

**Questions and Answers Arising from the Parent Consultation on Academy Conversion and Joining the Marches Academy Trust - Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February 5.30pm**

Q: The Marches is based in North Shropshire and we are in South Shropshire, I assume the governors have looked at more local schools around Shrewsbury...

A: We have looked at two schools within Shrewsbury and invited them to present to the governing body however, they did not meet our criteria or our ethos/values. We have been working with the Marches trust for over a year, which has given us a great insight into the Trust, Oakmeadow staff have been consulted and are very positive and can see the benefits of joining the Marches trust.

Q: Have you considered going it alone?

A: Yes, however when you look at the logistics and the risk factor this was something, we did not want to pursue. The background support for doing this would require a huge investment and part of the advantage of a Trust that is established is the centralised resources.

Q: Are there any schools within the trust which require improvements (RI)?

A: Sarah CEO confirmed

2 x requiring improvement – The Grove (secondary) and Tilstock (primary). Both have been improving and on an upward trend and there is the view at the next Ofsted these grades will be improved significantly.

3 out of the 4 current primary schools are good.

Trustees constantly review to ensure any support or changes do not have a detrimental effect on the other schools.

Q: I am unsure whether I want my child mixing with children from other backgrounds, as I don't want to lose the nature of Oakmeadow...

A: As a church of England school and a school with clear values, as you know we value very much teaching our children about different backgrounds and cultures. It is about giving them experiences of diversity and teaching them tolerance to appreciate others.

***In addition to this I feel it important to stress also that we can't judge the children of a school due to its location.***

Q: Oakmeadow is in surplus will this stay with us?

A: All funding stays with Oakmeadow, there is no academy central pot. Any income the school generates is allocated to Oakmeadow budget.

Q: What's in it for the Marches?

A: Sarah CEO answered: Oakmeadow is a dynamic school with a strong skill set. This will enable all children across the trust to have more opportunities and enhance their

experiences, while we can offer expertise from the Trust and the resources of the teaching school.

**Q: Day to day what will change?**

A: You won't necessarily notice any difference as we have effective systems and structures in place, you may see more resources' around the school because we can bulk buy and get these cheaper. You may see more specialist teachers working with the school...

Workload will change for administrative staff and leadership, as the centralised source will support with many tasks we currently do alone. Although this does not directly impact the children, it will give more opportunity to support teachers with administrative tasks.

**Q: Are you still able to connect with other local schools?**

A: Carla Whelan replied yes, she currently supports seven local schools with her associate head work, and this is something we are keen to continue. We are working with the Priory and the Maths Hub; we are supporting other schools we have connection with, and these networks will remain.

**A further questions was asked about will supporting others dilute what Oakmeadow has?**

A: For over 4 years now the school has supported in different capacities schools in Shropshire and other areas. This has not been at the detriment of the children; in fact we generate a budget through this back to the pupils. Currently we generate over £100K to our budget through this work, which allows us to continue with a healthy surplus budget. The work of the leadership and other teachers means we can enjoy providing more for our children and this will not change and will not dilute but enhance. If we felt at any point it did, we would pull this support back.

**Q: Will you remain headteacher?**

*During the meeting I reassured parents that the leadership will remain stable I would like to add further to this...*

Since 2013 I have had the privilege of working as the Headteacher here, yet it has been a difficult journey at times. I stated in the meeting that on my arrival I inherited a significant debt at the school and there was inadequate teaching. There was a job to do.

It was very hard to share why changes were made at this time, as it was not beneficial to share the information with parents. However, now as a strong school with strong teaching we can. There is no intention that we will return to this and we only want to continue to strengthen the school. I have a huge emotional attachment to Oakmeadow and wish to remain a part of its future.

Q: What are the next steps?

A: We are currently in the due diligence, we have approval from the Diocese, we are currently unpicking information, so we are clear about the Marches systems and procedures.

Likewise, they are doing the same on us. We have a conversion date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 however we don't want to rush, we want to make sure it's right. We will keep parents updated on the process.