



# Warboys Community Primary School

Moving Forward Together  
To Develop Confident, Independent Learners

Headteacher: Mrs Angela Boxall

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## Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting

**MAT Consultation Meeting with Thomas Deacon Academy Trust & Invited Guests (Parents, Carers, Governors, P.T.F.A & Staff)**

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018**  
**Commenced - 6:30 p.m. - Ended 7:35 p.m.**

### Present

Governors - John Parker, Angela Boxall, Claire Eeley, Greg Pelling Simon Marsh, Sarah O' Toole, Alan Evans  
TDET - Julie Taylor & Simon Smith -  
Staff - Angela Boxall & Karen Harding  
Parents - Mr O'Toole, Mrs K Smith, Mrs L Womersley, Miss C Harper, Mrs K Howard, Mrs T Watson, Mrs K Grange, Mr S Campbell, Mrs L Pienescu, Mr M Ive & Mrs E Smith

### Apologies

Received and accepted from Steve Dodd, Peter Wood Eeles, Mrs P Tofton, Mrs M Barker

### Meeting:-

Mrs Angela Boxall opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed Mrs Julie Taylor & Mr Simon Smith from Thomas Deacons Education Trust [TDET] and assembled members. She gave a brief outline of why Warboys Primary School has commenced consultation to become an Academy and why if this opportunity of resolution progresses, TDET has been chosen.

### Reasons for joining becoming an academy and joining TDET

- To continue to improve the standards at the school and to help us to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils, through access to a broader range of opportunities and resources.
- To increase collaborative learning with other schools in order to improve our 'Good' rating
- For increased Continuous Professional Development opportunities for all staff.
- To further develop distributed leadership for career development and enhancement through access to centralised subject leads and SENd support.
- For the support services which a MAT can provide following the due diligence process, thus providing savings for the school which can be redirected to teaching and learning. This mainly focuses on centralised services, e.g. finance, facilities etc.
- TDET is a local MAT (Peterborough based). The Governing Body does not want to join a national MAT as this would not suit the needs and 'family' ethos of our school. TDET has assured us that we will be able to retain our sense of identity and school values.



- Because our school is predominantly a White British school, a trust that is a multi-ethnic [like TDET,] has many opportunities to help us develop multi-cultural links thus reflecting today's society. This supports the Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural [SMSC] part of our wider curriculum.
- TDET is a smaller local Trust which has a similar ethos to Warboys School. It is a fairly new trust which means that Warboys School could be part of its development from near the start rather than joining a Trust that was already well established.

The Chair of Governors confirmed that Warboys School is the only school in the area who is not federated or part of an academy trust and that the Government are looking for all schools to become academies in the future. Governors decided that they would like to choose their own academy rather than being forced to join one if this benefited the school and therefore have been looking at academies over the last 18 months, which included holding meetings with three different trusts.

After exploring all options and taking due diligence into account, the Governing Body together with support from the Headteacher came to the same conclusion that, Warboys School should not remain as stand-alone school. TDET was deemed to be the 'best fit' for Warboys School because it will allow us to keep the school's sense of identity whilst being part of a wider network. Once consultations are complete we will keep parents/carers up to date on the progress of our decisions.

The following questions were asked:-

### Questions Raised by parents

1. Can the Board of Governors confirm whether this is a decision of their choosing or are they being pushed into an academy trust by selected members or by the local authority itself?

As a 'Good' school, Warboys has the choice of: remaining a stand-alone local authority maintained school; To federate with another school; to become an academy and join a MAT. It is the governors decision to explore academy status because we cannot remain a stand-alone school in today's ever changing education system.

2. What are the effects on our pupils of converting to academy, [in the short, medium and long term]?

In the short term [a year], children and parents will see little change. The school will still run as an individual school keeping its own identity, with the same uniform. [There may be a slight tweak to the name of the school to include the word Academy]. Teachers will not be made to work in other schools and most of the initial change will be around facilities e.g. bank accounts, finance support, personnel etc.

Helping to raise standards across all schools, within the first couple of years the children will see more visiting teachers and personnel from other schools in the trust as school support increases. School staff will be able to take advantage of more professional development within the trust which in turn should lead to further improvements in teaching, learning and overall outcomes for children. Although the National curriculum will form the basis of learning, the school will have a little more flexibility within the curriculum.

Longer term, this may depend on the education policies from the government. School policies and protocols will become more centralised with all trust schools working closely together to have "Unity of Purpose and Diversity in practice".



