

PRIMARY SCHOOL ORGANISATION CONSULTATION

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT GRANGE JUNIOR SCHOOL HELD ON 12 MARCH 2008

PARENTS'/COMMUNITY MEETING HELD AT 6.30pm

Present

J Griffiths	Parent
A Davies Friend	Parent
A Kinsey	Parent
D Jones	Parent
E A Jones	Parent
C Jones	Parent
T Arnold	Parent
M Arnold	Parent
K Dance	Parent
J Chadwick	Parent
J Roberts	Parent
S Carter	Parent
C Carrick	Parent
L Gardiner	Parent/Governor
F Davies	Parent
T Mullinder	Parent
K Davies	Parent
T Teeary	Parent/Governor
Cllr E Sandford	County Councillor/Governor
C Davies	Parent
A Cutler	Parent
L Wright	Parent
T Evanson	Parent
P Bates	Parent
K Romansiuk	Parent
Cllr Karen Calder	County Councillor
John Rowley	Acting Assistant Director
Norrie Porter	Head of Premises and Planning
Jean Mayle	Clerk

Introduction

John Rowley opened the meeting and introduced those present. He explained:

- the reasons for the review;
- the review process; and
- possible next steps

Alison Davies Friend If the aims are all the same, then why are there 3 options?

J Griffiths	Would the Headteacher of the retained school become Headteacher of new primary school without interview?
John Rowley	Yes and vice versa although Headteachers may choose not to take up a position and make personal choices.
Alison Davies Friend	If one school takes the lead then there will be implications – surely it should be open to interviews.
Parent	The existing Headteacher would have been appointed by previous school governing body.
Keith Davies	A major factor for a primary school would be a good headteacher. We would want someone to take the school forward, from whole primary school perspective. One may be expert in one field but not another. Best way would be an interview process.
David Jones	What consequences do the three choices have on premises and planning?
Norrie Porter	All three have some consequences. We are about to start a major programme – Building Schools for the Future. If the two schools come together, there will be an opportunity to plan with the new governing body.

Background to the Proposals

Amanda Kinsey	Will any decision be based on the Ofsted report?
John Rowley	The decision will be made on all available information. It does not start from Ofsted report.
Alison Davies Friend	Surely, this puts the Junior School in a weaker position.
John Rowley	You can rest assured that the Local authority is well aware of the strengths of the school.
Keith Jones	Why is it not a significant factor – why aren't strengths highlighted in this document?
John Rowley	All primary school organisation consultation reports contain contextual information and are limited to factual statements.
Alison Davies Friend	This must have significant bearing because the Infant School has asked for their Ofsted early.
John Rowley	The Infant School has been inspected in the normal Ofsted cycle. It is not something which is within our control.
Kate Rumasiuk	Referred to the paragraph in the document regarding special measures, particularly that the local authority is specifically required to consider reorganisation issues when a school is in special measures.

John Rowley	<p>The Local Authority is required to consider all options for a school in special measures. If it is surplus to requirements a school could be closed and children sent to other schools. This is not appropriate in this instance because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are a lot of children on roll 2. The Local Authority has made a consideration and is strongly of the view that particular issues which caused it to go into special measures are capable of being solved.
Kate Rumasiuk	<p>Will you therefore take into account the result of the Infant School's Ofsted.</p>
John Rowley	<p>At the point the consultation document was written, this information had not been published. The document can be updated if the consultation continues.</p>
K Davies	<p>What implications for special measures? Does it go away if the school is closed?</p>
John Rowley	<p>Yes, it does go away because the status is carried by the school and if a school ceases to exist, it goes away. However, by the proposed date of 2009, it is aimed to remove special measures status.</p>
K Davies	<p>Where does it say this?</p>
John Rowley	<p>This is not stated in the consultation document. However, this will be in the post Ofsted action plan.</p>
Claire Carrick	<p>It almost seems cut and dried with the Junior School closing. As a parent I am unhappy about this. I feel that the Headteacher is not being given a chance. If special measures are removed, he will not be credited for his work in turning the school round.</p>
Fiona Davies	<p>We were told that the timescale to come out of special measures is 21 months.</p>
John Rowley	<p>As an example, the previous school in this situation came out of special measures in 13 months. The aim would be to get Grange Junior out of special measures as quickly as possible.</p>
David Jones	<p>Can I formally request that parents are balloted on the three options?</p>
Cllr Karen Calder	<p>This consultation is to get an idea on people's views and then both governing bodies can communicate.</p>
Norrie Porter	<p>A vote may mean that more parents had a view of infants as most had been through Infant School first.</p>
Keith Jones	<p>Parents will do what is best for the children.</p>
Cathy Davies	<p>I am concerned about the stress on teachers of both schools. Teachers will need to know one way or the other as soon as</p>

