

Meeting between WPC members and Wylam First School July 16th 2018

Present: Steph Gibbon (Headteacher)

John Sedgewick (Chair of Governors and a Director of Tynedale Community Learning Trust)

Suzi Robinson (WPC)

Keith Trobe (WPC)

We began with John and Steph outlining the two year process (to date) of setting up the MAT and the reasons behind it. The main concern was to retain early years education in the village by maintaining three-tier education in the area. It was felt that the current school building would be too small for a Junior school and if two tier was introduced, it was likely that this school would close. The schools in the MAT have been working as a partnership prior to this transition and the new TCLT is seen as an organic development of this.

The TCLT will not have a super head as such but will have a 'Super-Sip' (School Improvement Partner) who will provide support and challenge to the new structure.

It was noted that there continues to be a very strong emphasis on results – 'one bad Ofsted inspection away from problems'. Steph and John were of the opinion that should any school in TCLT have a poor Ofsted report, then the mutual support of the MAT would be a strong basis for that school getting a further chance to improve.

Wylam First, along with all the other schools in TCLT are implementing the Singaporean strategy and White Rose maths.

We discussed the issue of parking/parents dropping off children at school. It was acknowledged that the school had done everything possible to ask parents not to go up to the school gates, turn etc. As well as regular reminders in letters home, individual parents have been spoken to. Steph Gibbon welcomes meeting with the Wylam Road Safety Group in September to discuss this issue.

We mentioned that WSPC is looking at ways to engage groups in the community of which young people is one such group. Both Wylam First and Ovingham Middle have active Student Councils and we discussed ways in which their role could possibly be broadened to include more general discussions about living in Wylam. There could also be a special youth edition of the Globe.

The school is keen to be involved with Wylam Past and Present.

Finally we discussed funding. The school had to carry out a restructuring this year which involved the loss of 1.4 teaching posts. Even with this, the school has little money to play with. Steph mentioned in particular the lack of IT equipment, specifically, the need for 15 Ipads in order to meet curriculum demands. (See Appendix at end). She also said they could not afford higher level reading books to stretch the brighter pupils. John said there was a need to resurface playing areas in the school.

We think all present considered this a very helpful meeting and presaged further communication and collaboration.

Helping to retain a First School in the village should be something WPC gives its full support to.

Keith Trobe Suzi Robinson