

Joint Meeting of the Governing Bodies of Lauriston School and the Federation of Daubeney and Sebright Primary Schools

Date: 8 March 2018

Venue: Bridge Academy

Attendees

Laurence Kavanagh (D&S) (Chair)
Marisa Childs (L)
Lorraine Groom (L)
Corrine Ffinch (L)
Madeline Davies (L)
Jacy Templeton (L)
Pauline Abbie (L)
Fiona Clarke (L)
Joanie Andrews (L)
Colin Hutchinson (L)
Kitty Stewart (L)
Anna McSweeney (D&S)
Sara Summersgill (D&S)
Christian Klettner (D&S)
Chris Russell (D&S)
Laura Stacey (D&S)
Seamus McGowan (D&S)
Janice Thomas (L, D&S)
Louis Harris (HoS, Lauriston)
Greg Logan (HoS, Daubeney)
James Green (HoS, Sebright)

Apologies

Mark Allenby (D&S)
Will Emms (D&S)
Allegra Mullaney (D&S)
Tom Boxer (D&S)

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1. The Chair introduced Governors from Lauriston and Sebright & Daubeney Governing Body's to the meeting. Introductions were undertaken.

Declarations of interest

- 1.2. Noted Janice Thomas was the Executive Headteacher of the Sebright and Daubeney Federation and Lauriston Primary School therefore will not be present for nor participate in the vote. As Head of Schools for the three schools involved, Louis Harris, Greg Logan and James Green would also not participate in the vote.
- 1.3. No other declarations of interest were noted.

2. Background and Context

- 2.1. The Chair explained the meeting was convened to consider the proposal to federate Lauriston School and the Federation of Daubeney and Sebright Primary Schools. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the consultation responses and decide how to proceed in line with the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.2. The Chair explained that, after joint discussion, the two governing bodies would divide and separately decide on whether or not to proceed with the proposal to federate. Both governing bodies were to reach decision by means of a closed vote and all staff members, including the executive headteacher, would leave the discussion at this point. The meeting would then be reconvened to discuss the outcomes and agree actions going forward.

Comments from Heads of School

- 2.3. The three heads of school were invited to provide comments on the proposal to federate.

- 2.4. James Green stated he had worked at Sebright School for 10 years and had been in post as Head of School for 2 years. James said he thought a larger federation would provide a huge network of school leaders and support staff who could support each other.

James said he had benefited from operating in a leadership team of Heads of Schools led by the Executive Headteacher as this had allowed the Heads of Schools to develop and be nurtured within their role. Noted working within a federation can retain staff who are seeking leadership opportunities and other roles as this scenario allows staff can work across the schools. He noted that if the decision was not to federate, there would be significant staffing issues to resolve at Sebright owing to current senior leadership arrangements.

- 2.5. Greg Logan, described his experience working in both Sebright and now in Daubeney. When Daubeney established its partnership federated with Sebright, concerns were raised on how Daubeney would maintain its own identity. He explained that the culture of the school had changed positively since then, with a strong focus on the children, adults and wider community. This year the school received a letter from the Rt Hon Nick Gibb congratulating it on being in the top 2% of schools in England for the progress its pupils made.

- 2.6. Louis Harris, Head of School at Lauriston, said how the current leadership team had worked hard to put in place various structures, processes and systems to ensure an inclusive offer for all children. Louis noted various positives developments within the school including raising the profile in performing arts and successes in sports tournaments. He gave a number of examples of engagement with parents, by having SEND coffee mornings, parental workshops, governor days and reading sessions with parents.

Louis explained he had relished the challenges and opportunities faced by the school and was deeply committed in taking the school forward within a federation leadership team.

- 2.7. A governor asked how many parents were currently engaged in this activity. Louis explained that 10 parents were involved in work week and between 30 and 40 parents attended the workshops.

- 2.8. Marisa Childs explained how 3 years ago, the school underwent a review which resulted in the overall effectiveness than good and the leadership had put the school at risk of requires improvement. The most recent Ofsted inspection was rated good and close to outstanding, which was testament to the work of the executive head and the current leadership team. On reflection at a recent Governors day, the improvements had been impressive.

3. Presentation of the outcome of the consultation

- 3.1. The Chair clarified a decision would not be made in this section of the meeting.

3.2. Hackney Schools Group

- 3.3. Information was shared with Governors regarding the Hackney Schools Group proposal, noting Hackney Council had agreed to move forward with proposal. Hackney's intention is to secure maintained schools in Hackney within one grouping, with a funding agreement between council and schools. It was clarified the proposal was not to form a Multi-Academy Trust and the timescale was unknown to attendees.

- 3.4. The Chair noted that HLT officers had that stated existing school groupings will be respected and will still exist within the framework. The Chair concluded this allowed the schools to move forward with the current proposal.

- 3.5. A governor asked whether any more information was known about the proposal, in particular whether all schools would be under one governing body. The intention as it is understood is to preserve as far as possible the current local responsibility and oversight of the school.

- 3.6. A governor asked whether the Hackney Schools Group proposal meant that the decision to form a new federation should be delayed given the Hackney context and queried whether a separate meeting should take place. In response, it was explained that the proposals are still relatively new and the timescale for setting up the federation was unknown therefore such a course of action was not recommended.

