

Wednesday 22nd January 2020; 9:00am – 10:00am

In attendance: Andy Kitchen (AK), Allison Hammond (AH) and Beenal Rajyaguru (BR). AK had opened the meeting to ten parents in attendance and thanked them for coming. Parents were represented from EYFS, year two, year three, year five and year six i.e. each year group apart from year four as BR is a Parent Governor for year one. AK stated that the main purpose of today's forum was to obtain feedback and help answer queries from parents with regard to joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and becoming part of Bradgate Education Partnership (BEP). AK also invited parents to highlight any other issues or concerns they wished to provide feedback at the end of the session.

Introduction

AK had reassured parents that although it has been nearly two years since the last Ofsted visit, an immense amount of work has been completed to help improve the school's standards and achievements. As a result, Stafford Leys has become one of the best schools in the country for improvement and continues to progress with very good results and progress for attainment in various subject areas.

Staff at Stafford Leys would very much welcome an Ofsted inspection to allow this improvement and progress to be showcased to anticipate a change in the school's current Ofsted rating, however it is unknown as to when Ofsted would attend the school for a full inspection visit. A recent HMI report from July 2019 was very positive and so it is frustrating that the school's Ofsted rating is not likely to change in the imminent future.

The Regional Schools Commissioner has strongly encouraged schools to become part of a MAT. Staff and Governors at Stafford Leys have decided to join BEP to provide the school with long term security and quality assurance checks working alongside other schools in Leicestershire to maintain and continue these high standards. Advantages of joining a MAT include collaborative staff training and resources as well as cost savings together with the quality assurance from BEP with regular monitoring visits. BEP will provide an extra layer of confidence and assurance to parents without changing the overall structure and day to day activities within school. Of all the schools within BEP Stafford Leys has shown the greatest improvement in such a short timescale and this best practice can be shared amongst other local schools within the MAT. AK also explained that joining a MAT was being evaluated prior to the Ofsted inspection in April 2018 but was put on hold until now. AK invited questions and feedback from parents.

Question: *"Once Stafford Leys School is within a MAT does this mean it remains in a MAT?"*

AK: There is no guarantee as Ofsted have changed the way that schools are monitored and are looking at other methods of evaluating a school's success through their Framework and are including the assessment of subjects other than English and Maths such as Science, Humanities, Languages and Sports and enrichment activities such as After School Clubs. The structure of MATs and therefore BEP may change depending on Government policies. However, managing a MAT is easier than managing standalone individual schools but by joining a MAT the long-term security for Stafford Leys is better guaranteed than as a Single Academy Trust.

Question: *"How will this affect staff at Stafford Leys School?"*

There are 14 other schools with BEP and this provides the additional security and potential job opportunities for staff to move around schools within BEP as staff retention at Stafford Leys is positive. The CEO of BEP together with the Leadership Team and Governors within BEP will be there in a supportive role to provide assistance to staff at Stafford Leys where needed. Day to day staff teaching and classroom activities are unlikely to change drastically.

Question: *“How does this affect funding for the school?”*

AK: For the short term there will be no major financial detriments to the school and being part of a larger Trust allows cost savings to be made for example with commercial contracts and buying power. However, there have been changes to funding for the 2020-2021 school year from the local Government and every year the school has been losing funding for Learning Support Assistants. AH added that the extra layer of quality assurance from BEP will also be useful from the Governors perspective re school funding for the Finance Committee too.

Question: *“Would this affect the Governors at the school too?”*

AH: BEP would provide further support for Governors too and provide quality assurance to the Governors too.

Question: *“Is the recent Ofsted visit from July 2019 letter attached to the original Ofsted report? If so, can BEP influence the Ofsted school visit for a full inspection?”*

AK: Yes, this is on the Ofsted website that has been available from 10th September 2019 and is available for public viewing. The report details the areas for development and provides evidence of how the school has improved in areas such as support for disadvantaged pupils and those students working at greater depth across all Key Stages. BEP can provide more evidence to Ofsted through their lesson observations and reports and fully support Stafford Leys receiving a Good rating from Ofsted and potentially push for an earlier inspection. Stafford Leys Senior Leadership Team have received 18 months of support from BEP, and whilst this must not go unrecognised, the staff and Governors of Stafford Leys have worked incredibly hard to make the necessary improvements needed as identified in the April 2018 Ofsted inspection.

