

## **Burnt Yates CE Primary School –Parents Forum Meeting**

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017** Governor comments in **red** Actions in **green**

Start: 6.30pm

Finish: 8.30pm

### **Attendance**

Helen Appleton (HA) Head of School, Paul Bowlas (PB) Executive Headteacher, Steven Holmes (SH) Local Authority Lead Adviser, Diana Kitzing (DK), Helen Leslie (HL), Joanne Mallinson (JM), Alan Manship (AM), William Moore (WM), Richard Noake (RN), Director of Education – Diocese, Jacqui Palmer (JP) Headteacher, Jean Tither (JT)

### **1.Welcome & Introductions – HL**

Governors remain totally committed and are working really hard to secure the long term future of the school. Thank you to HA, PB and all parents for the hard work and support given during this time.

### **2.Progress update - HA**

Smooth transition for JP to start in September. Consistency of staffing. Improved learning environment. Handover to JP will be done. Alex Strzeszewski in school Wednesday full day - full time in KS2 from September. Bethan Thomson & Lesley Broad job share full time in EYFS/KS1.

### **3.LA Update - SH**

Learning journeys, observation books, focus on getting assessments right (training on how to do assessments and moderation). Temporary staff gone over and above what is expected. Easingwold Primary school supporting. Wider learning opportunities accessed on regular basis. KS1 - Age appropriate work, level of challenge increasing, purposeful writing. KS2 - Sequence of learning in literacy, age appropriate, skills being used/applied, quantity of writing increased (focus more in September) support from LA putting a programme in place/focus. Displays improving around school and as a whole much less cluttered. Statement of Action checks completed. Safeguarding is much more robust. Governors Review completed. Focus now on Teaching & Learning due to staffing, not as fast as we would have liked.

### **4.Diocese Update - RN**

MAT not willing to take on as not viable as a stand alone school. **Why?** Financial which is driven by pupil numbers. Would have still been unviable based on numbers immediately after OFSTED so reduced numbers that have happened lately do not affect this. **From a financial view, with our Admiral Long Foundation (ALF) Trustees, this does not sound right.** The Academy Trust still feel it is not financially viable as a stand alone school even with the ALF. **How many schools in North Yorkshire have**

**viable numbers?** I couldn't give an exact figure. I work with 89 schools and a lot of schools have difficulties from financial situations. **Do we now have a timescale?** We should have converted within 9 months. (Expectation of the Department for Education). **Have you always known those timescales?** I know what the expectations are from the DFE. Because we have been unable to secure a solution, the LA have completed a financial due diligence and reported this to the DFE. Now up to the Diocese to decide what happens to the school. The Diocese have passed it back to the LA to make the decision. They have not made a decision to close. Suggestion from Diocese: If the school amalgamated, **would this provide a solution?** DFE have looked at removing the direct academy order but would need to see the solution and what it would look like. **What does amalgamate mean?** Closing a school to amalgamate it with another school. **We put this option to Fiona Beevers at previous meetings.** Looking at 2 x schools, School A & School B. School A closes and joins School B on 2 sites. **Have conversations been had with other schools?** It would depend on other schools been interested in doing this. Yes, we have approached another school but no resolutions have been reached at this point. **Are other schools saying no?** No not at this time. **Have schools expressed an interest in going forward?** No. **What's happening with the collaboration? Can we amalgamate with Ripley?** Ripley would be an obvious partner to have conversations with. **My concern - confidence of parents is being eroded. How many children are you expecting in September or is this what you are trying to do?** The LA/DFE/Diocese cannot force another school to come into this with us and we cannot tell you which schools are saying yes/no. **Is it purely financial on how another school will decide to join us?** Finance would be a major factor. **Does it have to be in the Harrogate or Nidderdale area?** It needs to be close proximity for a split site to work. **Have future building plans for the area been considered?** We cannot plan on what might or might not happen with housing developments. **How many children would we need to make the school financially viable?** We cannot put a number on it as it depends on a whole different number of factors. **If we do not amalgamate and the school closes, will we have the LA/Diocese support in helping our children get places in our preferred school of choice?** SH - Closure does not happen over night, the LA will work with parents and will support in helping to get children into the preferred school of choice under special circumstances (2 term process). Admissions will work with you, but that is all we can say. **(PB) is it possible to give a timeline so parents have something to work with?** I would like to do that, but I would need to speak with Fiona Beevers by the end of this week, early next week and communicate this to HA/HL. **If you knew the YCST would only consider schools of 90 pupils plus, why weren't we told this and amalgamation considered in January?** Conversations of this nature have been ongoing in partnership with YCST but it would need to academise as a single school but would only be attractive if paired with another school with a shared management. **HL. As parents, how do you feel about going forward with an amalgamation with a split site?** Do whatever necessary to ensure our school continues. **How would it work transporting children to two sites?** Staggered start/end times or transportation. **Are there other schools that have split sites and**

**does it work?** Yes, there are schools currently running very successfully on this basis. **Would amalgamation still mean sharing one Headteacher?** Yes, 1 Headteacher. **How many pupils can Burnt Yates hold?** 56 would mean we are full. But think about the site, there are things that can be done, for instance, the hall could be turned into a classroom or portable classrooms could be installed outside. Lots of scope with this site. **Does it not make sense to amalgamate with Ripley as we currently have the collaboration with them?** I cannot comment on that as it would not be professionally appropriate to do so. **Is there a maximum distance with split sites?** No, but it needs to be practical. **Going forward whose responsibility is it to approach other schools?** Diocese & LA in partnership. **How much can you lean on other schools?** We can recommend as a good option. **My interpretation is Ripley or bust is that correct?** **If there was a school tomorrow that wanted to amalgamate, how long does the process take?** There would need to be a consultation process but the decision lies with the Governors. **What is the plan and who are you talking to?** I cannot tell you who we are talking to. **Can you tell me about the staffing situation that we are currently in?** The current staffing arrangements are to continue into September, with Mr S starting in September and Mrs Payne leaving. **What is the criteria for amalgamation?** 1 budget, 1 Unique Reference Number (URN), 1 Governing body, special measures would dissolve. First thing to do is gain agreement from both Governing bodies, then a formal process will be entered into. Consultations with Governing bodies and parents. Due diligence. **What are the other schools Governing Body looking for?** Viability of both joining to improve the viability and environment of both schools. **If an amalgamation was agreed to, when would it happen?** Diocese would go back to Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) with a Governor resolution which would trigger DFE to write to Secretary of State asking to rescind the Direct Academy Order taking the pressure off. Work with all staff and children at both schools. What is the best way of managing this to ensure the best provision in terms of education for the children. **Can you provide a timeline or milestones to say when you will provide updates?** Very hard to do this, but a report will be made to HL next week so this can be delivered to parents and updates will be provided to parents via the website over the summer. RN will speak with FB tomorrow to establish a timeline of communication. **Can we have another meeting prior to September?** Await the information that is coming from the next communication to make any decisions.