

**Notes of the Translated Parent Consultation Meeting held at Cyril Jackson
Primary School on Friday 28th June 2019 at 9.00 a.m.**

PANEL

Gill Kemp (GK) Headteacher
Sue Stollery (SS) Chair of Governors
Hodo Dirir (HD) Head of School – Translator in Somali
Rukeya Begum (RB) - Cyril Jackson Home School Worker – Translator in Sylheti

1. INTRODUCTIONS

GK opened the meeting and explained the reason the translated meeting was being held was following feedback from parents who wanted to understand in their mother tongue. It was noted that as this was a translated version, with two people translating HD in Somalian and RB in Sylheti, it would be a slower meeting.

GK informed parents that at the previous consultation meeting there were many questions being repeated so she had created a PowerPoint presentation following the meeting of 19 June to address the common questions and concerns. GK also noted that there were printed FAQ documents available at the back of the hall that were sent out by text to all parents and uploaded to the website on 27 June 2019.

GK introduced herself and SS chair of governors.

SS explained that she has been a governor for 24 years and that her children had come to Cyril Jackson. She also explained that there are 13 governors in total, some of whom are parents.

GK presented PowerPoint slides outlining what has happened in the educational landscape nationally and locally within Tower Hamlets. There were a number of schools with licensed deficits.

There would be 400 extra reception spaces within the borough in September 2019. In light of pupil place planning in the borough, all schools had been asked to consider their position to potentially amalgamate, work in federations and share resources. The situation had never been this extreme in GK's 14 years at the school.

SS – Said what we do as governors is for the purpose of the children and staff. The last couple of years we have been looking at becoming an academy. Five governors made up a working group who looked at academies with presence in Tower Hamlets rather than other parts of the country as they wanted the research to be relevant to our local situation. As part of this they drew up a shortlist of four academies and visited and interviewed to see how these academies were structured and worked. Two were eliminated as they did not have local bodies or our same values. These two were asked about their outcomes and what they have learned. They had the same ethos, values that Cyril Jackson has.

GK – Explained the local context. Tower Hamlets sent a communication to all schools in February 2019 and told governors to reorganise and work together with other schools to optimise resources. They told all headteachers that one-form entry schools are not sustainable. They also told governors to evaluate each school's viability in 3 and 5 years in terms of pupil numbers and finances. Raines School, in Tower Hamlets, was raised as an example of a school that will be closing down due to significant drop in pupil numbers.

GK - Giving the falling rolls in the West of the borough in the autumn Tower Hamlets will consult on closing six forms of entry and by 2020 ten forms of entry. In Cyril Jackson we only have Year 4 full, this is the lowest pupil numbers I have seen.

GK – To reiterate Tower Hamlets asked governors to come up with solutions such as schools working together. The following schools are doing this: -

- Mowlem and Marion Richardson – one head will be retiring so they are working together.
- Stephen Hawking and Harry Gosling – again a retirement with one head taking on both schools.
- Redlands and Smithy – An amalgamation will occur in a year.
- Globe and Bangabandhu – will be working together in a soft federation.
- St Paul's and St Johns – Will have one executive head.

GK – With all this going on, the governors and I did not want to be pushed into an amalgamation that we do not want. We want to work with schools that we choose not what the local authority choose.

GK – Looking at the national context now - (a PowerPoint slide showed an excerpt from the Guardian newspaper). Tower Hamlets has suffered the greatest reduction across the country for funding. This equates to 68million in the last three years and it has impacted all of our schools.

GK – With regards to secondary schools, in Cyril Jackson St. Pauls Way is often the first choice for our parents but they do not get in. Historically, when the school was not doing well, the children of Cyril Jackson were allocated places, this is now not the case.

GK – KS2 TO KS3 is often known as the lost years. It is the fear children have when going to a new school. It is hard as you are not always going with your friends. SPWT is a good school in terms of results, it is inclusive both for education and a broad balanced curriculum.

The floor was opened to questions.

