision making and investment.

There are two ways of letting us know your views about Cumbria's proposals:

- By completing and returning this questionnaire to your child's school
- By completing your questionnaire online at www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/consultation

Improving Cumbria's Primary Schools

Tell us what you think as parents. Please tick the appropriate box to share your views.

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Do you agree with the 8 underlying principles?			
Do you agree with the concept of 4 models to cover differing geographical settings?			
Do you agree that schools should operate co-operatively and collaboratively in order to deliver effective education for all pupils?			
Do you agree with the concept of educating pupils with Special Educational Needs in the nearest school in which those needs can be met?			
Do you agree that schools should provide a range of community services?			
Do you agree that all schools must focus on and deliver high standards?			
Do you agree that the number of places in schools should reflect changes in pupil numbers?			
Any other comments – please tell us your ideas for improving education in Cumbria.			

Please return this response sheet to your child's school or complete the questionnaire online at www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/consultation