

BEAMINSTER SCHOOL

**BEAMINSTER
DORSET DT8 3EP**

**Tel: 01308 862633
Absences: 01308 861917**

Email: office@beaminster.dorset.sch.uk



**HEADTEACHER
MR K HALES NPQH**

**DEPUTY HEADTEACHER
MR D WITHERS NPQH**

Website: www.beaminster.dorset.sch.uk

September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Open Forum Meeting re Aspirations Academy Trust

We are extremely grateful to all the parents, carers and members of the community who made time to attend the Open Forum meeting last night.

Following a short opening presentation covering the changing educational landscape and giving a brief introduction to Aspirations Academy Trust (AAT), we then moved into an hour of questions from the forum.

The first part of the Q&A covered a number of wide-ranging issues to understand who AAT are, what they stand for and to outline the beneficial reasons for the move from Dorset Council to Aspirations, including enhanced learning and other opportunities that will be available for both students and staff, and the range of expert support available for Teaching and Learning and other essential, but non-student facing areas, such as premises, finance, IT, Health and Safety and HR; there seemed to be a good deal of reassurance provided by the responses to these questions.

The conversation then moved on to a heartfelt concern, shared by all attendees, around maintaining our school's unique identity, its ethos and values, and our close links with the wider community. This was also an area that Governors see as essential to preserve. David Herbert (Regional CEO) was happy to reassure everyone that it will still be up to the Headteacher and staff to set the tone for the school, as they know their local community best, and that Aspirations would certainly not want to change such a successful formula.

Beaminster staff have visited a number of Aspirations Academies and have welcomed the individual feel and different character that each of them held. Positive relationships with our primary partners, and continuing to work successfully with the local community are seen as essential elements for our school to flourish and, although we will also be working regionally and nationally for the benefit of all our staff and students in the future, we will always remain a small, family, rural school, with all that entails.

The Department for Education will be considering the proposal on 18th October 2022, and a final decision will be taken by Beaminster School Governors and The Aspirations Trust Board in late Autumn 2022. We would still very much welcome the views of any parents/carers, school colleagues and those associated with our school community as they are an important part of the decision-making process.

If you wish to provide any views or comments about the proposal directly to the Department for Education, please email RG.SW@education.gov.uk. This inbox will be open between 6th - 25th September 2022. If you wish to provide any views or comments to the Trust's Board to inform their final decision, please email info@aspirationsacademies.org and/or office@beaminster.dorset.sch.uk by 25th September 2022.

Thank you for your continued support and please do get in touch if you have any questions that you wish to raise.

Kind regards

Keith Hales (Headteacher) and Bridget Millwood (Chair of Governors)

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