



# Totnes St John's Parents Meeting

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 3.30pm

## Introduction to First Federation and the plan for Totnes St John's

**Governors present:** Chris Grimshaw (chair), Heather McIntyre (Vice Chair), Tracey Doody, Andy Simpson, Rev Julian Ould

**First Federation present:** Paul Walker, Rachael Caunter, Heather Slater, Angela Jenkins,

**Babcock International:** Alan Betts

**Diocese of Exeter:** John Searson

**1. Welcome & Introductions** - Chris Grimshaw welcomed everyone to the meeting and the above introduced themselves to the parents & carers attending the meeting.

**2. Ofsted – conclusions & repercussions** – The Ofsted report had been emailed to parents and carers this afternoon, with a paper copy sent home with children as well. It was noted that Ofsted only released it to the school late on Tuesday 16th January 2018. It had yet to be published on the Ofsted Website.

It was noted that Mrs Cate had given notice at October Half Term to take up another position before the Ofsted Inspection on 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2018 and the Ofsted Inspection was not the reason for her leaving.

Alan Betts (School Improvement Officer) explained the procedure of Ofsted reporting and ratings. Schools rated as 'Inadequate' are placed in Special Measures; an academy order is issued for all maintained schools that have been judged inadequate by Ofsted, requiring them to become sponsored academies.

As the school was already looking at academisation independently to secure long-term support, Alan Betts and the Diocese had approached the First Federation because they have the capacity and experience of turning schools around and moving them forward.

### **3. What is academisation and what does it mean?**

**Question:** What are First Federation Trust?

**Answered by Paul Walker First Federation CEO:**

Paul Walker explained about the makeup of the First Federation Trust. How it started with Blackpool Church of England Primary School at Liverton and now includes 14 Primary Schools. There are 3 Hubs: South, Central and East. The Primary Excellence Teaching School is led by the First Federation

who are committed to sharing very best practice to enable school improvement and provide the highest quality of teaching and learning.

Academies are independent, state-funded schools, which receive their funding directly from central government, rather than through a local authority, but can still follow the National Curriculum and are still inspected by Ofsted.

<http://www.firstfederation.org/>

**Question:** How long would it take to turn around a school, what about the current Year 6?

**Answer:** To raise standards as soon as possible, the First Federation would provide additional support to make an impact, as they had with Westcliffe at Dawlish.

**Question:** Various parents raised concerns over current staff sickness

**Answer:** The First Federation cannot change the past, but can change the future, taking on responsibility to improve the school including supporting staff.

**Question:** Assurance needed by parents as part of the Ofsted Report stated NQT's should not be recruited to St John's.

**Answer:** The First Federation Trust have a good reputation for staff training not dictated by finance.

Andy Simpson, a governor and employee of Babcock International endorsed the proven track record of the First Federation Trust.

**Question:** Parents of children with SEN felt let down by the school in the past, how would this change?

**Answer from Heather Slater, Inclusion and Safeguarding Lead:** From 3<sup>rd</sup> January we have looked at SEN and increased provision immediately to create stability.

**Question:** What about consultation to become an Academy?

**Answer:** Prior to the Ofsted Inspection, if St John's joined a Management Partnership there would have been a full consultation to become an Academy, but since the Ofsted Inspection, academisation is now a legal requirement so that improvement can be secured quickly.

**Question:** Parents new to school are concerned about change of uniform and costs if in an Academy?

**Answer:** Each school in the First Federation have their own uniform and identity.

**Question:** Why wasn't the previous Senior Leadership Team given support?

**Answer:** Key decision makers have gone, the Governors are committed to improve St John's.

**4. How does a church school effect the process?**

John Searson, Director of Education who supports all the church schools across Devon, gave a history of the Diocese and what voluntary controlled means for Totnes St John's. The Diocese of Exeter also have to approve any proposed academy partner and feels that the First Federation Trust with their long history of support is the best for Totnes St John's.

**Question:** A parent felt her child who left the school in July 2017 was failed over 3 years, she needs reassurance she should leave her other child at St John's.

**Answer:** The chair of governors realises that each parent has to make their own decision, but reassured parents of the governors' commitment.

John Searson replied that the Diocese of Exeter will work with the governors and the First Federation to improve St John's.

**Question:** Will the governing body continue?

**Answer:** It will carry on as the Governing Body in the Management Partnership. When joining the Academy there are different layers of governance, trustees and committees. There would be more detail when in consultation.

## **5. Introduction to First Federation and an explanation of the management partnership**

The First Federation is a Multi Academy Trust of Primary Schools across Devon, whose aim is to be outstanding in everything they do. The Federation began in 2006 as one of the first Primary federations in the country and has grown to include fourteen schools and a Teaching School.

Paul Walker appreciates that for parents it is a change, but asks for support from parents to pull in the same way. It is key that a 'line is drawn' following the Ofsted Report. Staff need to feel supported. The First Federation has more capacity to support St John's in all areas. The First Federation vision is to enable outstanding learning and teaching – putting children first.

## **6. Plan for Totnes St John's – from Special Measures to Outstanding**

The First Federation Senior Leadership Team will put together an Action Plan following the Ofsted Report. Including

- New Behaviour Policy
- Assessment
- High Quality Teaching and Learning
- Wider Curriculum
- Clear direction and guidance to staff
- Learning Environment
- Year 6 Booster Program

Heather Slater has experience in rapid progress boosting programmes for Year 6 which will start after February Half Term 2018 to produce significant improvement.

## **7. How will parents be informed of progress?**

Chris Grimshaw (chair of governors) will have fortnightly meetings with Rachael Caunter (Executive Head of the First Federation Southern Hub). Chris Grimshaw acknowledged there had been a lack of information and communication in the past but ensured parents this would be addressed.

## **8. Any questions?**

- **Which members of the SLT would be in school on which days?**

Heather Slater, Rachael Caunter and Angela Jenkins will be in school. A timetable of which days will be put on the weekly bulletin.

- **Children do not know who the Senior Leadership Team are?**

SLT will introduce themselves through assemblies and visiting classrooms

- **Update on the new building progress?**

The governing body will inform parents following the next meeting on the progress of the building

- **Parents were concerned about the balance of strictness and care**

Each child is unique and to address points about behaviour in the recent Ofsted Report a new Behaviour Policy will be shared with parents.

Chris Grimshaw thanked everyone for attending the meeting which finished at 5:00pm