

Multi Academy Trust Consultation Meetings

Friday 12th February 2016 – 09:00 and 17:30

Representing South Rise: Sophie Powell – Executive Headteacher, Hazel Brown – Head of School, Susan Skidmore – Chair of Governors, Judith Pemberton – Governor.

Mrs Powell gave a presentation to parents and carers explaining the process and reasoning behind becoming a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). She invited questions from parents.

A parent asked: **What is the expected timescale? How long will the process take?**

The consultation lasts until 14th March. The results of the consultation in each school will then be reviewed by our Governors, who will have the final say on whether we apply for an Academy Order. Once an Academy Order is received, the process takes approximately 5-6 months. If we decide to go ahead we would expect to become a MAT by October 2016. This date is subject to change and we would update all parties as necessary.

A parent asked: **How will the school be funded?**

At present, we receive our funding from the Local Authority, which they receive from the Department for Education, and pass onto schools. The Local Authority allocates some of the money to cover the services that they provide to schools, such as admissions (this is referred to as the 'top slice'). The school also uses some of this money to 'buy in' some services provided by the Local Authority e.g. the Music Hub.

If we become a MAT, the funding would come directly to the school from the Department for Education. The schools in the MAT would be responsible for their own budgets. They would pay a 'top slice' to the MAT to cover shared costs. It would be prudent to continue to 'buy in' services provided by the Local Authority that work well for us, and we would also plan to review the services that might be better quality and value for money from other providers.

A parent asked: **Will our children still be able to take part in the subsidised music lessons at the Royal Greenwich Music Centres?**

Services such as the Royal Greenwich Music Centres are run by the Local Authority and their provision will not be affected by us becoming a MAT. We believe your child will continue to be able to use these services as they are not organised through school. The borough may choose to change the services they offer but that is completely outside of the jurisdiction of the school. As a MAT we could go on to create, for example, our own music hub. Music provision is very important and South Rise is very passionate about it.

A parent asked: **Will the uniform be changed?**

We may decide to update the uniform, although this is a decision that we would be taking regardless as to whether or not our school became a MAT. If the uniform does change this will be the decision of the Governors, who would consult with parents before reaching this decision.

A parent asked: **Who approves the formation of the Multi Academy Trust?**

We have to register our interest with the Regional Schools Commissioner, Dominic Herrington, who is responsible for reviewing the proposals. The Secretary of State for Education has the final approval as to whether or not a school becomes an academy.

A parent asked: **What are the criteria for becoming a MAT? Could the Department for Education say no to this?**

We have not heard of any group of schools being turned down.

The legal requirements are looked at as the process progresses, the requirements are met before moving on to the next stage.

Susan Skidmore attended the 'Academies Show' recently. The legal teams there advised that a group of outstanding schools may be asked to support other schools, in the same way as we have supported other schools in the past (e.g. Wingfield).

We know from the work that we have done with other schools that both our children and staff benefit from the sharing of best practice, and this is something that we as a group of schools are committed to continuing.

A parent asked: **Who will manage building work etc.?**

Initially we would expect to 'buy in' to the services of our Local Authority. Once established we would employ our own staff e.g. HR team, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists, legal team etc.

The buildings and land would be leased to the MAT from the Local Authority. The Department for Education will have a fund for building works etc., which we would be able to apply for as required.

At the moment, Wingfield is working out of a building that is very old and in need of repair. They are expecting to move into new premises in the next 18 months or so. For this reason, if we do decide to become a MAT, Wingfield would look into joining the MAT once the building works have been completed. Regardless as to whether or not we become a MAT, we will continue to work in partnership with Wingfield.

A parent asked: **How will admissions work?**

We would process our own admissions and parents would apply directly to us for a place for their child. We would continue to follow the Admissions Criteria, which is an expectation of academies.