

Leathersellers' Federation of Schools



Prendergast School



Prendergast
Ladywell
School



Prendergast
Vale
School

1 April 2015

Dear Mr Wheal

On 20th November 2013, seven days after the publication of a false and misleading report about academy conversion in Lewisham, you wrote to the Executive of the Federation, 'I am disgusted by the school's secrecy about this. You have made enemies of friends.' (your email statement 20/03/15).

The Governing Board very much regret your view that you are an enemy. They do not accept the view that your comment characterises all members of the Friends of Prendergast School Association. The Friends of Prendergast School Association are as their name suggests, valued friends of the school. Their views in this as in all things have been listened to with care.

You do not appear to have modified your views despite the significant amount of information Governors have put in the public domain and the correspondence various members and officers of the Governing Board have entered into to provide you with further information.

Your latest correspondence asks questions based on the false premise that the 'Lethersellers (sic) had decided to change to a MAT' (your email statement 23/03/15) prior to the decision taken by the Governing Board on 12th February 2015 and, as may be understood from your thesis, prior to the establishment of a working party duly constituted on 6th November 2014, as is set out in the published minutes of the Governing Board.

"Exploratory discussions have been held this year with the DfE to get a better feel for the implications of Academy conversion. On the same day that CB called for this Additional Governing Board meeting, another meeting had been arranged inviting Frankie Sulke (FS) to the Leathersellers' City offices to inform the LA of the Federation's intention to convene a Governing Board meeting to explore the setting up of a working party to examine governance structures including conversion to a multi academy trust (MAT)."

It is transparent in the minutes that there were exploratory discussions with the Local Authority which led to a proposal to set up a working party to examine governance structures including conversion to a multi academy trust (MAT). It also records discussion with the Department for Education so that any investigation into this matter was properly established. It was clearly set out in the minutes that there had been no decision to establish a multi academy trust.

Stone King have acted as our solicitors over a variety of issues since Dec 2013. The Governors and the schools in their executive function have the authority to take advice from solicitors and you will understand that this advice is privileged.

Governors and the executive of the Federation have routine formal and many informal discussions about improving the quality of education in Lewisham with the Director of Children's Services. Details of the meeting you request to be put on the website are contained in the minutes of 6th November 2014. The record of the meeting with the Mayor is in the Governors' published minutes of 6th November 2014 and 9th December 2015.

Executive Headteacher: **David Sheppard, MA**

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All aspects of Governance of the Federation are properly conducted in line with The DfE 'Governors Handbook January 2015', the Instrument of Government and Governors' Terms of Reference.


Your request then, that the attendees of these meeting should be published is puzzling as the attendees of the meetings you enquire about are in the published minutes of the Governing Board. You have repeatedly asserted that there has been undue secrecy when the information you request has already been properly put in the public domain by the Governing Board.

It is the Governors' view that your 'chronology' is both incorrect and misleading in that it appears to construct a view that there was a decision made before February 12th 2015 to enter the process of conversion to a Multi Academy Trust. Your view that there has been undue secrecy does not appear to be supported by a reading of the papers in the public domain. As Governors have recorded they are disappointed by your expressions of enmity with which you initiated your correspondence and have repeated. Governors hope that the courtesy, honesty and promptness with which your emails have been treated would have caused you to temper this view.

When considering your correspondence, we would ask you please to refer to the minutes of meetings and other documentation posted on the Federation's website. This, we believe, would help you construct a more accurate picture of events, including collective decisions made, during these past 12-24 months.

Yours sincerely

Keith Surey
Clerk to Governors



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