

Future direction of Sherington Primary School

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Governing body (GB) are obliged to set a strategic direction that is in the best interest of the school.

This group needs to look ahead, beyond the immediate school year, and plan how the elements that make Sherington what it is (our vision, culture, structure, performance and financial management) can continue to thrive.

As part of exercising this responsibility, we have been reviewing alternative models for the way the school could be structured and funded.

We have aimed to take an objective and open-minded approach, developing and following a clear and transparent decision making process.

We have also been realistic - recognising that while the school may be able to influence or manage internal factors, there are external factors that are largely outside our control, such as local and national educational and political landscapes and how we are funded.

At the start of this process we looked at all possible options for the future of the school.

These options were then further considered based on their ability to address three ongoing challenges identified for Sherington (the first two of which are in the top three challenges identified across all schools in England for 2017/8).

These challenges are:

- Financial sustainability and stability;
- Recruitment, retention and development of high quality staff; and
- A sustainable school model in a changing environment.

Each option had to meet the following minimum criteria to be considered further:

- Aligns with Sherington values & culture;
- Retains Sherington's identity;
- Is based on local relationships; and
- Has clear net benefits (not net drain) for school resources (financial, premises and staff) and for pupils ie advances the school in some way.

We have followed a staged decision-making process, undertaking initial research and drawing on informal discussions with local MATs and the local authority, as well as on the personal experiences of the SLT in academisation, and wider research by the SLT and GB.

As part of this process, we used the criteria set out above to assess local MATs and remaining a stand-alone Local Authority-maintained school.

The next step is for the SLT and GB to meet with representatives of MATs and the Local Authority to hold Q&A sessions.

We will also be undertaking financial scenario planning of the possible options and continuing to engage with parents, carers and the wider school community about this work.

It is anticipated that a final decision on which option to take forward will be reached by Christmas.