AK concluded that the staff training across Leicestershire and at Stafford Leys is excellent and the move towards a MAT has provided staff with the assurance of career progression within BEP and support from other schools within BEP. AH added that all of the staff and Governors have met with the CEO of BEP and look forward to a positive working relationship with BEP. Parents were satisfied with all of the responses above.

Other issues discussed at this meeting:

Car parking around the school

A parent brought up concerns with parking around the front of the school and surrounding neighbours' driveways and is worried that a child may get injured during the busy school drop off and pick up times due to the excessive traffic and congestion. It was noted that afternoons tend to be

better than mornings as there is considerably more traffic during the mornings. There are vehicles being parked on the pavements and concerns about emergency vehicles needing access was also highlighted.

AH asked if there was anything the school can assist with e.g. "lollipop lady" or a pedestrian crossing/other traffic calming measures or staff/police presence wearing high visibility clothing? AK stated that the zigzag road markings do go quite far out and although parking on a road is not illegal, driving on a pavement is and this would be difficult for the school to enforce on a daily basis. The police newsletters that are sent out to parents provide some useful information. AK stated that the local council can be contacted but volunteers assisting with road crossings are not adequately insured and so AK strongly discouraged this.

A parent whether reminders on parent newsletters to encourage safe crossings near the library and a comment made to parents during EYFS induction can help with the parking problems? **AK to contact local council to see what measures can be taken, if any, to help overcome this problem. AK to also discuss this in an Assembly with all children to educate about road safety.**

AK also stated that parking during weekends may start to be noticeable as during May-August tournaments are held (dance on Saturdays, football on Sundays).

Latest homework unavailable on website

AK to discuss with phase leaders about ensuring latest homework activities are updated and available on the school's website.

Knowledge Organisers

AK asked about the knowledge organisers from the last parent forum meeting and feedback has been positive about the knowledge organisers and found them helpful.

Year Six Mock Results

Parents had thanked the school for the impressive turnaround time for the results of the mock exams which had helped relieve anxiety and nervousness. AK stated that some tests had to be specifically marked by teachers rather than support staff and teachers were able to set action plans based on the test results accordingly.

Swimming in Year Three

Parents stated that some children partake in swimming activities outside school yet swimming in year three is compulsory and parents feel it is unfair to have to "pay twice" i.e. pay for school swimming in addition to their regular swimming outside school.

AK explained in detail about swimming being a life skill and part of the Curriculum and Safeguarding measure for the school, and explained how the swimming lesson structures are throughout the school year. Children should be able to independently swim 25m at the end of year six. Some schools can opt for a term in year three, four, five and six, however Stafford Leys have adopted the approach of

swimming throughout the school year for the whole of year three, with a check in year five and intensive swimming lessons in year six post SATs for children unable to meet this target. In some instances, children in year three will be entering water for the first time and other children of the same age may be confident swimmers. Parents asked whether the children who are able to swim can stay behind at school to avoid parents paying the cost however AK stated that the school would have to pay extra to look after the children remaining at school. It would also provide an unfair advantage to those who were to stay behind if they were to receive extra teaching and support. AK also informed parents of the significant costs involved with swimming lessons, and although there is no swimming pool on site, it is not cost effective to do so due to the excessive maintenance costs. Swimming activities are therefore scheduled for after lunchtimes to minimise the impact on learning and keep costs down.

Talking Time

An EYFS parent had commented on the really positive talking time in EYFS and AK had thanked them for their comments and positive feedback.

The Governors and Mr Kitchen concluded the meeting and thanked all of the parents for attending and asked if parents could disseminate the information discussed at today's forum with other parents.