2. PARENTS' QUESTIONS

Parent Question/Comment – PQ
 Governors Panel Response/Comment - GPR

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| PQ | Why UST for our children? |
| GPR | We believe UST has a wide range of opportunities in teaching and facilities for staff and children. They have a theatre, a dance studio and PE and specialist Spanish teachers for example. In the long term, not immediately we can benefit from these opportunities. |

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| PQ | How long is the consultation period for, when will we decide if we become an academy? |
| GPR | The consultation is for four weeks. We have two weeks left. The governors will meet and decide on the second phase which can be between 4 – 6 months, UST and CJ will look at each other, buildings and documentation at the due diligence stage before making a final decision. If at phase one the governors did not think this was a good idea this would not have reached consultation stage. No new questions are coming up at week two so I feel 4 weeks is enough time/ |

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| PQ | We as parents have only been told this is happening, we have not been told the pros and cons. It is not enough time to process and think what we want. |
| GPR | Four weeks is recommended and we feel that this is enough time to gather all information and make a decision. Unfortunately there will be no more time. |

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| PQ | The FAQ document should be translated into Bengali. |
| GPR | We have looked into this and not many parents read Bengali, however we can put on a parent meeting for the document to be read translated. |

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| PQ | What would happen to SEN? |
| GPR | The local authority and academies get the same level of funding. We are in a position where budgets are falling and costs are rising. I would not be taking us into a position where we could not flourish. I believe this is the correct decision for all children and staff. |

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| PQ | The important thing for me is the quality of education for my child, will this change? That is all I really care about as we are an outstanding school. |
| GPR | I strongly feel that if we do not join UST our provision will deteriorate. UST can provide economies of scale. Mrs Dirir is in charge of the curriculum and quality of education and we have no plans to change.. For every child out of class this will impact us. We have to make sure CJ is attractive for parents for years to come. |

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| PQ | Admissions are not effective. My child has been on the waiting list for years, you said there are spaces. Can we have our own admissions then? |
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| GPR | All school places in Tower Hamlets are coordinated through the authority, we do not and will not have our own admissions we will still go through them. I will not pull us out as it would not be fair. |
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| PQ | Does Cyril Jackson have the same values as UST's other schools? |
| GPR | Yes. There is St Paul's Way primary and secondary and Royal Greenwich (RG) which was a failing school. RG provides a range of vocational courses such as BTECs, engineering etc which will provide our children with many opportunities to take advantage of. I am interim CEO with Grahame Price, I line manage Hodo at Cyril Jackson, Phil Akerman at St Paul's Way, Dr Richard Marshall at RG and the vision and values of those I work with is what makes me want to work together. |

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| PQ | Why is it the governors' decision and not the parents? |
| GPR | It is the governors who get the vote on this decision. We consult to get your views and answer questions and concerns, but they make the decision just like staff pay and after school club fees. They are appointed to make decisions on behalf of the school for its benefit. |
| GPR | I have not heard the end of the sentence 'Cyril Jackson should not become an academy because' from anyone. All the questions raised have been addressed. |

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| PQ | But we are doing outstanding, we are an outstanding school. Why now? |
| GPR | We are outstanding because of the people I have employed. This has been my life for 14 years. The governors and I did not feel it was right 10 years ago and even 2 years ago. It is not to do with how well the children are doing, this will continue, it is because I feel now is the right time. |

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| PQ | Is this all about funding? |
| GPR | No it is not the only reasons, it is to do with resources, range of opportunities, consideration of Continuous Professional Development for staff, HR, finance, facilities, IT support all the things we no longer get from Tower Hamlets. |

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| PQ | Will there be a cut to SEND? |
| GPR | No. In Tower Hamlets we are third out of 88 primary schools that have more SEND than any other school. The governors and I are passionate about an inclusive education. Other colleagues within the authority call us to take on SEND children. Currently if a child is outside of our catchment area we notify the Local Authority that we do not have the finances or capacity. But we are dedicated to provide the needs of our local SEN children. |

