

Parent's Forum 18/02/16

Preparing to become an academy.

Sarah Draper (Interim Executive Board), Satadru Ashton, Will Hopkins

1. Sanitary arrangements:

Mrs Ashton explained the arrangements for sanitary disposal for girls who start puberty:

- Sanitary waste bin in one of the Y5/6 girls' toilet cubicles.
- Team of female staff available (Mrs Ashton, Mrs Street, and classroom teachers / teaching assistants)

2. Academy Sponsors

Mrs Ashton introduced Sarah Draper, the chair of the Interim Executive Board.

The school had an Ofsted inspection in July 2015, and that it still "Requires Improvement". In November 2015, the Governing Body was replaced with the Interim Executive Board. In January 2016, the Local Authority informed the school that the Government (Department for Education) expected the school to become an academy. This is Government policy, and it is not a decision that the school can take. The Government wants all schools to become academies by 2020.

The school can, however, choose a preferred academy sponsor who best fits the school. This meeting is to start gathering parents' feedback on the type of sponsor they want.

3. Questions from parents:

- Academies are outside of the Local Authority. Why will we be outside of the local authority?
 - We don't have a choice, this is Government policy. We do, however, want a sponsor with a good relationship with the Local Authority.
- What does the Ofsted rating of "Require Improvement" mean?
 - The Ofsted report highlighted good areas in the school – behaviour, safety, but results are not as high as the national average. This is what needs to improve.
- Does becoming an academy mean changing staff?
 - The staff remain the same, but there are additional benefits to being in an academy chain – access to bigger or better services, and working with other teachers and schools.
- How does it change our children's learning?
 - We can use resources from other schools within an academy chain.
- What guarantees are there that this will improve the school?
 - The school has an action plan to improve, and regularly assesses progress against this action plan with the Interim Executive Board. Currently, the board meets every 2 weeks. The Government believes that becoming an academy will speed up the process of improving.

- Will academisation be done behind the scenes, so the children don't notice?
 - It should be a smooth process, so the children won't notice a difference.
- Can the school change sponsors?
 - If the school is assessed by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding, then it can leave an academy sponsor, to become an independent academy. The sponsorship is not necessarily forever.

4. What are we looking for in an academy sponsor? They should:

- Build on everything Byron Wood already does well.
- Include all children in the local area.
- Work with the Local Authority as part of the city of Sheffield.
- Work closely with parents, listen to parents and treat them as key partners.
- Be committed to the needs of every child, to make sure every child learns and achieves.
- Ensure the process has minimal disruption to staff and children.
- Continue to work in partnership with other schools in the city.
- Have a depth of Primary school experience.
- Have experience of working with families where English is an additional language (EAL).
- Continue the strong community support work (ESOL classes, workshops, extended services).

5. Parents want:

- Sponsor who will add extra support where needed.
- Continued access to Mrs Ashton and other staff.
- Sponsor to work with parents and Local Authority.
- Sponsor with a good track record of excellent teaching.

This process of choosing an academy sponsor will take time, and we are currently only in the earliest stages. Parents are invited to continue to send in feedback, either through Will Hopkins, Mrs Ashton, Smaira Sadique, or written down and handed at the office. Any correspondence regarding becoming an academy should be marked as "Academy", so Mrs Ashton can collate them.

There is not a full plan yet, as the best sponsor has not been identified, however the Interim Executive Board will inform parents when they are in a position to do so. This will not be until after Easter, at the earliest.

Parents Group will meet in coffee mornings at 9:00 on Fridays, so parents can bring their concerns and ideas there.

The next Parents Forum will be on Thursday, 7th April (first week back after half term).

6. Any other business:

- Why are all the interventions not available to all children?
 - Interventions are only appropriate for some children, depending on what they need to improve, if they are below expectations. This support is specific to them.
 - It is really important that children get to socialise, especially as the school has a diverse mix of ethnicities, cultures and religions.
- Why has 1-2-1 reading stopped in schools, and why haven't children's books been changed?
 - There are not enough volunteers to support 1-2-1 reading, however children are allowed to change their book as long as it is within the same colour band. They also have reciprocal reading in class.
- We would like more contact with class teachers (possibly at the end of the day).
 - Changes were made to the open door policy this year, for safeguarding and also to ensure teaching staff could begin without interruption or distraction.
 - Teachers also run after school clubs, and so are not always available immediately after school.
 - Appointments can be made with the office, and if a parent feels that they are being ignored, they can contact Mrs Ashton.
- Parents are reminded of existing resources available for parents and children to use at home.
 - Mathletics and Reading Eggs online
 - Parent workshops in reading and maths