

Questions and Answers from the meeting with ASSET Education

Monday 26th February

How has it been for Holton St Peter Community Primary school joining ASSET Education?

There has been change, but it has been overwhelmingly positive. We have had opportunities to meet with other schools in the cluster for training & planning, sharing good practice. The children also get to mix with the other schools, some of which are much larger than us, which widens their experience. Some of our children get to represent the school in the Pupil Parliament. There has also been cost savings by sharing activities and training etc. By sharing the cost of activities with another school we have been able to provide experiences we wouldn't have been able to afford on our own.

Does this extend to Governors training?

Yes. Governors will have the opportunity to meet up at the Area Governors Meeting and any training needs can be discussed there.

What is the maximum number of schools that ASSET would consider being part of the Trust?

The maximum benefit of economies of scale are not yet being achieved, but we do not wish to be too big. 15-20 schools would probably be the most efficient number. We always have a cautious approach to expansion.

The Headteacher from **St Helens School in Ipswich** said that she had found being part of ASSET gave them structure. ASSET look at a school's strengths and then tweak where necessary to make improvement. The school will still be able to put their slant on things. ASSET is supportive and collaborative.

The Headteacher from **The Oaks Primary School** said there had been a dramatic improvement in the school since 2015 and that this was down to the structures and support provided by being part of ASSET Education.

Which group of schools do you see us fitting in with?

The Ipswich and Waveney schools are in separate hubs. We are closer geographically to Ipswich. This still needs looking at. What would we like to see happen? The finance, assessment and back office systems will be updated first.

What plans do we (Stutton School) have to grow pupil numbers?

We have a unique ethos and we offer something different. We have always attracted children from out of catchment. With a good Ofsted report and the reversal of the threat of closure, we are confident we will attract new children. We can now re-commence our marketing campaign and are planning an open morning for Early Years children.

Questions and Answers from the meeting with ASSET Education

Monday 5th March

Is ASSET at capacity with 9 schools?

No, we have a growth strategy. 15-20 schools would be the optimum number for maximum efficiency and sustainability.

Does responsibility for the selection of new teachers remain with Stutton?

Yes. A staffing structure will be agreed and then the Headteacher will appoint according to that. It is good practice to involve the Governors in this process.

Would Stutton join the South Suffolk hub of ASSET schools?

Due to our location – yes.

What are the similarities and differences with the Governing Body now ?

As we are a church school 25% of the Local Governing Body will be appointed by the Diocese. The Governing Body itself is appointed by the Trustees. It is envisaged that the existing Governors would be re-appointed at the first meeting after joining ASSET. Committees within the Governing Body such as Health & Safety committee and Finance committee will no longer be required to meet separately. There will still be a termly clerked meeting and more of a workshop style meeting half way through the term. Governors will still be sourced from the local community and then appointed by the Trust. There is a flow of information between the Trust Board and the Local Governing Body.

Can we please have an overview of how the finances will work?

Both the school and ASSET have carried out Due Diligence checks to ensure that Stutton School joining the multi-academy trust will not detrimentally affect finances. The school is financially viable for 3-5 years due to some generous donations. The DfE would not have agreed otherwise.

The school will still be setting and reviewing its own budget and reserves are still identified for each individual school. ASSET take 5% of the schools delegated budget to pay for all the central services. Increased buying power enables cost savings to be made at contract renewal time.

Will the staff be employed by the Trust?

Yes

What about the premises?

The footprint of the building is owned by the Diocese, the remaining land, including Stutton Young Explorers, is owned by SCC. SCC will grant a lease to ASSET for 125 years and the Diocese will grant a 125 year licence agreement. The legal team handling this have been

appointed. ASSET will be responsible for the premises. If the need arose for large scale work to be done there are DfE funds which can be applied for.

What has The Oaks lost or gained by joining ASSET?

It has been transformational. We were doing ok but since joining ASSET we have come into contact with people/advisers that we would never have otherwise. This has moved the school forward. We are able to meet the other Headteachers fortnightly and opportunities such as these were not available from the Local Authority. We have really benefitted from the shared approach. Advisers who have come back into school have seen the change.

We have lost nothing.

The Diocese have their own MAT. Are they comfortable with ASSET taking us?

They are comfortable with this because they were unable to take Stutton themselves. It secures the future of the school.

Comments were made during the meeting that the community are delighted for Stutton and how responsive the school is to the curriculum. This was recently evidenced during the snow when the children walked to the shop, bought ingredients and made soup for their lunch.

Clare Flintoff (CEO ASSET Education) asked that during the consultation, and at any point in the future, we (the community) let her know what we think and what we want for the school in the future.