

## **Notes of Parent Meeting**

23 January 2019 7pm – Iver Village Junior School

Parents and staff from both schools present.

**Welcome and Introduction** - Ben Dunne (BD - Head of Strategic Improvement - BCC)

BD – Update and overview of Governing Boards in both schools. Iver Village Infant School has now reconstituted the Governing Board which now includes three parent governors. Clear that following the first parent meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018, greater transparency and improved communication required.

The school's two Governing Boards now exploring options on how they could work more closely together in the best interest of pupils at both schools. A Working Party (WP) has been set up to look more closely at the options.

The first WP meeting took place on 7<sup>th</sup> January with a commitment to communicate with parents the progress moving forward to both schools together.

Options being explored:

- 1) No Change
- 2) Schools continue to have separate gov boards, but work together more
- 3) The schools federate
- 4) The schools amalgamate
- 5) MAT Options

Terms of reference have been drawn up and linked to the four main outcome criteria of the OFSTED framework as well as some key red lines concerning ethos and learning culture being respected in both schools. Terms of reference have gone out to all parents.

Next WP on 6<sup>th</sup> February will further look at all the options and when any decisions have been made they will feedback to the parents.

The WP will be listening acutely to what parents have to say. An e-mail box has been set up to enable parents to pass on their thoughts and views. Next parent meeting will be really crucial. The date to be confirmed following the next WP communication.

There may well be frustration that the pace is not fast enough in some quarters, but the WP determined to get this right and move at a sensible pace so that they arrive at the right outcome.

Roger Rawlinson (RR) introduced himself as the new Chair of Governors at the Infants School. No preference from County on final decision. It is important to exploring all options in detail.

### **Q) What is the timeline?**

A) Two WP meetings per half term. By Easter will have a clearer idea of direction of travel.

### **Q) Who has the authority to make the final decision?**

A) Down to the Governing Boards – not the authority. Unless county have grave concerns about the education of the children.

An ex member of the Governing Board explained that the Infant School resignations took place because they had been 'threatened' during the team around the school meeting by LA personnel in the Autumn Term and that 'they would be disbanded' as a Board if they continued with a process to explore collaborative options. BD noted this and would respond at next parent meeting.

**Q) As the Working Party was formed before the parent governors were appointed would it be prudent to see if any of those parents would be invited to one of those working party meetings?**

A) RR is hearing that loud and clear and it will be the role of the Infant School WP members to decide if they want to re-evaluate the working party composition.

**Q) Can the five options be listed in a little more detail? Can we rule out the routes that parents do not want so that time is not spent on routes that parents are not interested in.**

A) Important to follow a clear process and explore all avenues. Meetings like this will eradicate the rumour mills by talking openly. This is the starting point so that we keep everything 'under one roof'.

Mark Vinall (MV – Chair of Junior School Governing Board) More detailed explanation of each option will be considered before we make decisions – this should happen as an outcome of the next WP – outlining the pros and cons of each option. WP will build in the outcomes of meetings like tonight when making those decisions.

**Q) Can you give examples of when some of these options do not work out?**

A) Sometimes MATs offer short term financial benefits to school and parents but when considered in the round, actually the Governing Board has to sometimes say that a particular route isn't right for the school in the longer term.

**Q) Who is on the working party?**

A) Nicola Raher, Bradley Carter, Stafford Salt, Roger Rawlinson, Mark Vinall, Chris Clarke, Terry Munn, Jill Digweed. BD is chairing the WP having secured consensus from the group.

**Q) Clearly lack of parent representation on the WP from the Infant school Board. All the issues are arising from the infant school, and not the Junior School. An observation made that the acting headteacher and no teaching staff from the Infant School present. What is happening with the substantive headteacher position?**

A) RR made apologies for NR absence but could not be avoided given weather conditions the previous evening and did not get home till 10pm. Infant school staff were present and made themselves known. RR had already recognised the issue around parent representation on the WP.

**Q) What is the impact on the education of the children over the next 6 months?**

A) The WP process will not interfere with the day to day running of both schools. More detailed Answers will come from the Governing Boards of both schools. They recognise parents can't wait much longer. Concerns that Forest School has gone and staff have left as an example. This had all been noted by RR.

**Q) Parent Governors needed support from external sources. How would they cope?**

A) The WP under no illusions that they are new and have to get up to speed quickly. There needs to be images of the parent governors on the next newsletter.

**Q) Immediate issues of pupils and staff leaving a concern. Will things be sorted within the next 2-6 months?**

A) The Governing Boards will consult, listen and work tirelessly to resolve these issues.

**Q) With federation, do the budgets of both schools remain separate?**

A) Yes. Two separate budgets but schools can choose to pool money centrally to fund shared provision and support.

**Q) If amalgamation were the preferred option, what would happen to the budget deficit? Is it county's preference for all schools to become MATS?**

A) There are pros and cons to all options and no different with the MAT option. Has to be the best local solution for your children and that decision will be made by the Governing Board of each school once they have all the facts and all stakeholder views. Bucks do not have a huge amount of MATs.

Different ways of working are preferable. BD is here to facilitate a mechanism that results in a decision that right for both schools. Unlikely that the deficit would be absorbed by county if there was an amalgamation.

**Q) OFSTED due a visit at the Infants School shortly. What might happen to our plans? Given all the ups and downs at the school, could OFSTED pressure the school to become an academy and then this plan would be gone?**

A) Worst case scenario could see an Interim Executive Board (IEB) put in place with a remit to force academisation of the school. More likely that OFSTED would listen to all stakeholders, the LA, consider pupil outcomes and if a robust plans of what is already happening is presented with strong evidence of impact; all would remain in control of their own destiny.

**Q) Mrs Raheer is on the Governing Board as an acting head. What's the timeframe for IVIS to put out an advert for a substantive head?**

A) Substantive head is an immediate priority following stability being achieved at the school. No timeframe in place for this at present. The situation is being reviewed termly by the Governing Board.

**Q) What has been put in place right now in terms of support?**

A) The Infant School has been allocated the Intervention strand of support by the LA's school improvement team. This **Side by Side** Partnership Team has put in place support across finance, leadership, teaching and learning, SEN and middle leader support. This will continue until the end of the current academic year and will then be reviewed.

**Q) Could parents have monthly meetings in this format for both schools but also separate schools?**

A) RR confirmed this would be possible and would be discussing all options with the Governing Board of the Infant School. It is important to hear all parents' views.

**Q) Financial position of the Infant School – is it getting better or worse?**

A) Figures to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 details have been made public by the Governing Board. 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 year end position will also be published at the start of the summer term.

**Q) Where is the communication? What impact is it having on IVIS at the moment? Need better transparency.**

A) This was noted by RR

**Q) Are things being streamlined – e.g. behaviour policy? The criteria needs to be discussed when the schools work together.**

A) The junior and infant schools both have their own behaviour policy, both schools may discuss using similar systems in the future.

Close 8.30pm