

Meeting with St Peter's School, Chippenham - Wednesday 11th July 2018

It was thought that it would be useful for teaching staff from Sutton Benger to visit the teaching staff at St Peter's School (part of DBAT) in order to discuss academisation and to ask any questions they felt relevant.

In attendance from Sutton Benger – Kate Baldwin, Ben Lawrence, Jill Kelsey, Carolyn McSloy, Natasha Moseley

Apologies sent – Steve Richards (illness), Olivia Elson (illness), Deb Magson (unable to attend), Nic Bucksey (unable to attend)

School context:

- Approx. 170 children on roll – 6 classes (mixed)
- 4 years in DBAT
- Old head decided to join DBAT
- Diocese of Bristol owned land – couldn't go stand alone and Diocese of Bristol wouldn't let them go with anyone else due to land
- Some consultation over whether to join DBAT
- As church school, felt DBAT was the best choice
- Reason for joining academy – worried if they stayed on their own they would be vulnerable, as well as LA beginning to weaken

SIP:

- Felt school improvement person (Jez Piper) was slightly better under DBAT than LA SIP – got to know them as a school and supportive
- On further questioning, staff at St Peters felt it was his personality that made this role more supportive rather than the role he actually held. Previous person in his role was not as supportive.
- Jez is talking to directors about schools and what is needed – they are beginning to take what he says on board, but it is only the beginning of this.

SEN:

- When first joined DBAT there was not a lot of support due to them being a fairly new academy trust
- SENCo at St Peters voiced that she felt Jez Piper had made a difference by looking at how the academy addresses SEN
- DBAT at the moment appear to be picking up on services that LA are reducing but it is still in the very early stages

Clusters / collaboration:

- Still work with Chippenham clusters
- 1 DBAT TD day a year – 6 TD days altogether not 5 as with LA

Financially:

- Falling role and classes had to be reduced so there was redundancy in both teachers and TA's when joined DBAT (TA's reduced hours rather than lose a person)
- Present situation - larger classes with less TA hours
- St Peters staff said this coincided with joining DBAT but would probably have happened anyway
- However, it was noted that this also happened at Christian Malford when they joined DBAT
- Financially it is felt that money is tighter day to day under DBAT

- Still have to be accountable to DBAT for how money is being spent
- St Peters staff felt that there is no financial advantage to joining DBAT

Working within DBAT:

- Can be moved to another school within DBAT but haven't been asked to do this yet
- Day to day make own decisions
- School development plans – these are aligned across the academies
- Assessment tracker – DBAT use their own tracker system which all academies have to use. SIMs based. St Peters staff are not happy with this change as they feel it is not needed – their assessment system is robust so why change it?
- Can change name of school but don't have to add the word 'academy' – staff suggested it was best not to add word 'academy'

Benefits for children:

- St Peters staff feel joining DBAT has made no difference to the children – they continue to offer the same education / opportunities as before they joined DBAT

Parents:

- No difference noticed by parents