**Barnes Farm Schools Parent Consultation**

**1st November 2017**

**Parent Questions**

**Approximately 14 parents were present**

*Personnel present:*

Ross McTaggart HT BFJS

Vicky Walker HT BFIS

Philip Cranwell Project Consultant – Cranwell Consultancy

Paul Banks HT Boswells

Amanda Reid HT Perryfields Infants

Steven Wade Governor BFJS

Steven Andrews Chair of Governors BFJS

Heidi Hards Chair of Governors BFIS

Roger Blundell Governor BFIS

Zanya Farmer HT of BFIS from Jan 2018

* **The geographical closeness but the closest school is Chancellor Park but why are they not joining?**

Ross explained about being part of STEP and they have opted not to be part of this formal approach. A governor said that it is not just the chairs decision it is the governing bodies decision.

* **You mentioned about geographical location, would we be expanding the MAT in future?**

Paul explained about sponsoring other schools only if it felt right and at no detriment to us. Paul mentioned Roding Valley secondary school. He mentioned that the LA could ask us to sponsor other schools but it would be up to the trustees.

* **Would it make sense to get the reasons why the other schools from STEP haven’t decided to join the MAT?**

Paul mentioned the other STEP school who decided not to at the moment it is not a forced choice but an informed choice.

* **What are the negatives in this decision, I don’t feel from tonights presentation that any negatives have been discussed? The presentation is all very positive.**

Phillip referred back to the beginning of the presentation about the risk of doing nothing and the potential impact on the school. He mentioned that also moving forward that the governors have been researching this for over a year and it is the partnership that works.

* **How is the board of trustees accountable are they accountable to us or the secretary of state?**

Phillip mentioned accountable to the secretary of state, DFE, Ofsted and the local authority, education skills finance etc.

* **Who will be the trustees for each school and how will they be chosen?**

Paul answered about each school putting their governor’s names forward. They will be chosen on a skills basis, financial background, education background, HR background and those trustees will join the existing trustees. In terms of accountability legally accountability sits with the board of trustees and the DFE. Morally Paul is accountable to the parents of his school. Keeping this model and keeping our own GB this model we are accountable to the parents. The board of trustees will be decided in a couple of weeks and helps us keep what we think this partnership is special. The list of trustees is submitted to the DFE so they can see the skill set they have for them to agree.

* **This seems too good to be true – is this a no brainer and this is why you are putting it to us?**

Ross – speaking honestly I’ve been through this journey for 6 years and the introduction through STEP. Frustrating for me as strongly as the partnership might be. Movement of personnel showed that the structure wasn’t as strong. Where there is a stronger structure there will be greater levels of challenge and greater levels of support. Heidi - I’m not a person who would rush to change or academy status my outlook has since changed. I think this model will be the best for the future of Barnes Farm Infant school. Roger – the direction we are going is only positive but doing nothing there are many more uncertainties.

* **Are there any other concerns?**

Barnes Farm Junior gov – the concerns about the change of contracts for teaching staff a challenge for them to get their heads around. There are a lot of bad examples out there and worries but the trust will ensure job security.

Paul mentioned school ethos and headteachers running their own schools and making the decisions. You hear about MATS that don’t work and we wanted to make sure that we don’t make the same mistakes. Paul went on to discuss single tier of employment for staff to ensure fairness and same rights. We are more than satisfied that these things are here and covered.

Heidi discussed her change of opinion since the start of the due diligence and consultation.

* **I think this was very positive but I think it would help if there was some more information about the negative concerns. My 2 points - are we sure this is going to be a partnership of equals with Boswells being a much bigger school with bigger funds? Will the teachers get paid more?**

Paul explained the funding of community schools and top slicing from the local authority. The trust will move the money out to each school same funding model and spend it but essentially they will receive more. He explained sponsoring schools e.g. Beaulieu. The founding schools will not have a charge. All the schools will get all their money and you can’t transfer money from one school to another – you cannot do that so the funding is protected for each of the schools. Making savings through HR and legal etc. Being a trust you can negotiate one contract for HR than 6 individual contracts. All these savings go back into the schools this is not a profit making trust and each school looks after their own money. Making sure all staff do not get inflated salaries. Teachers and support staff will benefit through reduced work load. Heidi went onto pay increments coming out of our pot of money and the savings mean that we may be able to give pay rises or to put it into other places. Phil – Standard formula for calculating pay scales and salaries and agreements with unions with a pay policy linked to this. Boswells is one of 5 equal schools. BFJ gov spoke about the secondary school wealth of resources. It is not just financial but there are other benefits.

* **Secondary schools – is this going to affect our choices for choice of secondary school?**

Paul – explained going out of consultation on their new admissions policy. We believe that if BF is part of the trust the children in BF should have access to secondary schools within that trust. BF are out of catchment but for 2019 entry BF will be listed at some point on the application criteria to Boswells. Phil – admissions ECC will continue to administer admissions like now and the trust becomes the admission authority. The governing body have to give permission for the trust before they give out an offer.

* **Maybe needs to give more than two sides to the story.**
* **There have been lots of changes in the infant school** – Heidi trying to get some stability to go ahead strongly with this. Chicken and egg scenario. The aim was to get as stable as possible to think of the medium and long term future of the school. In this position to take it forward.
* **How much information and say do the parents have in the final decision?**

Phil – it depends on how many parents complete the survey. Parents will need to respond. Governors will look at these surveys and parents and staff will be given feedback on these.

Meeting closed at 6pm