

## **ACADEMY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2016**

### **Members in attendance**

9am – Janet Baker (JB), Pauline Wallace (PW), Michael Paulin (MP), Angela Kunjiraman (AK), Elen Williams (EW) & Adam Redgrove (AR)

6pm – Meeting cancelled

### **Others in attendance**

9am – 15 parents/carers

### **Agenda items**

- **AC meeting times** - The timing of AC meetings was briefly discussed. It was noted that the morning meetings are relatively well attended, whilst the evening meetings are generally only attended by one or two parents/carers. It was therefore proposed by the AC that future AC meetings would take place at 9am only. The 6pm meeting scheduled for 10.5.16 would be the final evening meeting until further notice.

**No objections were raised to this proposal by those present.**

- **Parent Directors** - Some parents/carers have expressed an interest in providing assistance to the Trust at Board and/or Committee level. Adam Redgrove briefly explained the role of the Parent Director whilst Pauline Wallace (Board Director) briefly explained the current statutory requirements for parental involvement. It was noted that 2 out of 7 current Directors are parents. It is no longer a statutory requirement for parents to have roles at Board level, however the Trust is keen to maintain parental input subject to skills, contribution and commitment. It was highlighted that these roles require understanding and input in relation to all 4 of the Trust's schools, not just SPA.

- **School reports** - A query was raised as to whether school reports could contain feedback that was perhaps more expressive and tailored to suit each individual child. There is a feeling amongst some parents that the parent/teacher consultations can be somewhat hurried and therefore feedback is limited to data that is being used to track progress.

JB explained that the consultations typically coincided with points at which the pupils were assessed in the school hence the emphasis on progress and attainment. JB then presented an example of an end of year report which included commentary on various academic/behavioural aspects. JB also noted that teachers aim to operate an 'open door' policy so that parents can speak to their child's teacher whenever they feel the need throughout the academic year.

The drop-off/pick-up arrangements make an impromptu discussion impractical therefore parents were advised to email the school to arrange a suitable meeting time with their child's teacher as and when required. **The general consensus amongst those at the meeting was that the example reports circulated reflect the type of report/level of detail that they would expect to see for their child(ren).**

- **Communication** - Parents asked that newsletters contained 'look ahead' information as well as a report on what has happened recently at the school. For example, it was felt that more information on subjects to be covered and scheduled trips for each term would be helpful. JB said that the school does try to do this but it is intended to keep newsletters quite concise and therefore information on future events can be restricted from time to time. A suggestion was made that a specific 'coming up this half-term' newsletter could be circulated at the beginning of each half term. **JB to look into this and report back at the next AC meeting.**

- **Contributions from parents** - There is a feeling amongst some parents that the number of requests for financial contributions from parents for activities/trips is greater than might normally be expected. Parents at other local schools have advised that requests for financial contributions are nominal in comparison. JB advised that the contributions allow school funding to be allocated elsewhere in order to provide the best possible opportunities for pupils. Examples for the use of such funds include the music specialist, swimming classes and additional staffing/teaching. JB noted that school trips were particularly important in order to really engage pupils in the subject matter.

It was noted that all contributions were voluntary and that generally greater than 50% contribute. One parent highlighted a trip for which SPA requested £15 whereas another local school charged £1. It was felt that the disparity in this instance could not be justified and therefore this really must be avoided for future trips. Finally, it was noted that the benefits of being part of a multi-academy trust is that it provides more 'bargaining power' for services such as coach travel, accommodation etc and that this should always be used.

- **After school clubs** - AK advised that a violinist was lined up to provide after school lessons. However he has advised that lessons should generally be no 40mins to maintain interest/concentration, which requires 2No. lessons during the after school club period. It was therefore suggested that another club is established so that children could be rotated between clubs.

It was confirmed that everyone who unsuccessfully applied for the maths club this term should be offered a place next term.

It was noted that there were numerous examples of children having been signed up to clubs that they actually didn't wish to attend. This can often result in some disruption. It was also noted that children are often turning up for clubs that they are not registered for and that non-payment was a common occurrence. Some parents felt there was a lack of information regarding the activities to be undertaken within each of the clubs. **It was agreed that a separate newsletter regarding after school clubs should be distributed addressing as many of the above issues as possible.**

- **Summer fair** - This will be discussed at the coffee morning meetings which are held separately. A date has yet to be set. JB advised that 2 summer concerts will take place this year, with a split of year groups due to growth in pupil numbers. It is proposed that the summer fair takes place after one of the concerts.

- **School photos** - Scheduled for 14.6.16. Arrangements will be put in place this year so that parents will have the opportunity to have photos of siblings together.

- **Scooter storage** - AR advised that approval in principle has been received from LBTH parks and highways regarding a storage unit in the park. However there is a relatively high cost associated with this and the unit is also considered quite likely to be subject to vandalism. Parents felt that any such facility would be well used and would encourage greater numbers to scoot/cycle to school than do so already. **It was agreed that AR will prepare a proposal for review by the Trust and that fund raising could be used to help contribute to the costs.**

- **SRE** - A series of discussions are taking place with parents of each of the different year groups to help clarify the proposed content of this subject.

**Next AC meeting 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016 9am**