



Beechwood Primary School

IEB, Frays and Parent Meeting – 28th January 2019 – 1830 hours

Brief Outline of Items Raised in Meeting

Panel consisted of:

FRAYS:

Chris Cole CEO

Janette Gaffney – Chief Operating Officer

Ken Buckler – Chair of the Board of Directors

Sandra Voisey – Head of Laurel Lane Primary School under Frays Trust

IEB:

Mark A Bear

Dave Williams

Lester Dennis

Richard Skegg

Rachel Minter

Shadow Governing Body:

Kirsty Billington

Emma Caswell

John Ireland

Vicky Hamer

Ilaria Warren



Beechwood Primary School

Introduction & Slide Show Presented. Key point made were:

- Frays Academy Trust not for profit organization
- Opened in 2012
- Frays is a recognised DFE Sponsor
- 4 schools 2 sponsored
- Frays approved by DFE to sponsor Beechwood Primary School
- Track record of school improvement

Vision read out which is on website

<https://www.fraysacademytrust.org/>

Values on website showed a short video clip. There are 6 key features which are: Equality; Openness; Honesty; Accountability; Challenge; Partnership

- The main hub is in Hillingdon
- Frays will be opening a Wokingham learning hub
- 4 current schools under the trust are based in Hillingdon
- Laurel Lane Primary School head of school was present at the meeting

Frays is unique because the importance of each child, the vision for excellence, being well informed on educational development, focus on development sports and music, development of strong curriculum, experience School Improvement Team, leaders who are passionate about schools and providing that full wrap around support.

Discussion was made as to how Frays would support Beechwood

- Professional development of leaders at all levels
- Professional development of all staff
- Development of curriculum
- Development of school approach to Teaching & Learning
- Ensuring all pupils achieve potential
- Support and develop of governance
- Promoting safeguarding
- Compliance
- Moderation of standards across curriculum



Beechwood Primary School

- There is a small team at the hub looking after finance
 - Academy finances are very well known
 - There are regular returns in and extremely detailed audits
 - HR support
 - Systems and processes
 - Health & Safety
 - Development of IT strategy
 - Marketing
-
- Budget
 - School finance and business management support
 - Statutory returns
 - Support to School Business Manager
 - Procurement and maximizing economies of scale
 - Annual stock condition bids currently with track record with successful bids worth 2.3 million
 - We will also work with a company called Ginger to save utility costs
-
- Partnership with stakeholders
 - Continue to promote and enhance local links
 - Develop partnerships with parents
 - Keep strong links with WBC
 - Support development of school vision and values
-
- Important to work with you as parents
 - Scheme of delegation
 - Local governance
 - Leadership structure that includes Headteacher
 - Scheme of delegation that allowed autonomy and local decision making
 - Executive leaders who will provide support & challenge
-
- School is expected to contribute to the trust
 - Supporting each other
 - Leaders taking part in development of leadership programs
 - Work in partnership to develop rust research and development
 - Beechwood will become first school in Wokingham learning hub



Headteacher Process

- We are going through the recruitment process
 - We are now on the second round of advertising
 - Frays have been working with school IEB and Shadow Governing Body
 - Sarah Curtis was the interim Head teacher and has been off unwell
 - Zoe Voisey came in as Acting Head
 - Rachel Minter has returned as Deputy Head
 - From 1st Feb to prepare moving into academization Rachel will become Acting Head to 31st August
 - Zoe will stay on board until 24th Feb
 - Chris Cole will be Executive Head to further support the school
 - This process will work well in terms of transition
 - It will stabilize leadership team in school
 - It will bring strong stability and professional development into the school
 - Process of academisation needs to be short sharp and furious but with strategy on behalf of trust and DFE
 - IEB are happy to work with Frays and it is our intention to recruit best Headteacher we can to improve school
-
- Sandra head of school from Laurel Lane has been through similar sponsorship
 - In 2013 she became the interim head
 - 6 years on remains the Head of the school
 - In 2016 they won the Mayor for London School of the year award
 - This was under the same leadership structure that Chris Cole has offered to Beechwood
 - Laurel Lane was the school no one wanted to attend it was the bottom of all tables
 - When Sandra took over there was took over, they had no sports teams
 - Last year they won field sports cup, track sports and overall cup
 - 7th best in league tables for progress in whole of Hillingdon
 - This is down to the sheer hard work of the school
 - The Head was provided support from other 2 heads in the trust
 - Great advice and support with development
 - Teachers came and worked to progress teaching and learning side to ensure children obtained the best support and teachers were growing
 - When we started, we had no stable staff but with provision and support teachers wanted to stay and be part of Frays
 - Current deputy was an NQT when she started
 - Coming in as a non faith with the other 2 schools were faith schools was a concern, but nothing has been forced, we still maintain own identify and non faith school with a huge range of cultures in the school



QUESTIONS RAISED IN MEETING WITH RESPONSES PROVIDED

- **Teacher retention - how is this across the whole of Frays trust and what will you do for Beechwood?**

We have improved teacher retention and with Janette joining we have developed strong feedback culture, so staff feel safe in providing feedback. They felt supported and wanted to work with us. We are looking at different ways to keep teachers; how we can improve planning their skills; exciting people about a career and the potential in Frays through leadership. Encouraging people to be part of a great organization and mass focus on their wellbeing, support when needed. We are very aware of challenge Beechwood has had and we will provide stability of the workforce best we can.

