

## **FEDERATION BETWEEN FRAMFIELD CEP SCHOOL AND PIONEER FEDERATION**

Parent Consultation Meeting Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 9:00am

### **08:50**

Prior to the start of the meeting a parent came to speak with the Framfield Chair of Governors to share thoughts as was not able to stay for meeting.

### **Comments made:**

Prior to this year, felt very 'non-positive' about the changes being put in place, which arose from lack of involvement in decisions being made; parents knew there was going to be a change in leadership but they did not know what was happening nor were they included in the conversations taking place.

However, as the year has progressed, parents now feeling fully involved, parental engagement appears a high priority with them being brought into school if questions arising and they feel part of this process and listened to – not just as lip service but as a reality.

Through the previous year, there were not positive feelings about the school and with changes being made, there were concerns about what would happen for the transition for the new Y6 children. However, the headteacher has been positive and meetings held with parents as needed and information shared.

Communication is much better and the feeling within school is now great with parents and children feeling settled, relaxed, with Y6 children enjoying a positive transitional year.

From a child's point of view, the school has held onto the things that they know and find reassuring, so feel now process should continue, working on consolidating and moving forward with the work that has been started.

### **Meeting commenced 9:00am**

#### **Governors introduced**

- Framfield: Karen Bye (interim chair), Mandy Watson, Katherine Hall, Beth Morris-Boag, Lydia Cottingham, Tim Murray
- Pioneer: Alan Brundle (chair), James Procter, Neil Lovett, Alice Briley (cluster lead)
- Also present: Natalie Riley – head of school and Annette Funnell – clerk to governors

#### **Session introduced**

KB: Parent Consultation meeting about Framfield CEP School potentially joining Pioneer Federation, which currently has six schools within it, but will have eight if proposals go through.

Thanks extended to parents in attendance for coming (seven in person and three on line)

#### **Format of Meeting**

- Prepared PowerPoint Presentation shared with parents present with opportunity for questions and comments as presentation progressed.
- Not all slides were read word for word; where not, content was covered and explained.
- Time spent discussing school leadership as queries had arising through emails received

## Discussion re School Leadership

- Plan for JP to continue as Executive Headteacher but school will need to advertise for new head of school.
- This process does not exclude those already in post but within Federation will have a Head of School as opposed to a head teacher and current post is interim, not permanent
- Awareness shared that there have been a number of headteachers at the school in recent years that have not worked out
- Information shared that as a small school, it is difficult to fund/attract an experienced Headteacher as costs prove too high.
- Positives within Federation will mean the school would have a Head of School supported by a Cluster lead and an Executive Headteacher.
- Cluster lead will cover one of three clusters which are in place to ensure governors can get to know their cluster schools and ensure maintenance of school's individuality. Framfield will be in Downs cluster so that relationship built with current cluster lead can continue
- Subject leadership will be shared across the Federation so facilitate development of excellence in subject vs one teacher needing to lead many subjects
- Overall, the leadership structure is not going to dramatically change from how the school has been supported this year; main change, it will be one of three schools in one of three clusters.
- For governance there would be one governing board and three committees of governors covering one cluster each

## Questions

- How do you cover parent governors across all schools?

The number of governors allowed on the board is set, with two specifically identified as 'parent' governors. However, there is plenty of scope across the board for more parents to join but as associates and co-opted or foundation governors. What is ensured is a balance across all schools and background to those involved.

- What is the decision-making process?

Currently we are in period of consultation for staff, families, other stakeholders (i.e. Diocese/church) where governors ask for responses to come in, and meetings such as this are held to present what it would mean to federate with Pioneer and take questions. Through the consultation period, governors continue to ask questions and review the comments received. Once the consultation period finishes (23<sup>rd</sup> March), governors get together to discuss progress through the year, any further thoughts/questions and to analyse all of the feedback received through the consultation and vote on whether they feel the best thing for the school will be to federate or not. Information on vote will be shared with families on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March

- What would be the options if the school doesn't federate?

That is a good question and there needs to be consideration given to 'if not federation, then what?' If governors vote against, which is possible, they will need to move forward looking at a new governing board (current is only interim), appoint a new business manager, appoint a new head of school and potentially join a different federation or MAT or maybe tip into more unsustainable territory. In summary, it feels as if there would need to be a compelling reason not to join, but that is part of the consultation process, enabling concerns/reasons not to federate to be raised.

- Hoping it goes ahead as there is now lots of stability and can see a future for the school, but have had four heads at the school and am concerned that the current head needs to apply.

Unfortunately, this cannot be changed. The school currently has a headteacher post with an interim appointment. There has to be an agreed staffing structure within school – if it stays alone, it will need to advertise and appoint a headteacher, if it chooses to federate, it will need to advertise and appoint a head of school. However, the current post holder is able to apply.

### **Comments**

- Do not want the decision to be no, very much wanting a yes
- Thanks extended to those involved this year, as the hard work undertaken at short notice to a school with no staff can be seen to a school and the school now has a good positive vibe.
- From own experience, collaboration has been amazing, what seen with kids, head of school availability.
- A community school and needs community feel, which is now present, the vibe is completely different
- Staff are now engaging with the community including those in reception. The changes can definitely be felt.
- It is positive that also liaising with parish council, church and are trying to listen and engage with all
- Thanks extended on behalf of the PTFA, sharing that they are really impressed with the foundations laid. They have seen a real improvement and hope the current head stays.
- Thanks for support to the school extended.
- Staff are always available to talk now if needed

### **In conclusion**

Chair extended thanks to all for coming – in person and online with encouragement to email in, pop a note into the office or just talk to the governors when you see them around the school if have any further thoughts or questions, as more may arise following the presentation today