

19/07/2011 – PARENTS FORUM – 5.30 PM – LIBRARY

Question

What is the distinction between a Trust School and the relationship with Ossett and will you still have an acceptable degree of autonomy?

ACo explained different types of academies/chains

The distinction for us would be that we are not looking to opt for the “business” model.

We believe in collaboration for mutual benefits of students
e.g. developing aspiring leaders with other schools – share staff for mutual benefit.

Question

What is the government’s view of the type of partnership which we are proposing?

Answer

At the moment, the Department for Education is encouraging the development of innovative approaches to partnership and collaboration between schools. The key requirement of any model will be that it allows for appropriate levels of support and challenge for all of the schools involved, and that at least one of those schools has been judged by Ofsted to be outstanding. The outstanding school, in particular, must show that it has the capacity and desire to raise standards and support improvement in any of the partner schools which is not performing to a satisfactory standard.

Question

Do you feel that a level of autonomy is still achievable?

Answer

Yes, we are confident that governors and school leaders would have significant autonomy, though, as is currently the case as a Local Authority school, this would be dependent upon the performance of the school.

Question

Why Ossett?

Answer

We have worked with Ossett for 18 months already through Gaining Ground (as they are an outstanding school). As a result of the options appraisal which was carried out, governors took the decision to explore further the potential benefits of formalising this relationship.

In particular, Ossett Academy has an inclusive, student centred ethos which is consistent with our own and a well -established track record of successfully supporting and working closely with other schools.

Question

Will it affect where our children are educated (out of Armthorpe)?

Answer

No, students on roll would continue to attend The Armthorpe School. However, as another of our partners will almost certainly be Hall Cross, there would be a range of new local opportunities such as :

- Joint training for staff
- Collaborative learning and enrichment activities involving students
- Departments working together, joint projects
- Could look at sharing staff
- e.g. joint appointments to meet the needs of students

Question

Regarding inclusion, I would be keen for that to continue as I am very impressed with the existing stance at Armthorpe.

Answer

The school's commitment to inclusive practice would continue, and is likely to be enhanced by closer links with the schools in the proposed partnership.

Question

Does the catchment stay the same?

Answer

The school's catchment area would remain unaffected. We will continue to serve our community.

Question

Will alternative method of funding be guaranteed?

Answer

The method of funding as an Academy is unlikely to change, but the challenges in managing the school's budget will remain and are likely to become more pressing because of the reduction in funding which will affect all schools over the next four years.

Question

Would specialism remain the same?

Answer

Yes, the school's commitment to its specialist areas will continue, though the nature of specialism in all schools will also be likely to be dependent on being subject to financial constraints.

Question

What is the staff view of the proposal?

Answer

Staff have been informed of the reasons for and anticipated benefits of the proposed partnership. They have also been reassured over matters such as pay and conditions of service, and contracts. The consultation process is ongoing, but, in the main, staff understand the need for change and the reasons why the Ossett Academy option is favoured by governors.

Question

What would the procedure be regarding staffing appointments? – would Ossett be part of the decision making?

Answer

We have the autonomy to make our own appointments and these will remain Governors' decisions. We could however, if we choose, invite input for key appointments but that would be our decision.