

Overview of Parent Meeting Monday 5th December

The meeting followed a format of a 40 minute presentation, which is now on the website, a 20 minute break in which parents had opportunity to write up questions onto postit notes, and then the meeting reconvened to answer 'themes' of questions.

The main themes of questions were on (1) Academisation (2) more detailed questions on safeguarding practices and how we reached this judgement and (3) some adhoc questions such as staff turnover, recruitment and school attractiveness.

The whole panel answered the questions. Academisation was a concern for some parents. Some parents worried that the school is being 'directed' towards academisation as a result of the 'Special Measures' category. In reality, whilst the government had declared a looser approach to converting all schools to academies by 2020, our Governing Body was already proactively exploring different options, as academisation is inevitable at some stage in our future. A question was posed as to stakeholder consultation and whether parents will be informed along the way. The final decision rests with the Department for Education, however, the Governing Body will seek to influence this decision through its own recommendations for what is best for our children.

Further questions on safeguarding practices and how the school had slipped behind expectations on systems and practices were asked. It was explained that since the last Ofsted Inspection a Safeguarding audit was carried out and follow-on inspection visits showed the school to be compliant with all relevant standards. However, since 2014 not only has the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' policy been amended many times, but also we have had a huge amount of staff and leadership change and as a result some practices and procedures had not been as rigorous as they should have been. It was found, therefore, that a stronger 'culture' overall towards safeguarding was required.

The questions concerning school attractiveness to new families, and staff turnover as a result of this judgement were considered. The meeting was strongly represented and supported by teachers, teaching assistants, governors and leaders. This solidarity shows the teams' commitment and loyalty to the school, and in showing their belief in the progress made since the last Ofsted in all areas of teaching, learning, progress and outcomes. Whilst the judgement is emotive, we spoke about all stakeholders' influence in promoting the strongly good messages above all else, and in having influence over the reputation of our school. How we all now portray the findings and what we emphasise is up to us. The Headteacher also assured parents that staff, when joining any new school, do their research. This Ofsted report is highly unusual, in that it speaks so highly of all aspects of teaching and learning. Any prospective new joiner would be able to 'read between the lines' and understand that Safeguarding concerns are a limiting judgement and that this is the only reason for the judgement.

There will now be regular updates and a dedicated place on our website where action plans and updates will be posted. If you have any questions please refer these to the email address we have set up: ofsted@manorfields.herts.sch.uk