



### **Summary of consultation meeting with staff**

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014, Longwood Primary School

Present: 29 members of staff, Maxine Evans (Chief Executive, NETAT), Takako Yeung (Director of Operations and Development, NETAT), Ruth Bird (Chair, Interim Executive Board), Jan Tringham (Interim Executive Head), Stephen Rodwell (Academies Officer, NETAT), Tula Smith (Senior HR Consultant, Essex County Council), Fran Johnson (IEB), Tosca Boothman (IEB)

What follows is a summary of points raised at the initial meeting between NET Academies Trust (NETAT) and the staff at Longwood Primary School.

- Introductions by NETAT representatives included an outline of the purposes of the meeting. Attendees were also advised that any matters of a personal nature associated with the employment of an individual would be reserved for proper negotiation with HR and Trade Union representatives at a later date.
- Staff raised concerns as to whether, following conversion, the school might place a greater focus on reaching school academic targets to the detriment of the individual needs of the children.
  - On the one hand, high targets and expectations are vital to raising aspirations and encouraging children to achieve the very best they can. On the other, all pupils possess different skillsets and talents and these must also be nurtured. The ultimate "goal" is that pupils leave Longwood Primary School as well-rounded individuals, ready for secondary education and a successful future career; catering to specific pupil needs is essential if this goal is to be realised.
- Staff asked whether NETAT planned to move individuals between the three Harlow schools following conversion.
  - Staff initiated moves may be possible following negotiation between staff members and the new Executive Headteacher (to be formally appointed on 1st January 2015, and introduced before then). Disruption to teaching and learning caused by the unnecessary redeployment of staff will be avoided; staff at Longwood know their pupils, school and community well, and this is a clear strength to the school.

- Clarification was sought regarding the appointment of the new Executive Headteacher and the likely changes in senior leadership at Longwood.
  - Typically, when an Executive Head is in place, one senior staff member, often called a “Head of Learning”, will be responsible for the day to day running of his or her school and will be the ‘face in the playground’ for parents. The Executive Headteacher will be responsible for the outcomes of pupils across all three schools. He or she will also be responsible for strategic thinking across the three schools.
  
- Staff raised concerns as to whether NETAT, the Executive Head and the new governing body would have the time and resources necessary to convert three schools to academies at the same time.
  - NETAT assured staff that great caution was exercised when agreeing to project manage these conversions. The Trust has all the support it needs in place to ensure a smooth conversion process for all three schools. The appointment of Maxine Evans, our new Chief Executive, was one of many actions designed to increase the capacity of NETAT to deliver this effective support.
  - When the three Harlow schools convert in January 2015, they will also make use of, through collaboration, certain time-saving efficiencies (e.g. group staff training).
  
- Staff asked how the Executive Headteacher would spend his or her time in relation to the three Harlow schools. Would they spend more time in some schools than others for instance?
  - The new Executive Head will spend significant amounts of time in all three schools, with the precise timings to be delineated over time once he or she has better acquainted themselves with the desires and needs of each school. This sharing of time across the schools will undoubtedly change in some weeks if unforeseen events occur.
  - Once appointed, the Executive Head will be accountable for the performance of all pupils across the three Harlow schools.
  
- A final question was raised regarding any potential changes to employee contracts and terms and conditions following conversion.
  - On the conversion date (1st January 2015), all current staff contracts and terms and conditions will be transferred over to the new employer, NET Academies Trust, via the TUPE process.
  - Staff would legally have to be notified at this stage if any changes to contracts were planned. There are no current planned changes to staff terms and conditions.
  - A further meeting will be held in October to begin the formal TUPE consultation.

- Staff were thanked for their attendance and contributions and invited to send any further comments or questions to Takako Yeung:  
[takako@nationaleducationtrust.net](mailto:takako@nationaleducationtrust.net)

Our websites:

**National Education Trust (NET)** - [www.nationaleducationtrust.net](http://www.nationaleducationtrust.net)

**NET Academies Trust (NETAT)** - [www.netacademies.net](http://www.netacademies.net)