

Waddington All Saints

L.E.A.D. Academisation consultation meeting for Parents

3rd October 2017 at 5pm

13 parents attended the meeting.

Governors Present: Julia Vause (Chair), Paul Yates, Chaz Gimenez-Codd, Andy Canavan, Andrea Smith, Matt Gilbert, Graham Cavill, Laura Rushton,

Paul Martin (Headteacher)

Neil Spencelayh (L.E.A.D.)

1. Mrs Vause introduced and welcomed Neil from L.E.A.D. and gave a brief introduction about the intent of tonight's meeting. The meeting is part of the consultation on the governor's decision to move towards academisation with L.E.A.D.. This process is to provide opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions and contribute opinions about the decision before it should be signed off and become legally binding. Nothing has been signed yet.

2. Mr Martin outlined the timelines for the conversion process with the likely start date of 1st January 2018.

September 2017

- Formal Consultation Period
- Begin works on staffing contracts
- Negotiate and agree land transfer in readiness for conversion

October 2017

- To review list of contracts and assets for inclusion in the Commercial Transfer Agreement
- Review Consultation and report

November 2017

- To prepare and initiate school financial year-end close down and procedures

December 2017

- Send letter to suppliers to confirm new change of academy name and school status
- Financial transfers

January 2018

- Open as an Academy with LEAD

3. Mrs Vause presented the reasons why the Governors felt that joining L.E.A.D. was the right decision for the school and the children that come here.

- Uncertain political future
- Shrinking budget for schools

- Control of own budget
- Virtually no LCC support for maintained schools now and have to purchase from elsewhere
- L.E.A.D. would give us a proven level of support and access to financial expertise and staff and leadership development programmes for building our future.
- We feed to 7 schools and would not wish to put preference in one by joining their own MAT. L.E.A.D are independent of our High Schools.
- (Please see also the fuller explanation in the FAQs)

Questions From The Meeting:

Q. Will we be better off as a school?

Not necessarily in purely financial terms, but we are unlikely to be worse off. The financial benefits are a better quality of service, support, economies of scale, infrastructure and greater financial stability for the future as a result of not being a stand-alone school.

Q. Can you explain the difference between local authority and academy funding?

LCC top slice and then send the funding out to schools. The amount of money schools is receiving is reducing and the services offered by LCC have also reduced to a very low level.

In a Multi Academy Trust- the government send the money to L.E.A.D., L.E.A.D. retain a small percentage for services (around 5%), the trust has smaller management of 21 schools compared to LCC. The remainder of the money allocated to an individual school then goes into schools. L.E.A.D.s sole purpose is the education of children.

Q. Is the cost of services the same as the local authority?

There is no quality in the service provided by LCC and their processes are not clear and targeted at supporting schools such as this.

The MAT (multi academy trust) is about an organisation working together for success, so more support is provided. L.E.A.D. check financial details and balances to ensure that school manage budgets well.

Q. Will All Saints be asked to give up resources/ teaching staff?

No. If another school requires support this will be brokered through the Headteacher, it is the Headteacher's decision. This will not destabilise our decision but strengthen it as school to school support is already happened in school- it is part of what makes us outstanding.

Q. Will financial decisions still be made in house?

Yes, L.E.A.D. will check our accounts more frequently and provide quality assurance on the school's financial decisions.

Q. What if L.E.A.D. make a financial mistake?

This is unlikely to happen as accounts are tracked monthly, there is a clear budget and 3 year plan in place- this allows errors to present themselves quickly, so again it shouldn't happen.

Q. Is there a cap on the number of schools joining L.E.A.D.?

21 schools are currently in the MAT, however growth of the MAT has been progressive, as L.E.A.D. have wanted to ensure that they have the infrastructures in place to service all of the schools appropriately. For example, the MAT started in 2013 and 12 schools joined very quickly, in then stopped growing for 2 years so that the infrastructure could catch up. The growth strategy over the next few years is to 'grow' a Lincoln hub of approximately 10 schools.

Q. Is the decision irreversible once we are in?

It is a 7-year process to decouple from an academy trust, but we would always be an academy after conversion.

If we had a rarity, such as a sharp decline in results then the Government (Regional Schools Commissioner) could intervene this would mean there would be a possibility that we would be brokered out from L.E.A.D., again this is very unlikely to happen.

Q. As an outstanding school within the trust would be still get support?

Yes, the Trust carry out desk top checks (patterns in results etc) similarly to OFSTED, termly checks also take place and any support requirements are identified and met.

Q. Waddington village is in a period of growth, under L.E.A.D. is there capacity to expand the school?

Yes, this is much easier than if we were a local authority school, as the local authority will not build schools if other schools close by have places. L.E.A.D. receive a 7 figure capital budget annually which is used for building works within its schools.

Q. Will the badge be compulsory on the uniform?

There would just be inclusion of the L.E.A.D. logo onto school uniform, but this would be phased in over time with no immediate change in policy.

Q. What are the downsides?

There is no guarantee in an uncertain world, whichever way the school decide is the right way forward is still a judgement call and a leap of faith.

Q. Who found who?

The school found L.E.A.D. There is a cohesion between the principles of L.E.A.D. and the school's values and ethos, the principles of the trust are strong as are the school's principles. The school sees L.E.A.D. as a positive partner.

Q. Is the school tied into contracts through L.E.A.D.?

For larger projects, yes, for example if the path was damaged- L.E.A.D. would negotiate with building companies. Health and Safety of site is always the highest priority. However, if school needed a plumber for an emergency job they would organise this ourselves like we do now.

Q. How does the trust ensure value added for all pupils?

School will use L.E.A.D.s assessment tool which monitors progress and attainment year on year within school.

Q. Will the national curriculum still be followed?

Yes, it would be a brave school to deviate from the national curriculum when this is what our pupils are tested against at age 11. L.E.A.D. provide courses and support to enable its schools to deliver a high quality curriculum that is based on the needs of the children.

Q. If the Leadership of the school wanted to take the school in a different direction could L.E.A.D. step in?

The success of L.E.A.D. schools is based on the strong Leadership from within, L.E.A.D. will intervene if there are any issues identified however this is not how they generally manage schools.

Q. Are there any other schools in Lincolnshire currently?

2 outstanding schools are considering joining L.E.A.D., if successful this will be the start of the hub.

Q. Have other schools dipped since joining L.E.A.D.?

No.

Good schools have maintained at least good and school identified as requires improvement have moved to good.

All L.E.A.D. schools have termly checks; these checks ensure that schools are running well.

Q. What is the back ground of the people carrying out the checks?

They are highly qualified heads who have worked in outstanding schools and have other high levels of professional development such as trained OFSTED inspectors.

The termly checks are written to the OFSTED framework with supporting evidence. The system is tight there should be no surprises.

Q. How is the length of the consultation decided?

L.E.A.D have advised the school about the legal expectations and the process of Academising. This is a process that they have managed many times.

Q. Apart from staff and parents, who else has been consulted?

Letters/emails were sent to: the schools that our children move on to and other schools within the local area, all relevant Trade Unions, the Local Authority and major local organisations with a connection to the school.

Q. I would like to ask if, from September 2018, the academy logo on school uniform will remain optional, giving parents opportunity to purchase non-branded uniform that would be in keeping with the current school uniform policy?

The school currently already insists upon uniform, but we do not take issue if some children wear a red cardigan without a logo. It is the logo that will be changing not the expectations in relation to uniform. However, whether we academise or not, long term decisions about uniform expectations cannot be guaranteed.