- 3.7. It was noted that if Hackney were able to form a federation of all schools in the borough, whilst each school retains their governing bodies, why this option was not available to Lauriston Primary School. Attendees of the meeting were unable to comment on the legal position of this and how this has been made possible.
- 3.8. It was noted no consultation on the HSG has begun. Further discussion will take place to establish forming a working group consisting of Headteachers. However discussions were underway with Headteachers and Chairs of Governor to ascertain uptake on the proposal therefore the still in the very early stages of development.
- 3.9. A governor asked whether the executive head had a view on joining the Hackney Schools Group. She said that she was in favour if it meant that it protected schools against the risks of coerced academisation. She welcomed this as a method of keeping Hackney schools together and maintain shared services.

Consultation report

- 3.10. The Chair said that many comments received were about process of consultation and acknowledged that, if it were run again, there were elements that could have been done differently. However the procedure was nonetheless followed correctly therefore the decision making process remained valid.
- 3.11. It was noted that additional drop-in sessions were undertaken and the consultation period was extended by 2 weeks.
- 3.12. A governor asked whether the consultation report would be published. The Chair said that a summary would be published. However as the contents were confidential, it was not appropriate for the whole document to be published. Governors expressed that as much information as possible should be published for parents.
- 3.13. Governors noted a concern stated repeatedly throughout the responses was the desire to maintain parental involvement. Many were particularly concerned about the restrictions on the number of parent governors in a federation. This therefore needed to be considered carefully regardless of the outcome of the discussion, to which all agreed.
- 3.14. A governor asked whether, if the decision was reached to federate with moderations, whether a proposal to federate with delegation could be pursued. It was noted that functions should be identical across each schools, that only 2 elected parent governors were allowed and there should be a balance of governors connected with each of the schools. However this could be considered based on the outcome of the decision made during the course of the meeting. Governors recognised the concerns, particularly among the parent body at Lauriston were divided on this issue.
- 3.15. It was discussed as to whether there were options for a two-tier model to improve parent representation or community involvement in decision-making, which would benefit both the schools and parent body. It was noted that this could be considered during discussions around modifications, depending on the outcome of the decision.
- 3.16. In addition to the issues raised, a further two were acknowledged: views from parents who thought they had not received enough information about the consultation and how well the options available to Lauriston School had been explained.
- 3.17. It was noted that some views in the consultation related more about how parents felt about the process and the current leadership. Therefore it was important to keep focus on what was the best outcome for the school and the community in the long term.
- 3.18. A governor queried whether the structure of groupings of schools would still look sensible in the future. It was explained federations were not always based on geographical locations, but leadership, capacity and what the school needs.
- 3.19. It was noted that it was important to listen to the views and concerns of parents going forward however there was much that could be done to mitigate against the concerns raised. It was also noted that a two-tier option appeared sensible.
- 3.20. One governor stated the concerns should be addressed by publishing as much as possible. It was also expressed with joint agreement, it could be a productive federation.

- 3.21. It was felt that having seen the interest parents had in the process, a concern was the lack of stability in the school which was addressed through the current arrangement. Therefore it was unusual the alternative of not federating was not more concerning to parents.
- 3.22. It was noted during second meeting with parents, there were many misconceptions and a lack of opportunity for Lauriston senior leaders to express their point of view. It was also noted there was some inaccurate information circulated during the consultation process. One governor disagreed with this comment, stating that parents disagreed and this was the point put across.
- 3.23. A governor asked why a prolonged partnership wasn't possible. Noted the partnership had originally been formed for 2 years and this was then extended to 3.5 years to allow for further deliberation. The longer this arrangement is left the more embedded the partnerships structures become and therefore it was appropriate to make a real decision in good time.

4. Division of governing bodies for separate consideration and decision

- 4.1. *During this item, the governing bodies separated to consider the outcome of the discussion and vote on the decision. Members of staff, including the executive head, withdrew and did not participate nor observe either discussion.*

5. Outcome of deliberations and final decision on the proposal to federate

- 5.1. The Chair confirmed that the Governing Body of the Federation of Daubeney and Sebright Primary Schools had decided, following a vote, to proceed with the federation subject to the modification that this started on 1 September 2018.
- 5.2. The Chair of Governors confirmed that the Governing Body of Lauriston School had decided, following a vote, to proceed with federation subject to modifications that would involve more local involvement in decision-making. No objections were received to this proposed modification and it was also agreed that 1 September date was appropriate.

Resolved:

Lauriston School, Sebright School and Daubeney Primary School to federate in line with proposals published for consultation with moderations such that (i) this arrangement will start on 1 September 2018, and (ii) there will be a form of school-level structure within the new federation.

- 5.3. It was noted the design of school-level structures would require further discussion.
- 5.4. It was agreed that a further meeting of both governing bodies should take place to consider proposals for the selection of governors for the new board and the design of school-level structures within the federation. It was noted that it was clearly advantageous to have a representation for all 3 schools within the main governing board and a principle that should be pursued as far as possible.
- 5.5. It was noted that it could be considered to have local committees if the option for more parental representation on the governing body was not legally viable. It would need to be considered whether this applied to all schools. Governors could agree the principle to address and it was believed to be the right thing to do considering the responses of the consultation.
- 5.6. It was confirmed that due to the delay of the date of federation, existing governing bodies would remain in existence until 31 August 2018.
- 5.7. Queried how the governing body would be constituted. Some roles would need to be elected and others co-opted.
- 5.8. It was agreed that formal consultation was not needed on the moderations. Governors felt it was important to keep the school community involved in the process. Noted this would be considered and comms would be distributed to parents.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. The relevant authorities to be notified. **Action: LK**
- 6.2. Decide how to coordinate comms to parents – potentially be coordinated with the survey.
Action: LK/MC
- 6.3. Working group to come up with a proposal to be presented to both governing bodies.
Action: LK/MC
- 6.4. All to inform the Chair and MC if they wish to join the working group.