- **You haven't mentioned a Deputy Head in the proposed strategy – do you not need one?**

Up to 24th February there are 3 staff on the top team – Chris Cole, Rachel Minter and Zoe Voisey. Zoe will become Deputy and after February we are looking for a solution. We do have assistant heads available who deal with the management side, day to day experience and we are working with the local governing body on this.

- **How many times is the headteacher candidate interviewed?**

It's a long complicated process (Mark A' Bear introduced). We Keep going until we are satisfied 2 days of assessment during those days the candidates undertake a series of exercises some will be interview based, maybe leadership and management, one around teaching and one around community experience, series of exercises – understanding data and pupil outcomes, management meeting to understand how they interact with other leaders, school council interview, ask them to run assembly, prioritization exercise, we have a kit bag of 15-17 we can ask them to do. we will shape them to what we think the candidates needs to best serve Beechwood. This will work alongside CC and Shadow GB and IEB.

We have huge amount of experienced between us all.

Closing date is next Monday for candidates, we will hold assessment 11/12 Feb

Have you had any applicants yet?

No, it doesn't work like that – it works at the last minute

Has anyone applied?

NO rarely does that happen until last minute and nothing to be concerned over.



- **Children are finding it challenging not having use of the swimming pool at Beechwood, what is happening with this?**

We have discussed; however, it needs £50k plus spend to be fixed. Beechwood does not have that money. As part of academy we will not take that risk so we will look at different options available. We are currently negotiating with the Local Authority, but we are not intending to bring the pool back into use.

- **How are you going to work with parents, as we do a lot for the school but often met with barriers if we make suggestions?**

Its good to hear that feedback so we can work with leaders here. There is a lot going on at moment and we will work on how we enable the breaking down of some of those barriers. There are certain things Frays can provide in order to enable leaders to do more community work.

In Laurel Lane we have done a lot of work with parents – parent council for example, lots of parent volunteers, get parents as involved as much as we can – so we run a lot of courses as well

In terms of regular contact, Chris Cole has spoken to 1 or 2 parents and will be encouraging leaders to be in regular contact.

- **As a trust you can name your term times and holidays can differ, we have children in 2 different schools, how is this going to affect us?**

Don't worry – term dates need to stay local and its whatever works in local picture here. We are aware Wokingham is outside of Hillingdon. We have tried to make changes in other schools before but realize this doesn't work, so the term dates will coincide with the other schools in Wokingham Borough.

- **What will Frays do for my children?**

1. We work indirectly with children, directly with staff.
2. Quality of professional development to enable teaching and learning to be much stronger
3. Build Strong leaders
4. Have a very strong curriculum
5. We want children to be excited to come to school



Beechwood Primary School

How long will it take you to introduce this curriculum?

Immediately! We have been through lots of children books and looked at where the gaps currently are. The training and implementation takes time. We could bring in a curriculum and just drop it in but that is not going to work. There are aspects within the school we want to improve and change.

When do Ofsted re-visit?

30 months' time

How will we be sure of improvement? What will Frays to ensure a better standard?

Once you become an Academy you lose the Ofsted rating. Frays will support and challenge and this is key to improvement to make significant progress. If and where significant improvement isn't made, we break it down to see what has to be amended and done again

1. Its checks and balances
2. Role with senior leaders
3. Governance is majorly important
4. Throughout the year KPI's will be set and we will be expected to achieve them
5. Chris Cole will ensure the support is there to achieve that

What if Ofsted came back and are still not happy?

Frays would be held accountable

If we didn't want to make a difference, we wouldn't be here.

Will Beechwood have its name changed and uniform changed?

There is no intention to change the name. We will look at the vision and values of the school. There may be a whole variety of changes, but we won't do it to disadvantage parents.

At Laurel Lane they simply changed to white shirts to smarten up the children, but it was a small change but with a huge impact.



Beechwood Primary School

When will children see the changes?

Very soon, we can start to progress now.

How will their day change?

More pace, more tired when they come home, more challenged, more questions, more excited,

So, if I have a child going into the school next year do, I have to buy a new uniform?

