

## **St Michael's CE Primary School.**

### **Minutes of IEB meeting with parents and carers**

**21<sup>st</sup> October 2015**

#### **Present for the IEB:**

Penny Gaunt, Chair

Greg Russell, community representative

Cathy Slow, on behalf of the Diocese of Chichester

#### **Also present:**

Ms Pip Gasson, Head of School

#### **Staffing**

The school is currently fully staffed. Penny Gaunt explained that the IEB hopes that the need for short term supply will be much reduced in the future.

Ms Gasson will leave at Christmas; the Local Authority will put in place an Acting Headteacher from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 with a hand-over period at the end of term 2. Penny Gaunt is in discussion with the Local Authority regarding this appointment. The Local Authority will provide an Acting Head until there is a permanent solution for the leadership of the school.

#### **Progress and Outcomes**

Overall, really good progress was made across the school last year, with the exception of Y2.

Outcomes were good in the early years.

There was a significant improvement in outcomes at the end of KS2.

However, the good progress is not yet sufficient to have overcome the legacy of underachievement. For example, Y5 made good progress last year but the pupils have still not caught up and too few are at age related expectations..

This year, there is a particular focus on further acceleration of progress in Y3 and Y6.

The outcomes at the end of KS1 would not allow the school to achieve Ofsted good across the board. The Local Authority has been supporting St Michael's as if it were a Special

Measures school. With the recent progress the school has made, with the new Ofsted framework focusing on progress, the school could secure a Requires Improvement to be Good judgement. In response to a question Penny explained that schools in Special Measures are subject to regular visits by Her Majesty's Inspectorate and are expected to become an academy.

The learning environment has improved significantly with the new build and the standard of displays.

The quality of teaching is now much better. Planning is much improved with the needs of individual children being met.

Communication with parents has improved – the school always welcomes feedback on this.

### **Future leadership arrangements**

At the last meeting the prospect of the school becoming a sponsored academy within the Diocese of Chichester Multi-Academy Trust was discussed.

The Diocese is no longer taking this forward which is disappointing. The MAT locally would have also included Northiam, Peasmarsh and Winchelsea primary schools. The decision not to proceed was made between the Diocese and the Department for Education. The due diligence process led to the judgement that the plan was not financially viable.

Therefore, on our timescale, for permanent and sustainable leadership, MAT membership is not possible.

The IEB is not looking for a private academy sponsor but, with the Local Authority and Diocese, is looking at forming a federation with one or two other local primary schools. It is considered that this is, in many ways, a stronger model with more advantages for pupils and staff to secure improvement through partnership working. The option of the school remaining as it is with the current leadership structure is not viable. Small schools are looking at federation because of: financial reasons including economies of scale; the difficulty of attracting applications to headship in very small schools; and to increase the capacity for school improvement. In addition, research, endorsed by Ofsted, shows that this is a very positive way forward.

No decisions have been taken about which school(s) St Michael's might federate with. Decisions can only be made when the governing bodies of the other schools decide they too would like to federate. Other local schools are considering federation.

The federation model would be to have an Executive Headteacher across the federation with a Head of School in each individual school. St Michael's currently has significant leadership capacity with a .4 Executive Head, Head of School and Deputy Head.

If St Michael's federated with one or more other local schools, the overall size would then be that of an average sized primary school but with the additional capacity of more than one Head of School.

Any proposal to federate would be subject to full consultation. Possible partner schools are being sought by Penny Gaunt and the Local Authority.

A federation has one governing body with responsibility across all the schools. Local governors can also be retained in an advisory capacity. The IEB would cease but would train up and develop governors to serve on the federation governing body. Any suitable IEB members could serve on the federation governing body.

Federation partners do not necessarily have to be church schools. If the federation is with one other school, that school would have to be a strong school. If the federation is with 2 other schools, one of them would have to be a strong school.

Federation was not originally sought as a multi academy trust route option was preferred by the Diocese. Also, at that stage, other local schools might not have considered federating with St Michael's because of the significant improvements needed.

For the longer term future staying with the IEB, getting stronger and then asking other schools to federate with us is not an option as it leaves the school without substantive leadership for too long.

In response to a question Penny explained that school strengths are easily measured: progress, behaviour, teaching – plus cultural strengths. At St Michael's, expectations have been raised and progress improved while maintaining the culture. Any school with whom St Michael's federated would have to be sympathetic to Christian values.

There is no intention to bring in a new head who will come in and change everything. Any fundamental policy changes have to be agreed by the IEB and the IEB will not agree to significant change as there is a need to ensure continuity of current practice and expectations. An internal appointment cannot be made as any acting head has to have experience of leadership and securing improvement in a fragile school. While outcomes in early years and at KS2 are good, there was still a legacy of underachievement in July 2015 with not enough children working at age-related-expectations.

The national averages for level 4+ at KS2 are:

Reading = 89%

Writing = 87%

Maths = 87%

Schools with age related outcomes lower than this in any year group are vulnerable but care must be taken in very small schools where 1 child = 10%

Year 2 outcomes were poor last year as teaching was not good enough. This has been addressed. Current Y3 are having a significant amount of intervention work. Quality of teaching across the school is significantly better than in January 2015. We would always aim to employ good teachers on permanent contracts. The two teachers on part time contracts could not job share to teach one class as both are contracted for the same days of the week.

Other local schools are looking to federate - St Michael's is now well placed, partly due to the data but also because of the atmosphere and culture.

The Local Authority does not intend to close the school as the places are all needed.

If federated, this school would remain the same size. The school retains its individual identity but can share and draw on skills and experience from the other school(s).

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm

