

Re-brokering a new sponsor for The Whitehaven Academy - statement from Bright Tribe Trust

30.11.17

In January 2014, The Whitehaven Academy opened under Bright Tribe's sponsorship. The Trust had hoped to develop a hub of schools in Cumbria, recognising the value of the collaboration and school-to-school support that happens in our other hubs. As we have been unable to grow beyond a single school in Cumbria, we recognise the need to explore alternative sponsor options for Whitehaven Academy.

In the light of this, Bright Tribe has agreed with the DfE and Regional Schools Commissioner that they will pursue alternative options for the school. The process which must be followed to achieve this may take some time and due regard must be given to the sensitivities around managing this action appropriately.

We believe alternative sponsorship is the most appropriate route for the school's continued improvement journey. Bright Tribe has supported a number of improvements to assist this, including the recruitment of the current senior leadership team. Their strong leadership, including the work of Principal Mr. Warren Turner, was recognised by the most recent Ofsted monitoring inspection, which judged the school to be taking 'effective action' towards improvement.

Bright Tribe is aware of the problems with the school's buildings, which are the result of historical underinvestment prior to the Trust's involvement. The Trust has carried out numerous works to improve the condition of these buildings, something which was also recognised in the recent Ofsted monitoring report, which states that "the Trust has implemented a planned schedule of remedial work".

Bright Tribe has continued to lobby at the highest level to secure additional funding for the school's buildings and grounds, but without success.

The Trust is aware of the increased media activity of late and would ask for a period of calm, to allow all parties to focus on the needs of the school, children and staff. It is essential that the school is able to remain focused on educating the children it serves and driving forward progress around educational improvements at pace.

This will also allow time for Bright Tribe to continue to work with the DfE to determine the best solution for the school's future success.

