



Dartmoor
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST



Friday 8th February – Open discussions

Present : Adam Hill (Head of School)

Phil Whittley (Executive Head, Dartmoor Federation)

Parents: Peter Steer, Lynne Hickmott, Shouna Sibcy, Jim Sibcy, Aimi Satterly, Sarah King, Katie Sandford, Claire Budd, Emma O'Brien, Andrea Dunn, Sulina Tallack, Jackie Andrew, Tracey Davies.

Discussion:

AH introduced the meeting and welcomed any discussion points.

Discussion point: AH's secondment to cover Head of School maternity leave at Bridestowe Primary School.

SK – How is it going to affect the school and children?

AH – AH's time will be split between Exbourne and Bridestowe for, in theory, 2.5 days a week. In reality this will be 3 days one week, 2 the next for example. There will be days when there are meetings, appointments or issues which require AH at a particular school. Days will not be fixed. AH will be at school for all important dates, sports day, harvest etc.

SK – Who is going to deal with issues when AH is not in school?

AH – The experience teaching staff will be able to assist with day to day issues and AH has confidence in them. AH will be available via phone or email for parents and staff. If there is a serious issue AH will return to school – Bridestowe being approximately 20 minutes' drive away. PW and Steve Williams (SENDCO) will also be available to be at school more on days that AH is off site.

LH – How long is this arrangement for?

PW – As with any maternity cover it is hard to determine a single date, however it is due to start between (February) half term and Easter and last for approximately 2 terms. It could be anytime up to 12 months. This post gives the opportunity to focus purely on Head of School duties as opposed to balancing teaching and Head of School. AH will be available to deal with any issues and it will help the stability of both schools.

AS – (AH's replacement) will have to be someone who is not working as they don't have time to give notice?

PW – The post could start after Easter, in which case they would have time to give notice. We will not appoint if we do not find a suitably strong teacher to fill the teaching commitment. The

secondment has been offered to AH with the caveat that we find a suitable teacher, we do not want to create weaknesses in both schools.

Will the new teacher be experienced, not an NQT?

PW – No, we need an experienced teacher who can hit the ground running.

TD – Will Mrs Williams stay?

AH – Yes, she will continue to do her contracted Fridays. She has offered to fill in during any interim period and offered to take on more teaching within the classroom, so there are options.

SS – Will the appointed person only be temporary?

PW – It will only be temporary, this is not a school restructuring. AH will be available to do more leadership and Head of School work. Although there is no teaching commitment AH may step in to do some cover teaching or working with particular groups.

EO'B – It would be nice for there to be more interaction with other schools so that children know more children when they go to college.

AH – That is absolutely the aim and this secondment will only make that easier.

JS – After two terms will everything revert back to how it is?

AH – Yes, with improvement as there has been lots of opportunities to improve the school.

Discussion point: From Marie Webber (Parent) via email: Is there a way the school can show more regular updates of progress?

AH – We have fortnightly book looks, you are always welcome to look at your children's books and there is termly reporting to parents. We will look into producing a more regular, small progress report.

AS – Parents should be more informed if children are not progressing well.

PW – Absolutely, nothing should be a surprise at Parent's evening.

JS – Do staff have the resources to produce progress reports on top of their normal classroom jobs?

AH – With the secondment, I will have more time to support in that.

Discussion point: Parent's would like more feedback around homework.

AS – The systems of reporting back about homework need to be standardised across the school, in some classes children are well recognised for completing homework whilst in others they are not.

AH – Apologies that that has been your experience. We will work on standardisation of reporting.

Discussion point: Communication to parents

SK – Communication needs to be improved, the school website is hard to use on mobile devices

CB – Reporting back to parent’s if they are required to drive to extracurricular activities needs to be improved.

EO’B – Details on letters need to be more precise.

AH – Our current communication systems are: letters home, the Newsletter, Facebook pages, the website and the text messaging system. We will review our procedures to make sure that feedback is quicker, letters are sent out in a timelier manner and that precise details are given. Are there any other methods you would like?

TD – The text messaging system is good.

AH – It is expensive, so only used for last minute events, e.g. snow closures.

EO’B – It was great that the decision to close the school in the snow was taken early.

SS – Can learning objectives be shared with parents at the start of term, help the parent’s to support at home?

AH – The curriculum maps are shared on the website and social media. Meetings to discuss what we be teaching could be explored.

AS – Could videos of teaching a lesson be uploaded?

PW – It is something we can explore. PW has a grammar guide to share with parents.

Discussion point: Rucksacks

AH – We are still waiting for samples to test the quality, we have been requesting them for 6 weeks.

AS – Does it have to be a uniform bag?

AH – It is to be part of the uniform to avoid it becoming a status symbol amongst the children.

Discussion points: Any other

ST – Can we do a ‘word of the week’?

AH – We will review it, share ideas with Boasley Cross School

KS – Do children have to go out in very wet weather? Some come home with wet clothes.

AH – Outside playtimes are risk assessed; the safety of the children is the top priority. If it is perceived dangerous the children will have indoor play. However all children should have appropriate coats and shoes, children who do not have opportunity to play outside during the day become sleepy/drowsy and do not learn as well.

ST – Does the school want spare coats/boots?

AH – We have several spare coats, but wellington boots – yes please, these are useful for going to the field.

CB – Could the book look be at other times for working parents?

AH – We will review this; parents can view their children’s books at any time.

AH – Many thanks to you all for coming.

Meeting closed at 5.05

Action points agreed:

- School to review progress reporting to parents
- School to review and standardise feedback around homework
- School to review communication with parents ensuring it becomes more precise, timely and consistent
- School to chase samples of rucksacks from supplier
- School to research ‘Word of the week’
- Parents to donate any spare wellington boots for trips to the field