



Fairview Community Primary School



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Dear Fairview Parents and Carers

We were waiting to write to you with a final decision regarding our proposal to academise with The Westbrook Trust, but we find it appropriate to update you now with recent developments, not only as a team of Governors but as Fairview parents, staff and members of the local community.

We would also like to take a few moments to reflect on the journey we have all been on together over the last 18 months to ensure that in amongst all the procedural technicalities, no-one loses sight of the intention with which we began our work. The importance of the goal that has motivated our desire and determination to keep stepping forward through each challenge we faced, and that was to focus at all times on ensuring we did the very best not only for Fairview pupils and their families but for Fairview staff.

Our responsibility back in 2019 was to identify the best long-term direction for Fairview Community Primary School and all the pupils currently in its care, as well as for those pupils yet to come. A school whose reputation and popularity has always been rooted in its ability to provide not only an environment that supports a good academic experience for its children, but also an environment that feels like 'home' to its pupils, parents and staff alike; a positive and nurturing community created on clear values and ethics that underpin its very existence; and was also very much at the heart of its local community.

Our school is precious, and its future deserves protection; not just in the short-term, but most importantly in the long term, and therefore the careful and thorough consideration of all potential options for Academisation was essential.

In a perfect world we know that communication would be seamless, complex procedures would be simplified and action would be able to be progressed at a pace that ensures that all necessary changes create minimal disruption, confusion, and concern. But we don't live in a perfect world...in fact for the last 12 months, in addition to working through this process, we have all been trying our best to juggle our lives, health and home-schooling to the best of our ability; no-one untouched by the impact of Covid-19 in some way or another.

But despite the unique challenges of trying to move through this process during periods of national lockdown, please be reassured that as Governors, our intention has never wavered. We have remained committed and clear in our minds to identify the best long-term direction for Fairview.

In summary: -

- We started the process by asking for recommendations from the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and they provided a list of local trusts with a strong record of primary school improvement and capacity for the Trust to grow. Compass were not on the list however Governors included Compass within the process of shortlisting because of their interim support.
- We began to canvas staff and parent opinion discretely by asking them what was important about Fairview and what they would be looking for in an Academy, well rounded pupils with community involvement were most frequently mentioned with individuality and location also a consideration.



- The process continued with hours of due diligence which included a range of activities: for example, presentations, school visits including meeting staff, pupil performance data, reviewing parental surveys, reviewing Ofsted reports etc.
- Over several months and many meetings considering the information received we reminded ourselves of our responsibilities and strategic aim to preserve the community ethos and long term vision of Fairview, for its pupils, and staff. Governors voted overwhelmingly to proceed with The Westbrook Trust as their vision aligned most closely with the ethos and values of Fairview. It was discussed in depth that although Compass would likely offer greater short-term stability, it was felt that The Westbrook Trust was the best long-term option and a careful transition plan would avoid detrimental impact to all those the school serves today.
- In January 2020 Governors commissioned an independent report to review the process following a concern raised. The outcome of this report concluded independent decision making had taken place and this report was shared with both the RSC and Medway Council.

Throughout this process we have been challenging of ourselves and each other not to take the fastest route or make the 'easy' decision, but to do our absolute best to find the right solution for the long-term happiness and prosperity of the school. We worked to understand from the early stages how any option would support and build on all the good things at Fairview – we would not contemplate an option that would put at risk the great things about the school.

We all know that change can be unsettling and particularly so when that change has the potential to affect the future academic experience of our children and impact the working environment. We are very mindful that strong personal relationships have been forged with the current leadership team, but it is our strategic duty to see beyond the day to day and consider all aspects of a trust to ensure that the long-term future of Fairview remains true to its core ethos and vision.

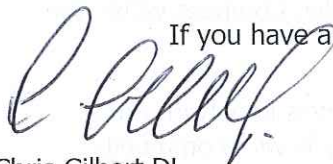
In December we proceeded with an application for an Academy Order, this was declined as our Local Authority, Medway and the RSC raised concerns after receiving a number of correspondences. We have now had sight of these correspondences and are working with Medway to address the concerns raised. Part of our action plan is to review the consultation feedback from all stakeholders again to ensure that they have been considered thoroughly in the decision making process and to check that the objective we started with is still being met.

Emotions always run high where there is true passion for a cause; but what is essential for a clear and successful path to a thriving future for Fairview, is that mutual respect, and the ability to work together remain.

During this period of reflection, we will take this opportunity to respond to the most frequently raised themes highlighted, including Academic Standards, transparency and the question of why The Westbrook Trust with more regular communication. Additionally, in response to the various comments around change, Fairview's Governing Body had already extended its temporary contract with Compass until the end of this academic year to provide stability throughout these uncertain times.

We have further meetings scheduled with Medway and the RSC to continue discussing the future of Fairview, nothing has been decided at this point, once we have confirmation of the next steps, we will share this information with you.

If you have any comments please email governors@fairviewprimary.medway.sch.uk



Chris Gilbert DL
Chair of Governors

