

GREAT MISSENDEN C of E SCHOOL – ACADEMY CONVERSION CONSULTATION MEETING

12TH SEPTEMBER 2013

6PM. SCHOOL DINING HALL

Present: A mixture of parents, governors, staff and neighbours.

Frequently asked question and answer sheets were on chairs upon arrival for people to read.

The meeting was opened with an introduction from Roz Thomson (RT) and Caroline Taylor (CT).

RT and CT continued with the meeting by outlining the reasons for becoming an academy and the stage the school is at. This was done using the 'Thinking hats'.

WHITE: Facts and figures – information sheets were available to read upon arrival and to take away.

YELLOW: Positive – Positive thoughts of liberation from the LEA were expressed along with positivity for the future.

BLACK: Potential problems – Fear of the unknown. Out of the ordinary events/'acts of God' happening, CT explained about insurances for such events. Premises needing updating/repair, CT explained how DoFE grants are available. Negative situation of not converting would be lower admission numbers.

RED: Feelings – Character of school will not change. Academies are now encouraged for good and outstanding schools and no longer for just the failing schools. There will not be a change in name or signage.

GREEN: New Opportunities – Chance to set admission numbers. Chance to set up new partnerships with other schools and businesses. Ability to buy into best services. Possibility to apply to government capital fund for a new classroom. Chance to improve access to school site.

BLUE: Strategic overview – The position we are now in as a school.

RT asked for any strong views to be fed to the school (via office) before governor meeting on Wednesday 18th September.

Questions were invited:

(All were answered by RT and CT along with comments from governors on the steering group.)

- Will temporary classroom be removed?
- Will school still have a 3-2-3-2 intake in KS2?
- Why is it not possible to apply for planning permission for temporary classroom without becoming an academy?
- Will OFSTED remain?
- Is there any flexibility with setting the curriculum within an academy?
- Where does academy money come from?
- Is any extra money offered offset by the extra costs of running a school on own?
- What services do schools buy into?
- Would county provide any funding to an academy school?

- How will it affect statemented children? – Does this also apply to School Action/ Action + etc.?
- As a child in the school would I notice a change?
- Will there be a benefit to the teaching environment?
- Have any converted schools regretted their conversion decision?
- What could go wrong? What worries are there?
- Can you convert back?
- Is there a risk to LEA services diminishing if more schools convert away?
- Are teachers positive about the change? Could we lose our very good teachers? (– in response to this question teachers gave their views – all positive.)
- What will happen if we don't get a grant from DfE for classroom?
- Will admissions applications still go through county?
- Will catchment area and admissions criteria change?
- Will “expensive” creative activities be lost if an academy?
- Is the extra management responsibility a worry to the school?
- Will we be a SAT or MAT?
- Will we be a sponsored academy?
- Have any other local primaries converted?
- What is Mrs Thomson's main driver as a head teacher not to stick with the LEA?
- What is the focus for development with investment?
- Who is the school answerable to if an academy?
- Are trustees external to the school?
- Where will continued support services (particularly for staff) come from?
- What is the next process? What is next week's vote for?

The meeting was closed at 6.50pm and RT and CT gave time for individual questions to be asked. Questions can also be sent via school office.