

Monday 28 November 2016

Questions and answers from open meeting at Murrayfield Primary

Why does the school need to be an academy?

- *An academy is funded by central government, and run by an academy trust. Academies are schools that were already in existence, under local authority control, before they changed to be academies.*
- *The government decided in April this year that Murrayfield should become an academy in order to help improve educational outcomes for the pupils. This is a legal order and nothing can be done to alter the government's decision.*
- *As an academy, the school would need a sponsor and Paradigm Trust was asked by the local authority and the regional schools commissioner to consider becoming the sponsor for Murrayfield.*

Why did they choose Paradigm Trust?

- *For two reasons: local connections and excellence in school turnaround. Paradigm Trust is the sponsor of Ipswich Academy so has roots in the area. It also runs three primary schools in London, two of which are rated as Outstanding by OFSTED and the most recent addition rated as Good. All of these schools were in special measures or requiring improvement before the Paradigm team got involved.*

What is Paradigm Trust?

- *The leadership team behind Paradigm Trust has worked together since 2003. Amanda Phillips became head teacher of Old Ford Primary Academy (OFPA) in 2003 and Executive head teacher of Culloden Primary Academy (CPA) in 2006. OFPA was in serious weaknesses, having been previously in and out of special measures, and CPA was "causing grave concern" at the time. By 2008 OFPA was judged by OFSTED to be Outstanding and in 2015 CPA was judged by OFSTED to be Outstanding. Amanda was awarded a CBE in the 2015 New Year's Honours List in recognition of her outstanding achievements in school improvement and contribution to services in education.*
- *The leadership team's tried-and-tested approach to school improvement ultimately drove the creation of Paradigm Trust. Two of the four current schools have been judged "Outstanding" by OFSTED.*
- *Paradigm Trust was formed as a Multi-Academy Trust, in September 2013, when the two founding schools, OFPA and CPA, converted to academy status.*
- *In September 2014, Paradigm Trust became the sponsor of what is now Solebay Primary Academy (SPA). Since then the school has improved significantly and OFSTED now rates Solebay as Good with Outstanding features in the quality of leadership in and management, Early Years provision and Personal development, behaviour and welfare.*

Why were parents/carers not told earlier?

- *Paradigm Trust cannot comment on what communication did or did not take place beforehand. However, we are now able to and want to be open with parents/carers and are committed to keeping you informed on what will be going on at Murrayfield.*

What will happen to Murrayfield staff?

- *The key to improving standards is great teaching. There will be changes as we improve the teaching in the school but we will keep you informed about those changes. One of our main objectives is that the school is staffed in a way that allows us to deliver the outstanding education that we believe every child deserves.*

How have you decided which staff to keep?

- *There is a legal framework called TUPE which means that all staff will transfer into Paradigm Trust unless they have decided to leave the school.*

Why did the previous Head Teacher leave?

- *The previous Head Teacher was offered and accepted a job elsewhere out of the county.*

Will anything else change? Uniform, school days, curriculum, name of school etc?

- *The uniform will not change. Paradigm Trust expects a simple uniform of dark on the bottom and white on top with a royal blue sweatshirt. So; grey trousers or skirt or pinafore, white shirt/ polo shirt/ blouse with a royal blue sweatshirt-all these can be bought from local supermarkets. If your child/ren has/ve a Murrayfield school jumper/cardigan with a logo that you wish them to wear out, this is perfectly acceptable to us.*
- *School day –the school day remains unchanged starting at 8.50am and ending at 3.15pm*
- *Curriculum – Paradigm Trust is committed to the National Curriculum. We shall concentrate on the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics initially, with key skills.*
- *The school name - will be Murrayfield Primary Academy*
- *Breakfast Club – we want to do as much for the pupils as possible to help them have a great education. We will look at everything the school is offering and will not remove anything without a very good reason.*

Will you change the admission criteria?