### 3. If Warboys Primary School decides to convert and join TDET, when would this happen?

If Governors decide to join TDET, this would be unlikely to happen until Easter 2019 at the earliest. As parents you would hardly see any difference as this is led by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body would remain in place.

### 4. Will teaching and support, or office staff be taken to other schools?

The Senior Leadership Team will be maintaining the equilibrium of the school if we transfer to the Trust. Staff would not move to other schools within the Trust unless it was their intention to move for a career opportunity anyway. Staffing will remain the same at Warboys School in terms of who works in the School Office and in classrooms.

TDET Answer:- Centralised services are applied to drive efficiency and other functions. All schools have different skill sets and TDET adjusts each school's services to allow professional development within schools. We do not dismiss staff and we will continue to use local services.

### 5. What happens about Ofsted?

Ofsted inspects academies in the same way as maintained schools. The performance of all academies is still monitored by the Department for Education.

### 6. The letter mentions that you have been having frequently dialogue between yourselves and the TDET Trusts CEO, could you please elaborate on what has been discussed. How have the conversations affected the school's current decision-making processes to join the TDET and not another trust like CMAT?

Governors and the leadership team have had discussions with each of the 3 MATs. The CEOs of each have presented to the full Governing Body, topics covered included: future growth, standards, school to school support, staff, finance and facilities. Questions asked were the same for each Trust. The Leadership team has also visited schools within each MAT and talked to head teachers to gauge school life in practice. The school has also discussed academy status with the local ASCA school cluster. TDET had a similar ethos to Warboys School and also has another very local school joining them.

### 7. Will there be any gains to the general funding allocations as a result of joining a MAT? If the school joins an Academy trust who will be responsible for setting and managing the school budget. Who will have financial oversight to ensure that funds are spent appropriately and fairly within the school & the wider trust?

TDET Answer:- There is no change in the funding formula and funding runs from September to August. Funding goes directly to the school even when they join a trust. Warboys School would receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as we receive from the Local Authority currently. The Governing Body of Warboys School will still control the school's budget; the school budget will not be taken over by TDET. The school will bench mark spending against other schools as it does currently. TDET will have the oversight to ensure public monies are spent appropriately.

The bargaining power for certain contracts is greater when tendering for contracts as there are more children in the Trust than at Warboys Primary so this should effectively save the school money. We also have the added expertise of financial expertise as part of TDET.



8. Obviously going into an academy trust allows the school to call upon a wider level of resources and allows for cross school sharing of resources and standards when the trust is run effectively. This could come at the cost of local oversight and structure so what would be the impact on the Governing Body with this fundamental structure change and will it lose the ability to make or be over ruled by an Academy Trust in the future, so it doesn't deviate from its strategic objectives?

TDET Answer:- Governors are currently solely responsible for finances, H.R and personnel. When a school joins a trust the responsibility for balancing the books i.e. deficits, would be down to the trust, but the school is held accountable. Each school has their own budget share and in TDET the budget is given to SLT and Governors and they decide how the budget is to be spent.

At present the Local Authority takes a top slice percentage for services of approximately 10%. Joining TDET we would expect this slice be approximately 4.5% of the budget. However, this could change but only after consulting the Governing Body, SLT and the Headteacher. There has not been a single situation over the last 2 years where this happened. There is full transparency on accounts which can be seen on our website.

9. The TDET website provides limited information into its accounts and financial status and includes no notes regarding its committee meeting outside of an uploaded agenda. Has the school or Governing Body been given any insight into this and are they aware of any challenges the trust currently faces that could impact the school if it's chooses to join with them?

The financial status of each Trust was discussed at the presentations given to the full governing body. The DfE have stated that all three trusts explored were sound choices.

10. The school is largely in need of TLC due to funding issues, would the going into the academy trust enable the school to under-go some much-needed maintenance to the school? Many years ago, the school was rumoured to be considered for a rebuild, would being part of the academy trust start these conversations again?

TDET Answer:- We would be more than happy to explore a new school and also the condition of the building and steps required to support funding. However, we do not have a magic money tree. Money can be prioritised for TLC and this will be prioritised. Our other schools are newer and this gives Warboys a head start in respect of discussions for improvements.

School response: The school has worked hard within its budget to maintain such a large property, and has been long over-due a refurbishment from the local authority. The school is able to bid to the county for funding but as an academy we will, with the support of a trust be able to bid directly to the DfE for condition funding.

