

Notes on questions raised at the Parents Meeting on 4 February 2002.

These notes were taken by John Bowles at the request of Andrew Brown and I have tried to include both the question and the answer.

VA = Voluntary Aided
VC = Voluntary
Controlled.
LEA = Local Education
Authority.

Meeting opened with short presentations from Andrew Brown, David Burgess and Louise Stallwood outlining the school's position. Then Clive Sedgewick (representing the Diocese) and David Ayres (representing the LEA) provided the views of their organisations.

Question

Reply

Would the make up of the Governing Body change?

It is intended that the same Governors as at present will continue to serve.

Would the age of the children admitted change? Would there be a change of provision?

No. The Governors would need to consult interested parties and obtain permission for such a change. There is no intention to make such a change.

The present admission process requires that the general application form has to be completed, would this still need to be done and would there be any change in the numbers admitted?

No change in the numbers admitted is envisaged and the same form would need to be completed. There may be an additional form to be directed to the school.

What does Government Standards money pay for?

Learning support, Numeracy, Literacy etc.

What would be the situation if we needed say to fund a new classroom?

There is likely to be a convergence in the future of the various funding streams so that any differences between LEA and VA are likely to be less in the future.

What about repairs - for example if the boiler needed to be replaced?

This would be funded from the major projects funding available to the school. The school would have to find 10%.

Would VA status make raising funds more complicated.

No we don't think so

Would services such as payroll be administered by the diocese?

No, the school has the choice of where it purchases it's services and our advice is that the same service provider used at present (the LEA) should continue to be used.

Do the governors have any legal protection?

The Governing Body is ultimately responsible but if standard procedures are followed would have protection. Open question as to whether advisors can be included in any action. Legal matters should be addressed through the Schools Complaints Procedure.

Do the nine Foundation Governors represent the community?

The diocese appoints them and tries to create a balance.

Would the conditions for staff change?

No they would remain the same.

What educational benefits would there be?

Better. (although no evidence for this was offered as difficult to define – support for Head and school is better from Diocese so other schools report).

Question

Have you spoken to other schools who have been through the same process?

Have there been any schools making the change in the other direction from VA to VC?

What are the implications for the governing body in becoming employers?

Can the Diocese accept responsibility in the event of any problems occurring?

Would this affect those volunteering to be Governors?

What are the costs versus public purse criteria? (This following a statement from the LEA representative that there could in the future be "public purse" considerations if the school chose to make further changes - e.g. going private, selling part or all of the land for development).

Does the LEA have an "issue" with VA schools?

Would there be any change in the admissions policy?

Can you guarantee that?

In the selection of staff would RE be a factor?

Are the school numbers likely to alter as a result of a change to VA? What is the experience of other schools?

Where will the school obtain advice? What will the Diocese actually provide?

Reply

We have spoken with two people from schools who have in the one case made the change and in the other case are in the process of making the change.

It is possible to make the change and the LEA cannot refuse to accept a school who wishes to make such a change.

Greater responsibility. The relevant administrative services would still be bought in from the LEA although it would be possible to change this if it would help.

If the Governors have taken advice and acted in good faith then the LEA/Diocese are responsible. Individual governors would be no more liable than at present.

It is difficult to fill all the places now. At present we are one of the very few schools with a full quota of Governors.

These sums would only be done in the event that such a decision was taken. The LEA representative could not tell us what part or proportion of the land and buildings would be regarded as "ours" and what proportion as "theirs".

No they are treated the same.

None is intended.

The Governors do have the authority to make changes that they wish but must consult the community.

The situation would continue as at present, there would need to be Christian awareness and a balance is required. Appointees would need to be aware of the aims and ethos of a church school. The situation would continue as at present, there would need to be Christian awareness and a balance is required. Appointees would need to be aware of the aims and ethos of a church school.

There is a need to plan the intake to allow for population bulges.

The diocese will provide a single named advisor who can assist with RE, worship, management, pastoral care. The diocese can support project applications which are said to be easier as VA. The diocese will work with the LEA.