- *No. Paradigm Trust follows Suffolk County Council admission criteria and is non-selective. This will be the case for all our schools.*

What are you going to do to improve the school?

- *Our goal will be to provide the pupils at Murrayfield with outstanding teaching and education, leading with a well-planned and taught curriculum, in an environment where the safety and wellbeing of pupils are paramount.*
- *We want to work with the broader school community to achieve excellent results. This includes parents /carers supporting their children at home by encouraging learning, good conduct and high expectations.*

What is actually going to change to improve results?

- *Within the first two weeks of term Amanda Phillips, who will be the Principal at Murrayfield, will have done a complete inspection of all classes and teaching. A team of former senior school inspectors will also have visited the school to conduct a thorough review. At the end of this, there will be a clear plan for what needs to change to improve standards.*

How soon will we see improvements?

- *From Day 1 there will be improvements in the quality of teaching, leadership and governance. We expect improvement in standards to be noticeable in the first term and then to continue.*

What about children with special needs or for whom English is not their first language?

- *Paradigm Trust has a great deal of experience that enables us to meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and/or English as an additional language.*

How will you keep us up to date on further changes?

- *We will communicate with you in the playground at the start and end of the day, have meetings, send letters and update the website.*

Why are you taking over this school? What's in it for you?

- *Paradigm Trust believes that every child is entitled to an outstanding education, with equal access to knowledge, skills, opportunities, aspirations, life chances and dignity. If we can help to do this by taking control of a school that is struggling, then that is core to our philosophy.*
- *We were asked to accept the transfer to Paradigm Trust of Murrayfield to ensure that the issues raised by OFSTED were addressed so that the pupils can receive an outstanding education.*
- *Many pupils on leaving Murrayfield then transfer to Ipswich Academy. By raising them to the academic standards and levels of behaviour that we would expect by then, the transition to secondary school will be that much smoother and good progress from then on will happen at a far greater pace.*

What effect do you think this will have on pupil numbers at the school?

- *We expect that, given our strong track record of bringing excellent standards to our existing schools and as word spreads amongst the local community, parents/carers will want their children to be pupils at the school and that pupil numbers will increase year on year.*

How do you expect parents/carers to react to you taking over the running of the school?

- *We understand that change can be unsettling, initially we will be an unknown quantity and that parents/carers will have questions for us. We want to reassure them every step of the way and believe that any changes we introduce will have a positive impact on pupils at the school, who will become more confident and engaged in their learning.*

How confident are you that you will deliver improvements to the school?

- *We are confident in our ability to make this school a success and provide all pupils with the outstanding education that they deserve. We have a strong track record of bringing excellent standards to our existing schools, and we believe that we are more than capable of delivering similar results at Murrayfield.*

What additional facilities will be provided outside of normal school hours?

- *We are committed to ensuring that pupils have access to appropriate educational opportunities outside normal school hours, including clubs and activities. These will be introduced to Murrayfield, but our first priority is to get the school day established.*

How are parents/carers able to become involved?

- *We welcome parents/carers getting involved in their child/ren's education. There are many ways that they can get involved, including supporting their child/ren by reading with them and helping them with their homework. Parents/carers should contact the administration office at Murrayfield for information on other opportunities.*

What will be the governance structure for the school under Paradigm Trust?

- *The ultimate governing body will be the Paradigm Trust board of directors – under which there are three committees responsible for Operations & Finance, Education, and Audit & Risk. For Murrayfield, there will be a Link Director who will report to the Paradigm Trust board.*
- *We will set up an Academy Council as we have done at our other schools. This will comprise of elected parents/carers, who in turn will elect their chair person. This will act as a communication and advisory body representing pupils', parents' and carers' interests. The Link Director will be invited to attend many of these meetings to ensure that there is a two-way communication between the council and the Trust. All parents/carers will be invited to attend each meeting and encouraged to raise any queries, concerns or suggestions that they might have.*
- *We recognise both the need and desirability of ensuring local engagement and working closely with Suffolk County Council on this.*