11. Some local schools have faced funding issues based on false promises made by successive governments on funding settlements for schools who have gone down the academy trust path. Will this happen to Warboys?

Our main reason for joining an academy trust is to gain school to school support to further improve teaching and learning. However, the DfE do review the bank balance of schools wishing to gain academy status to ensure any costs can be met by all parties. The DfE give a limited amount towards the legal costs of conversion.

12. Could you provide a sample of funding over a period of 5 years with comparisons of staying within the local authority and within the local academy format?



This is difficult to do at this point because the funding for schools depends on pupil numbers and is never static. The largest impact on budget is staffing which will not change because we are tied to national pay scales. Most schools set only short term budgets. At present Warboys school sets a balanced budget. Any savings made will, therefore, be of benefit to our school.

13. Newspapers report that larger, more national trusts will centralize funding to its flagships schools so they have materials and resources they need at the cost of maintaining the lesser known schools. How could the students of the school be protected by this if you chose to become part of an academy trust?

The Trust is held accountable for all of its schools. Every school is inspected by Ofsted. As with children in a class, every school is important to the success of the trust.

14. The school has been reliant on the fund-raising activities of the PTA and local charities over the years to accommodate its funding short falls to provide equipment and materials that are essential to teaching and learning rather than providing resources that could benefit the students in more traditional ways. How will going into the Academy trust resolve this?

The Chair of the PTFA confirmed that they would continue to raise funds for Warboys School and that all funds raised would be for the sole use of our school and not within the Academy Trust. The school provides essential resources and the PTFA with additional purchases.

15. I believe the government is promoting digital literacy as part of its push into 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, the school's interactive display equipment is quite older and its network equipment isn't modern. How will going to Academy trust affect the schools IT provision both insider and with the school services it requires parents to use (Parent Pay .etc.)?

TDET Answer:- TDET confirmed that they are looking into receiving funding for smart boards etc. to modernise all IT equipment. Once again centralised services will be investigated to save money.

16. Other schools in the Trust are judged as Requires Improvement, will the standards at Warboys School drop as a result?

No, the CEO has a responsibility to make sure all schools within the Trust improve, but not at the detriment of another school within the Trust. The Governing Body is striving for Warboys Primary to be an outstanding school and will work very closely with the CEO to ensure we try to achieve this.

17. The SLT team have instilled a core message of respect being the schools key value for its students to follow. After reviewing the TDET website they seem to promote a wider culture message than just one key value, how will this impact on the way that the school communicates with the children and what would be the proposed integration period for integrating the wider trust's key values.

TDET Answer:- Several of our key values underpin the over-arching school values of Respect. Each school will have their own key values and we, as a Trust, respects each individual school's principles and values. Therefore we will continue to allow each school to translate their own values which are connected to their own school and the wider trust.



**18. What rights does Warboys School have to ensure that the TDET is going in the right direction?**

TDET Answer:- We follow the Department of Education Model, so a group of 5 Independent Members who govern the governance hold our trustees to account. At the AGM when the statement of accounts is published, members hold the trust board to account and ask about strategic plans. If the trustees are not efficient they can be replaced. The trustees meet 5 times per year and the CEO is held to account. There are also two committees, Finance and Educations Standards. Local Governing Bodies and the CEO attend these meetings. The Department of Education observed TDET and its processes last July and were told nationally that they were at the top end of the spectrum. Money is public money which is for children and is spent in the interest of the children. There is a direct line from trustees to governors. There is also a Whistleblowing Policy in place and, of course, we are monitored by Ofsted.

**19. TDET does appear to be a smaller trust with 3 schools actively promoted within the trust according to their website, with a further 5 having some level of association. How big do you see TDET growing in respect of taking on more schools?**

TDET Answer:- At the moment we are in consultation with one other Primary School as well as yourselves. It is our intended plan to grow to 12 schools. We will take time to grow to capacity ensuring standards are not compromised in any school. One other local School is in the process of joining TDET. We do not wish to be a massive trust, just a comfortable trust of around 12 local schools to continue our current family feel and we wish to understand communities that the Trust is serving.

**20. Can we change from one MAT to another?**

A school cannot return to be a Local Authority school once it becomes an academy. Schools are encouraged to follow a due diligence process when selecting a MAT because although it may be possible to change MATs the process is difficult and costly.

Meeting closed at 8:30 p.m.