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| PQ | I think parents are just scared at how much the school will change. Will it be more selective for example or be independent and start charging? |
| GPR | Not at all, we do not and will not be selective as we do not coordinate school places, this will remain with Tower Hamlets. We are not private and will not start charging for education. |

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| PQ | What is the fall back if UST go bust? |
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| GPR | We have only ever set one year at Cyril Jackson in deficit in my 14 years. Governors approved this as that year we had 12 maternities, however carry forward covered that. St Paul's Way has never set a deficit budget. UST receives money direct from the Department for Education and that money is sent direct to schools. UST is a charity, not a private company. Actually over 50% of schools in the country are academies. In Tower Hamlets 18 of my colleagues have set a deficit budget in 2017 - 2018, this year there are 9. |
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| PQ | If two schools were to merge will there still be two head teachers? |
| GPR | No, schools cannot afford it. The schools would keep a head of school and has an Executive head overseeing the two schools. |

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| PQ | What about the staff? |
| GPR | Since I joined 14 years ago there are four of those teaching staff still here and also significantly more support staff. There have been lots of staff on this journey with me, I would not jeopardise the stability for these loyal members of staff. Cyril Jackson will not stay exactly the same, it never does, people leave when they get married or move. However, we do have consistency in our support staff. |

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| PQ | Have you had a discussion with staff as I hear some are opposed? |
| GPR | Yes. We have spoken with staff and had staff meetings. Unison have come in and spoken to the support staff and the NEU rep has spoken to the teachers. A number teachers were quite cross when they saw their collective name as apparently opposing this. There has been some miscommunication that teachers are opposed, this is not true for all. |

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| PQ | I think parents are scared as they have not seen the benefits of being in an academy, I work in an academy and the children are happy. We didn't have music before, for example, and now we do. |
| GPR | You are a small voice in the academy consultation, we have not heard enough positive stories. |

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| PQ | My husband works in an academy and I know a lot about this. I think the concern is will UST really help? |
| GPR | Yes, we believe the Trust is the best fit for us, Cyril Jackson will be fine. If we become an academy for example together with SPWT and RG we could potentially save up to 25% on insurance. This will not directly affect children but it is a saving. We do not want to be in deficit and we are planning now. |

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| PQ | Will there be any bad changes, I have only heard the good ones? |
| GPR | The only change that I can envisage is the possibility of anti-academy teachers leaving. However we have received positive feedback from some of these staff who understand why we are doing this. |

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| PQ | Will there be a financial strain on parents in any way? Will After School Clubs go up in price? |
| GPR | No, we will abide by Tower Hamlets policies for everything as we do now. The current 15 hours nursery funding is the same across the borough. We have not cancelled as many trips this year due to voluntary |

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| | contributions remaining high. No after school club will remain the same, there is no reason for it to go up. |
| PQ | The umbrella of the local authority is a comfort blanket, parents are scared of losing this. |
| GPR | The local authority has had to make their own significant cuts to key services, the people that are left doing the jobs of the services we use are great, which means all the jobs are not getting done. This will continue. |

SS – Joining UST will give greater, richer education and opportunities. If you can come from primary school to secondary and then to college straight through to university all through with the same policy, ethos and values I think that is tremendous.

Parent – As long as the education is good for my son, I have good trust in that and that this is progression for the better.

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| PQ | If there is a petition will this delay the process? |
| GPR | The petition would need to be clear as to what they are against. The decision will be made on 17 July by the governors. |

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| PQ | Are we due an Ofsted? Will we be visited if we join UST? |
| GPR | Ofsted do inspect schools and trusts. As we are an outstanding school, Ofsted will only come if there is a safeguarding issue raised. |
| PQ | Parents are just worried about the future of the school. If it is better, politics aside, that is all I care about. |
| GPR | Either way if we stay as we are or become an academy, there is a worry, but even more so with the local authority. The decisions we are making are for the better. |

3. CLOSING REMARKS

Parents were thanked for their attendance and the meeting was closed at 11.20am. A commitment to follow up with a translation of the FAQ document meeting was agreed for Tuesday 2 July 2019.

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE:.....

DATE SIGNED:...../...../.....