No look we have to involve parents and local governors to discuss and decide what we are going to do. The uniform in all 4 schools is different, we smartened up the uniform not major changes, we had to ensure we didn't disadvantage parents as discussed before. There is rebranding around the vision but its an open book to be discussed but this is where parents are to be involved.

Are you going to work with children on this vision change? My child is passionate about change but is now Year 5, will they get any opportunity?

It's not Chris Cole who will make the changes. It will be the local governors and they will work with the parents and children. We start with the children and their input and then with the staff. Chris Cole will not come along and say we all need to be in purple but may well implement a new strap line. There are lots of ways to operate. What is not negotiable is how children learn and progress

I understand the longer term planning but what about my year 5 child?

We are trying to improve Teaching & Learning across the board. As we are already working alongside the school, we are doing lots of assessment and finding the gaps in the knowledge, so this is what we are improving. Once the gaps are known, we can make the improvements.

But you don't relay this to the parents, asking a 10 year old you don't get much feedback?

The more we test the less the children learn so we are working alongside the Leadership team to improve this and we will ensure we feedback more to the parents.

Music is good for children's mental health however we have lost a lot of the music and choir – can we get that back as its important for my SEN children?

Again, good feedback and will give this to the Leadership team – we will ensure a good balance across and all children to flourish. We aim to get a good broad curriculum available to all.



Beechwood Primary School

Will children be told about changes coming on board with the Academy?

Yes, we will ensure the children are told what is happening. We recognise some are a little despondent not understanding what is happening as they have had 3 different Head Teachers recently.

When you talk about welcoming parent feedback – what process shall we follow to give that?

What do you do at the moment? – Usually we would email.

OK so we need to look at that and find the best way to feed input into the school.

Sports day last year. Children should be excited to cheer on but the whole day was hideous – the process was awful and not enjoyable – this feedback needs to be provided to the school. How could we have done that?

Dave Williams from the IEB spoke and advised: In the Communication Plan the IEB wants to bring two plans in – one is the suggestion box at the front of office the other is Parent representative forum type – parent from each year group to have regular meetings with Senior Leadership Teams to have a two way form of communication.

Email isn't great, sometimes messages can be misinterpreted (both ways). We do understand that if you send an email, we can track it and action, but we are looking at new ways. There is already a suggestion box in reception so we will relay in next news letter to parents.

As a parent I am annoyed that so many after school activities are no longer available, what are you doing about this?

When Chris Cole first became involved there was a huge amount of focus of teachers doing extracurricular out of school activities, it was having a massive impact on their quality of teaching. Mark A Bear from the IEB advised that there were teachers still in school 10pm preparing because they had been doing after school clubs, so we switched the emphasis to bring outside people to run clubs for our children.

Richard Skegg from the IEB explained that he did 7 exit interviews – 6 of them were due to extra additional activities they had to do. Richard is also a parent and yes appreciates that the clubs are sorely missed but given a choice of teacher's preparing for a lesson or doing gymnastics – there really was not comparable.

We have talked about teacher retention, but we need to create an environmental they want to be part of and then we can introduce clubs but forcing them to do clubs and after school activities will not work.

As we get a new regime, they will come back but as we stand the clubs were not practical and stand by the decision to cancel them.



Beechwood Primary School

Well, as a parent I would like to see a few of them back immediately?

Sorry we are not in that place right now.

Is there a plan to recruit a new PE teacher?

As we move towards April we will work on the curricula and ensure we have the right staff in place for the new term.

With a central hub under Frays will we lose people here?

No not at all. The team will remain. We wrap around the team here to support them.

Will the emphasis change the daily routine?

It may do yes, it will be about how well children are learning, if they're not learning well in a sector, we may change that to ensure they do.

There is more research about children learning better in the afternoon and as a Trust we are addressing and monitoring the research. Ofsted have been looking at morning and afternoon standards so we are looking at things to suit accordingly.

So, its flexible?

Well yes, we want the children to learn best they can – so are children adaptable – yes of course and we can analyse things and work it around to get the best for our children and school. Part of the ethos of Frays are that children are aware of changes which will be made, there is planning, and children must be told this, they want to know what their doing. There is no set timeline but yes you will see changes.

When Ofsted come back – what level are you expecting?

At least a “good” – it’s all about the why – we want children to learn.

Many members of the IEB will be staying on the Governing Board. Most have been or are chairs of other boards. We have had good experiences and bad which enables the board to be able to provide and bring to the table suggestions which will make Beechwood a better school.

Who are the shadow governing body?

We will put all names in next newsletter to say who new shadow governing body members are.



CONCLUDING MESSAGE: We see a great future for this school we will bring results. I can see enthusiastic parents who will help to bring improvements to help bring improvement and achieve high quality education for their children.