possible.

K Davies Could you explain the implications of this particular school being a Foundation school?

Norrie Porter Schools are in 4 categories:

- Community School – governing body operates and staff are appointed by governors but employed by Council
- Voluntary controlled School – same as above but buildings are owned by the church;
- Voluntary Aided – stronger links with Church and governing body employs staff and owns land and buildings
- Foundation – governing body employs staff, owns building and land and have control over admissions within the admissions policy.

If the category of school changes the whole site would take the character of the new school. Does not make a substantial difference to teaching staff.

If both schools closed, there would be a competition and advertisement and proposers could come forward from groups of parents, church or the County Council.

D Jones If there is a new school – how does it impact on investment?

Norrie Porter There would be no effect on investment. However, if a new school is voluntary aided, after initial investment, the governing body would have to pay 20%.

K Davies If this is a Foundation school now and the land owned by the governing body, will it revert back?

Norrie Porter If status changes the ownership of the land changes / reverts back.

D Jones What legal rights do we have?

Norrie Porter It could be referred to the Schools adjudicator.

Cllr Eileen Sandford We have expressed the desire that headteachers of both schools are considered.

Junior Governors would be willing to relinquish the Foundation part because of legal factors. Foundation has little impact on the interests of the children.

Key Educational Benefits

John Rowley referred to key benefits on page 5 of the consultation document.

D Jones Cost savings should not override children's education.

Cathy Jones Can I suggest that a new school could have a new name, eg Heath Farm Primary.

Making your views known

John Rowley reiterated that it is important to gather views in the formative consultation period. He reminded the audience of ways to do this (Page 6 of the document).

- Mark Arnold Having come through education process of comprehensive and found it unsettling, I would like to make sure our children are protected – are they key indicators?
- John Rowley It is important that there is continuity for all children, eg Albrighton which has recently amalgamated and where children's education is core.
- Alison Friend
Davies The children are paramount. The staff work hard and we want the best for our children. The headship should be open so that the best Headteacher is appointed.
- K Davies I ask you to bear in mind that the Headteacher of the Junior School has only been in post for 14 months and there were problems before he arrived.
- Fiona Davies Sadly, someone will lose their job. This is someone's career which we have to remember.
- John Rowley Acknowledged the many positives in the Ofsted report.
- Eileen
Sandford Reiterated we need the best person for the job of Headteacher.
- Alison
Friend Davies Changing the name is not relevant – we should be proud of our schools and what has been achieved.
- Parent One parent commented she had not had her leaflet in advance of the meeting. However, it was established that most parents had received the paper in advance of the meeting.
- Claire
Carrick I have 2 children at this school and this will be the third head in less than 4 years.
- Parent Will it be stated that our Junior school is a very good school. Infant parents may think this school will be awful, which is not the case.
- John Rowley The same presentation and answers will be given at the Infant School meeting tomorrow. These are community meetings and public can attend both meetings.
- Eileen
Sandford It is important for schools to work together to form a better relationship. This is what we want to happen.
- Cllr Karen I agree with Eileen Sandford – it is not just parents from each school,

Calder it is the whole community which needs to move forward.

K Davies Commented that 'special measures' are emotive words. However, he acknowledged that there would be support from advisory team as when help was needed with the Infant School.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm