

Minutes from the initial staff consultation meeting Monday 20th June 2016

Regarding the proposed conversion to academy status as part of the Tenax Trust

Mr Ian Bauckham chaired the meeting and is the Executive Headteacher of Bennett Memorial School and the CEO of the Tenax Schools Trust.

This was an informal consultation for the staff of Leybourne Ss Peter & Paul CEP School to pass on information and to answer any questions that they may have.

Currently we are in a period of rapid change within the schools' landscape, between now and 2022 the majority of Local Authority (LA) schools will move to being part of multi-academy trusts. The Government is no longer going to force this by a law but will close down LAs by turning off the funding to them. Good schools are being proactive so that they are not left behind.

A Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is a group of schools who share the same underlying view of education.

The Tenax Schools Trust is a Church of England MAT which was set up by Bennett Memorial Diocesan School. As a Church of England Trust, the members (which are like shareholders in a company) ultimately 'own' the Trust. Tenax Schools Trust is comprised of 80% from the Diocese of Rochester and 20% from the Diocese of Chichester.

Leybourne has previous links with Bennett Memorial Diocesan School and joining the Tenax Schools Trust secures distinct identification as a CofE School in the future.

Advantages of joining the Trust:

It will consist of likeminded schools and will be able to support the professional development of all staff. Tenax is a Teaching Schools Trust, so teacher training and professional development is ongoing already. They hope to be awarded SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training) status soon.

Currently the Trust consists of one secondary school and two primary schools. Three further primary schools including Leybourne are hoping to join during the next six months. In addition a free school is due to open in September 2017 and there is a bid for one other school as well. Within the next year or so it is hoped to have between seven and nine schools in the Trust, all will be Primary Schools except for Bennett Memorial.

The terms and conditions for staff will not change as TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment) will apply. This will safeguard all the existing terms and conditions that employees have now and Tenax will continue to pay staff on those terms and conditions. The Kent Scheme for Support Staff and the Teachers Scheme will both continue. Appraisal arrangements will also stay in place.

No member of staff will be compelled to work at another school in the Trust without their consent.

Questions from staff:

How will Inclusions be affected?

This will not change the LA will continue to have responsibility for SEN, Transport and Admissions. As an Academy we would still have to deal with the SEN team at the LA in the same way we do now. Funding for pupils with SEN would also still be allocated in the same way.

Will we be able to use other schools' facilities?

Yes, resources and expertise can be shared throughout the Trust but locations of the members would need to be taken into account to ensure this works effectively (for example, planning to take a class to

Crowborough for a lesson lasting an hour or two would not be beneficial. However, an example of a positive sharing of resources could be a shared minibus between schools close to each other).

Will there be changes to funding?

The Capital Funding will come from the Academies Capital Funding rather than the Diocese. Currently we are a Voluntary Aided (VA) school so need to contribute 10% of any capital funding ourselves, as a member of the Trust this would not be needed. In addition the Trust have successfully applied for a bid for funding from the Education Funding Agency, they used the services of a professional bid writer who works on a no win, no fee basis. These services would be available to our school.

Which other schools are part of the Trust?

Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Sir Henry Fermor in Crowborough and Brenchley and Matfield Primary.

Plus they are in discussions and going through due diligence with a new free school in South Tonbridge, Leybourne Ss Peter & Paul CEP School, a school just outside Tunbridge Wells and a school in West Sussex.

There is one secondary school and the others are primary, (all of which are Church schools apart from one community school which shares the same underlying view of education).

How will becoming an Academy affect Ofsted?

As Leybourne is currently an outstanding school, it will continue to remain exempt from inspection, unless a whistle blowing or safeguarding issue or other trigger signals that an inspection is needed. After the conversion the school will retain their outstanding status.

How will the day to day running of the school be affected?

The day to day running of the school will not be affected. The Senior Leadership Team will remain in place and will continue to lead the school as before. A change to academy status does not signal a change in leadership.

Instead of the school's budget being delegated by the LA this will come from the Trust but the school can continue as before. There may be opportunities to generate income by staff working across the trust.

Can the conversion still go ahead even if the parents don't agree?

Ultimately converting to an Academy is the decision of the Governing Body. The Governing Body hope to fully explain their reasons for proposing conversion to parents during the consultation process and hope that parents will understand their reasoning and be supportive of it. They will take the full range of parent views into account when they are making their decision regarding the conversion and wish to engage fully with parents as part of the process.

The Next Steps and other comments:

The Governing Body will host a parent consultation next Monday. Ian Bauckham and Tina Holditch will be in attendance.

The date of the conversion is likely to be the end of this year.

The name of the school will not change. It does not need to incorporate the name of the academy Trust. We would just replace any Kent logos with the Trust's logo.