



# Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College

Stanstead Abbots, Nr. Ware, Station Road, Hertfordshire, SG12 8EH

**Headteacher:** Mrs Jan Liversage  
B. Ed., Ad. Dip., B. Phil. (MSI)

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017

## Consultation Process as part of Academisation - Parents

Led by Senior Leadership Team: Jan Liversage (Headteacher), Neil Ward (staff Governor representative and Deputy Headteacher).

Note Taker: Janet Warrington (clerk to the Governors)

### Parent Present:

Daniella Vandeppeer

## MINUTES

JSL welcomed Daniella and explained that this meeting was part of the consultation process that the governors had called as part of the process to enable them to decide whether the time was right for Amwell View School and Specialist Sports Club to become an Academy.

JSL explained that the Government was looking for all schools to be 'fast-tracked' into Academies by 2020, through a white paper, but it had been retracted. However it is still expected that all schools become an Academy by 2022.

JSL explained that Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College had looked at becoming an Academy three years ago, however, decided against this because when reflecting on the question "what is the impact on the children?" at that time JSL didn't feel there would be any positive beneficial impact.

Daniella said that she was going to ask this question about the benefits for the children..

JSL continued that she would hope that there would have been a positive difference. If we become an academy there will be no pupils or staff that would be compromised. Pension rights would remain. It is important for the staff to be happy, if we have happy staff we will have a happy school. At the staff consultations it appeared staff were 'comfortable' with the decision to become an academy. This school will try to improve things and having academy status will not restrict us. Pupils will still be placed by the local authority.

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JSL said that no child living in Hertfordshire will be compromised. She continued, it is important we maintain a school for the community so that when transitioning they continue to keep in contact with familiar people. Health and Education Psychology Services will remain the same.

DV said that at a recent meeting with CHIPs, DSPL3 area, there was a sense of panic because of the high ratio of children in the area diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and nowhere to go.

NW said that there are several factors contributing to this:

- Population growth
- Medical intervention
- Rate of growth
- Aging schools
- Planning

The DfE are encouraging schools to become a member of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) where schools can support each other. Amwell View School wants to be able to make decisions, and quickly, rather than go to the 'Trust' for approval.

If we leave it to the time where we are told to join a MAT who would we attach to? We may not want to attach to them? By grouping schools together there is a compromise. The 'Trust' will act as a mini local authority.

Q. Changing into an Academy – will there be a lot of change e.g. new uniform, branding etc?  
A. No – not even the name. We have our own identity already. We rebranded 9 years ago – we don't need to do it again.

A. You shouldn't be able to tell. The Governors will remain the same, but will be a 'Trust' they will continue to be our 'critical friends' – in effect no change to how the school is run now.

DV said that she will feedback to parents.

JSL said if anyone has any questions they just need to ask and we will happily attempt to answer them.

Q. Will the school as an academy be under Ofsted

A. Yes.

A. Local Authority has to still provide statutory aspects; Physio, Speech and Language etc.

The Governing Body will be a 'Trust'. One of our Governors Steve Carter is a trainer to Governors and a great asset to bounce ideas off – gives us strength. To get continuous service staff have to go to another academy not a maintained school. Pensions are all transferrable as we change from a maintained school to an academy. We don't want to lose anybody. SLT feel confident – so staff feel confident. Funding stream will continue to come from the LA. We have a buoyant budget so in a good position.

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We also understand that schools cannot become a SAT unless they are a Good or Outstanding school who manage their budgets well. So we are in a good position and at this moment in time allowed to become a SAT. However, we don't know if this will change, which makes it more important to act now and take control. Our Bursar used to work in an Independent Academy. As a school we already employ cleaners, kitchen staff and feel we are in a good position to move smoothly into an Academy.

Q. Parents are saying "if it isn't broken....."

A. That is what we don't want for someone else to break it for us.

We want things to stay the same by becoming a SAT, if we don't move now we could be forced to change and we don't want that to happen.

Parents may think that the Local Authority run maintained schools, however, in reality schools have to buy in services and we have been doing this for some years now. For example we buy in our own services from Architects, builders, electricians, internet, catering, cleaning etc.

We have our own vision and want to continue to create our future and destiny. For example when we wanted a Dance Studio we built it, currently we are thinking about having a Salon. We need to be able to have visions and make them happen ourselves.

In order to become Academy Status and be a Single Academy Trust you need to demonstrate excellent financial management – which we can.

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