

## Parents' Voice meeting – Term 5 – 13 April 2018

The focus of the meeting was a discussion about whether Hannah More should join the Cathedral Schools Trust. This meeting was part of the consultation process.

The meeting welcomed Neil Blundell, Executive Principal of the Cathedral Schools Trust, with key members of his team. Also in attendance were Hannah More school governors Amy Creech and Hannah Pepper; Sue Ramsay (Headteacher), Khalif Noor (Somali Achievement Manager) and Ruth Cochrane (Community Development Coordinator).

49 parents signed in, representing all year groups.

**Ms Ramsay introduced the meeting.** She explained that currently the local authority - Bristol City Council – control the school. Funding comes from the government to the local authority and then to the school. Ms Ramsay explained that over the last decade the options for schools to leave local authority control and join groups of schools (Multi-Academy Trusts) has widened. These trusts are not under the control of the local authority – they receive their funding direct from the government.

Ms Ramsay explained that over the past few years the government has reduced the level of funding to the local authority. The local authority is much smaller than it was and there has been lots of staff changeover. The local authority now offers much less in term of support for our school.

Hannah More has decided that Cathedral Schools Trust would offer the best support network in the future. The values of Cathedral Schools Trust – what it thinks is important – are very similar to the values at Hannah More. The schools in the Trust are strong schools, led by people with whom we believe we can build a very good working relationship. It is also a growing Trust; this means that Hannah More can have a say in how the Trust develops.

A consultation document has been sent to all parents. Ms Ramsay acknowledged that this is a long and complex document. She explained that today's meeting was an opportunity to clarify things, ask questions and find out more.

**Mr Blundell introduced himself and members of his team.** He explained he arrived in Bristol 10 years ago as the Head of Cathedral School. Five years ago Cathedral Primary School opened. His team decided to form their own multi-academy trust, in order to protect the individuality of the school and keep those things that made the school special. Mr Blundell explained that schools need to be connected and work together. The Cathedral Schools Trust now includes the two Cathedral schools as well as Victoria Park Primary, Headley Park and a new secondary School – Trinity Academy – which opens in 2019.

Mr Blundell explained that all schools in the Cathedral Schools Trust would keep their individuality and maintain their special strengths. The Trust also wants to be a fairly small group of schools within Bristol. Mr Blundell explained that schools in the Trust are all very different; they serve different communities and have different skills and strengths within them. However, the Trust offers a good opportunity to share this expertise. Mr Blundell also talked about the importance of a deep educational experience for children. Learning is not only about maths, English and science; it is also about sport and the Arts.

Mr Blundell concluded by explaining that this is still very much a consultation period. He invited questions from parents, which are summarised below. Answers came from Mr Blundell, Ms Ramsay and school governors. There are also some key answers in the document that has been sent home to parents.

Would the school keep the parent classes and holiday trips if we joined the Trust? Would staff remain in post?	Yes! All decisions are still made at school level; the school would keep the same team, the same teachers and the same governing body. There would be extra support available from the Trust.
Will Hannah More be a feeder school for Bristol Cathedral Choir School?	No. This would be neither possible or fair. However, there would be opportunities for children at Hannah More to gain from shared experiences with other schools in the Trust.
Will Hannah More become a faith school?	No. The Trust welcomes the diversity of the different schools involved. The Trust wants to have faith and non-faith schools in it. Only Bristol Cathedral Choir school is a faith school, however, it welcomes children from all faiths and none.
How will the school be held accountable?	Hannah More will retain its governing body and the parent representatives within that group. The school will be accountable to the governors and then to the Trust. The Trust replaces the role of the local authority.
Will staff recruitment remain the responsibility of the school?	Yes. Staff will still be recruited by the school. The Cathedral School Trust can support with this. If Hannah More were to recruit a new Headteacher in the future then the Trust would support with this process.
How can being part of the Trust help us to improve behaviour?	The Trust will support school with a wide range of things. Ensuring behaviour is good is a key area. The Trust will be able to share expertise. They will have a clear understanding of the school. The Trust wants children to be happy; if they are happy then they are engaged with their learning and they make progress.
Can the Trust exclude children who are badly behaved?	The school will continue to manage behaviour, with support from the Trust.
What will change?	Parents may not see changes! There will be no new branding or new uniform. What will change is that the school will be less isolated and better supported.
Sometimes good teachers leave – can joining the Trust help reduce this?	Teachers leave because they want to advance their careers. Being part of the Trust may mean more opportunities within the group for teachers moving on, meaning that expertise can stay within the Trust's group of schools.
Will the school meal provider change?	No. The other Trust schools already use the same catering company as Hannah More. It is possible this may change in the future, however the schools would be committed to ensuring that a good menu was provided, including halal options.
When might this happen?	If Hannah More decides to join the Cathedral Schools Trust this is likely to happen in the autumn of 2018.

Ms Ramsay thanked Cathedral Schools Trust staff, governors and parents for such a constructive and positive meeting.