**SOUTH CUMBRIA MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST**

**ORMSGILL SCHOOL PROPOSAL TO JOIN SCMAT**

**QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING 24/3/22**

*Below are questions and responses given as part of the consultation process. Responses are from Ormsgill Headteacher Mick Cull and SCMAT CEO & Executive Headteacher Andrew Wren as part of the public meeting on March 24th 2022.*

**Q: Why join this Trust?**

**A:** Headteacher response

Academisation is something we looked into closely and that the governors have previously explored and done a bit of work with the Furness Education Trust and the schools involved there and for me the values of the SCMAT really speak to us. The opportunity to be in at the beginning and help shape the direction of the Trust is quite exciting. what I feel really strongly with SCMAT is that we will have the opportunity to keep our character as a school, some other Trusts have a cookie cutter approach that we would be required to replicate.

**A:** Governor response

We wanted to be able to get involved to be able to shape something and have an input because Ormsgill School ultimately needs to have a voice in the community. If we didn’t stand our ground for the rest of the community, the community would have something to say about it. We have really strong ties and want to stand up for everyone who lives here and to make a difference to every single child who comes through here. We just want to give each child every single opportunity that we can and I think being part of this MAT, its ethos and everything that it stands for will absolutely give the opportunity for every single child no matter where they come from to do whatever they want in life.

**Q: Has there been much comment from the community?**

**A:** Headteacher response

I think with some things on social media that we have shared some parents have a little bit of nervousness but that has been down to the misconceptions of an academy – that the school will be changing the uniform, the name, the staff. So there was some nervousness but a parent governor has been very good at correcting people on some of those and I think generally people now seem quite satisfied. There was a lot that people didn’t understand about what academisation involves. With previous conversions in the town ‘academy’ had been a dirty word and people thought terrible things would happen and the school would change but people have been reassured that will not be the case and actually day one there will be very little visible change. We’ve assured parents that it will be the same staff at the doors, same teachers teaching their children and people seem happy with that.

**Q: Is this privatisation of education?**

**A:** CEO response

Ultimately the funding comes from the same place, the difference being that the school is no longer maintained by the local authority, rather the MAT as a legal entity. This enables the MAT and school to make decisions about the bought-in services. The Local Governing Body is still expected to comprise members of the local community and this can include local councillors, should the Governors choose. The local authority retains the final responsibility for the school and if the school consistently fails to maintain the quality of education or a strong financial position, the local authority, working with the Department for Education, is duty bound to intervene.

**Q: How many schools are going to be joining SCMAT?**

**A:** CEO response

We don’t know but it will grow slowly. We started with no schools, Chetwynde school joined and two more are scheduled to join in the next academic year. In terms of next year there may be a handful, depends who comes forward and whether they are a good fit for us and us for them. We have got to be solid in what we are doing and get things right. We will admit good schools in the first instance because we need a really sound base. Then when we start taking schools requiring improvement or in special measures we have the capacity and expertise to bring about improvements and we can then make a real impact by giving back to the community.

**Q: What is the situation with capital long term, what if the school falls down?**

**A:** CEO response

As an academy you move out of the funding from the local authority to move into a realm that is the Education and Skills Funding Agency which makes available academy funding so it is different pots of funding, used for essentials such as broken boilers, windows and energy efficiency.

**A:** Headteacher

That is a real telling point for us, when we wanted the council to pay for things it has often been a real battle as other schools are higher up the list. There are pots of money that we couldn’t bid for and under the academy we can. We don’t have to wait for 200 schools in front of us.