



Collective Feedback from Parent/Carer Consultation Meetings May 2019

St Francis of Assisi C of E Primary School Parent/Carer Consultation Meeting 1 Tuesday 21 May 2019 2:45pm at St Francis of Assisi C of E Primary School

22 Parents/Carers in attendance

- Question** **Is there a facility in 2/3 years to go back to Local Authority (LA) control?**
Answer It is highly unlikely that this would happen due to the legal constitution of academies. The LA role in education is reducing and unless funding or government policy changes we cannot see it would be possible.
- Question** **How does the funding work?**
Answer Funding for academies comes direct from the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to the Academy Trust / School. The Academy Trust makes a central charge to the school (in this case of 4.5% of the overall budget less pupil premium and high needs) and the remainder of the budget is allocated and managed by the school in line with the Trust Scheme of Delegation. The 4.5% pays for services linked to Human Resources, Finance, Insurance, Management of payroll, Audit, School Improvement and salaries of the central staff.
- Question** **How does it work with admissions to secondary? Will that change?**
Answer The admissions will be the same as it is now and there are no plans to change the school's admissions policy. The school will follow the National Admissions Code and Stockton Borough Council admissions protocol.
- Question** **Teaching – how does the Trust impact on teaching and the curriculum?**
Answer The Trust has a two way dialogue with the Headteachers as the lead professionals and experts in teaching and the curriculum and a single School Improvement Advisor, who is also an Ofsted inspector, works across all the Primary schools. Additionally, for example, Headteachers share data and work collaboratively on common areas of development, often coordinating CPD across school settings; subject leaders also meet on a regular basis to share best practice. Currently the CEO is working with Headteachers in respect to the new Ofsted framework and each school's curriculum.
- Question** **Will attendance targets stay same?**
Answer Yes current targets will remain and in future years as part of Dales, target setting remains at a local level. The additionality comes from the scrutiny and challenge from Dales and the Improvement Advisor ensuring targets are contributing to the overall Trust wide development and improvements.

Question **What do you estimate will be the financial benefit in year 1?**
Answer In year 1 we don't necessarily think there will be a massive saving however, there will be additionality in areas such as school improvement, financial planning and efficiency savings on joint procurement opportunities, capital projects etc

Question **Do the reserves come to the school?**
Answer Yes all reserves the school has pre conversion and subsequently as an academy with Dales are allocated to the school post conversion. These are accounted for in the Trust annual report and accounts and can be seen each year on the Trust website, www.dalesmat.org

**St Francis of Assisi C of E Primary School Parent / Carer
Consultation Meeting 2
Tuesday 21 May 2019 5:00pm
at St Francis of Assisi C of E Primary School**

X16 Parents/Carers

Question **How does it compare with money coming into school now?**
Answer The amount of funding coming in to school will be the same it is the process in which the funding is distributed which is different. Academy funding comes direct from the Education Skills Funding Agency, pupil premium and high needs funding comes direct from Stockton Borough Council. Dales is accountable for all expenditure in the MAT but responsibilities are delegated via the Trust Scheme of Delegation to local governing bodies and Headteachers. The school will continue to plan and prepare its own budgeting on an annual basis, although the signing off of the budgets is undertaken by the Trust Board rather than the local governing body, with the financial year changing to September – August (rather than April to March).

Question **The Trust has two schools in deficit last year. How does that work?**
Answer The financial position of each Trust school is reported in the annual accounts which showed that in 2017/18 two schools were in deficit. In the case of one school this was an agreed short term position to enable necessary capital works to be undertaken. In the case of the other school, amongst other financial challenges, the process of conversion necessitated the repayment of an LA loan for a boiler which then had to be shown against the individual school's financial position. In such circumstances a repayment arrangement is put in place.

Question **Are any costs being saved from other sources than just Stockton Borough Council?**
Answer Yes there will be money saved in specific areas and we will work with the school to prioritise and determine what should change on conversion and what may change in time. An example of this would be on Broadband where the Trust has recently completed a review of Broadband provision and procured the same provider across the organisation, reducing the overall cost.

Question **Does the MAT have School Improvement capacity?**
Answer Yes Dales has an independent adviser/partner who is a registered Ofsted inspector, they also employ someone with a SIAMs focus too. The Trust CEO is held to account by the Chair of the Board and Regional Schools Commissioner, an annual general meeting, annual reporting etc.

Question **How does accountability with the Board and responsibility with the Headteacher/Local Governing Body work?**

Answer Dales have a document which is called the Scheme of Delegation and this sets out the levels of authority within the Trust. This covers all areas linked to financial powers, policy and procedure, education, admissions etc. A copy can be found on the Trust website www.dalesmat.org. Each year the Trust reports on educational performance, financial position and capital projects through its annual report and accounts. This is made publicly available each year by the 31 January and is available on the Trust website.

Question **What is the difference/improvement that the Trust has made to Richmond and Barton?**

Answer Trinity Academy Richmond has made great progress and the feedback from our Primary School Improvement Advisor is very positive; the Executive Headteacher and staff continue to work hard to raise standards in the school. Equally we are very pleased with the improvements that have been made at Barton CofE Primary School.

Question **Who decides if there is capacity to support another school?**

Answer Support can come in many forms and requests for support can come from different organisations. In some cases we may be asked by the Regional Schools Commissioner to consider supporting a school in an Ofsted category, equally a local authority may ask if we can support a school with specific challenges in a key area where we have capacity and strength. It is important to note support isn't always physical either it may be sharing of resources or being able to contact a colleague over the phone to have a discussion.

If there is a need to support within the Trust this would always be done in consultation with the school leader(s) and the individuals who may be providing support.

Question **I can see benefits for St Francis to join but some schools have falling rolls. Will we be propping up these schools?**

Answer I think you have identified that not all schools are full rather than they have falling rolls. Every school in Dales no matter how large or small contribute to the overall effectiveness of the Trust. All schools must have a balanced budget, be viable and sustainable and this includes ensuring admissions numbers are the best they can be.

Question **Does it give us a stronger link to secondary admissions?**

Answer The admissions will be the same as it is now and there are no plans to change the school's admissions policy. The school will follow the National Admissions Code and Stockton Borough Council admissions protocol.

Question **Capital Improvement Funding and emergency funding – how does it work?**

Answer Currently there are two ways Trusts can access additional capital funding for building upkeep etc;

1. If the Trust has more than 5 schools and 3,000 pupils – this is formulaic and issued annually direct to the Trust
2. If you don't fall into category 1 then individual schools can apply on an annual basis (usually October to December) through a Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) application. There is a strict criteria for this and in the last 12 months Dales submitted a number of bids and were successful in 4

If a school faces an emergency situation linked to its buildings you can apply to the ESFA emergency fund and they determine if you qualify to receive funds.

Question

Will you be bringing in more secondaries?

Answer

The Trust is keen to work with like minded schools but equally does not go out to recruit / chase new opportunities – schools tend to come to us because they have read or heard something that resonates with their vision and future direction of travel.

Dales have spoken with secondaries and will continue to do so and believe that in the future others will chose to join the Trust.

Question

Your central charge is low (4.5%), what is in it?

Answer

Please see answer to earlier question 'How does the funding work?'