

SOUTH MALLING CE SCHOOL

Formal Note of the Extraordinary Full Governing Body Meeting 10 June 2013

1. Attending: Alan Velecky, (Chair), Ian Rothery (Vice Chair), Emma Allen, Ann Baker, Sue Govus Julie Harris, Stewart Hunt, Matt Kent, Mark Moody, Jo O'Donoghue, Alastair Pickering, Annie Schulte, Rosalyn St Pierre, Sue Warren.
Absent: David Rogers (Clerk)

In the absence of the Clerk and given that this was a one-issue Meeting, Alan Velecky asked Ian Rothery to provide a formal note of the discussion.

2. Declarations of Interest & Confidentiality Reminder. There were no declarations of business or pecuniary interests. Governors were reminded of the sensitivity of this agenda.

3. Minutes Of the FGB Meeting of 15 May 2013. There were a number of corrections which were noted by the chair and have been passed on to the Clerk. Action Points were reviewed.

4. Single Item: Lewes Educational Federation.

AV took members through a presentation setting out the rationale for the decision which Governors were asked to make at this meeting. He covered the new educational landscape, the nature of the Educational Federation proposal, steps which the Governing Body had already taken to bring us to this point, the proposed timescales, potential partners, key points about the proposal, the position of other key stakeholders, the proposed benefits of federation, the financial costs, possible alternative responses to the new educational landscape set out above, issues to consider, and final reflections. JO and IR added comments where they had particular knowledge. Governors' asked questions for clarification during the presentation. A particular issue to emerge at this stage was the need for particular care to be taken in consultation with Ringmer which might fear that it is disadvantaged in comparison with Priory as one of the two major routes into Secondary Education at age 11. AV agreed that we need to be proactive in working with Ringmer on this but stressed that year 6 children have complete entitlement to choose their secondary school when the time comes. RS underlined how much of a threat to their future Ringmer might see this proposal to be. AV then clarified that the vote which governors were asked to take is, "to go to consultation on the motion to join the Lewes Educational Federation."

Most of the cost was one-off but there was a query about whether part of the cost was an annual subscription to the Cooperative College.

5. Discussion followed:

S W asked whether we would have to commit to a full year as members if we eventually took the decision to join. JO believed that that would be the case. She also asked how arrangements with land might work for schools taking over local authority property. Ir said that these issues would be dealt with in the legal arrangements which would occupy our attention once the results of consultation were becoming clear. A large number of schools had already taken these steps and we had been advised that there are standard processes to follow where we would have support from the Cooperative College, the LEA and the Diocese.

AS commented that it appeared to deliver the benefits which had been identified in the Governor research groups set up by the GB to advise on Academies and other options.

MK expressed concerns about the danger of playing into an agenda commercialising education. He was concerned that Priory was too much the driver in this process, and was worried that SEN children might be forced together into specialised units at different schools. JO explained that Priory had researched the options intensively and had proposed this option because it was led by educational principles and committed to sharing good practice. It would be possible to buy in and share SEN expertise to a greater extent than currently. IR noted the proposal is also based on values including equity, democracy and operating ethically, which will be guaranteed by a legal agreement as part of the Trust.

AB asked what happened if staff did not want to work in partner schools. JO explained that this issue would be part of the normal process of managing discontent and would find its way into terms and conditions. In certain circumstances, it is already happening.

SG asked where Chailey fitted into this process. There are some families who prefer Chailey to either Priory or Ringmer as secondary school options. Had they been approached to join in this or were they involved in any similar process in their own area? JO said that they worked closely with their own feeder primary schools. One of the real strengths of this proposal was that it was local.

MB also asked whether Teachers Unions would be happy with potential changes to terms and conditions. JO explained that we remain within the LEA maintained sector so that Unions remain protected by current national negotiation procedures and are likely to be happier with this than alternative options.

6 Vote on the Proposal: “to go to consultation on the motion to join the Lewes Educational Federation.” Carried unanimously.

The Chair said that he would now report this to the Chair of Governors at Priory.

The Meeting ended at 7.15pm