



# Belmont Primary School

## Public Consultation:

### Responses to Frequently Asked Questions

#### **1. Why LSEAT?**

**Response:** LSEAT share our values and want Belmont to be a primary flagship for the Trust. Their schools have made rapid improvement (Bromley) and the Bexley schools (all Good / Outstanding at the point of conversion) chose to join them because of what they were able to offer and the level of autonomy given to strong schools. LSEAT is committed to the local community and that was important to Belmont which prides itself on being a central part of the Bexley educational landscape.

#### **2. Did the governors consider any other Trusts?**

**Response:** The governors asked the Executive Head Teacher to investigate a range of options. This was done over a lengthy period of time and many discussions were had to look at what was the best Trust for our schools to join. The governors voted unanimously to join LSEAT at the end of this process because of the focus on school improvement, the child-centered ethos, the valuing of the individual identities of their schools, the high standards achieved by their schools, added value of the college provision for staff in terms of training and older pupils for post-16 pathways and quality of back office services.

#### **3. Will the school feel different for my child?**

**Response:** For the pupils in the school, nothing will be different. Belmont Woodside governors have chosen LSEAT because they are happy for the schools to retain their own identities and give high levels of autonomy to successful schools of which Belmont is one!

#### **4. Will the Admissions Policy change?**

**Response:** No, there will be no change to the Admissions Policy.[]

#### **5. Will the uniform be changed?**

**Response:** No

**6. Will the staff be the same?**

**Response:** Yes, the staff will remain unchanged.

**7. Will Belmont continue to prepare pupils for the 11+?**

**Response:** Belmont does not currently specifically prepare pupils for 11+. The curriculum and its delivery will remain a local Belmont decision. Joining LSEAT will make no difference to what is taught in the schools.

**8. Will Belmont lose money from joining LSEAT?**

**Response:** Belmont buy a lot of their back office services from the Local Authority (HR, Finance, insurance, recruitment, etc). The money to fund these services comes through SLAs with local maintained schools or academies who opt to use them. Almost all academies access back office functions through their Trusts. The majority of the funding comes from maintained schools. There are now so few maintained schools buying their services that there is far less money going to the Local Authority which means that the services have reduced and the cost is getting higher. Belmont will make savings through joining LSEAT and pay one lump sum % cost to the Trust to allow them to access all of the previously paid services at a lower cost. The money Belmont pays the Trust is only to pay towards the services they need and not to fund anything else.

**9. Some parents are concerned that LSEAT only has SEMH schools – is LSEAT only specialist in SEMH education?**

**Response:** There are currently three special schools in LSEAT and two alternative provision academies. Alternative provision academies are for children and young people who are mainstream and generally only accessing the academies for a package of support before returning to their mainstream schools. They are not all permanently excluded or not all have diagnosed SEN. LSEAT also has a secondary mainstream free school in pre-opening within the Trust. The good practices of the Bexley schools has been recognized by the DFE who have encouraged them to then work with local mainstream schools and help them improve the quality of their education. Both the Bexley and Bromley AP academies also have staff who work in local mainstream schools helping them to learn more about strategies to manage attendance, behaviour and SEN needs. All of the LSEAT schools are judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. The Bromley schools were both failing schools when under the Local Authority who invited the Trust to sponsor them to help improve standards. As a result of the work of LSEAT, both schools are now Good. The SEMH and AP schools cater for pupils of all abilities and are not for pupils with specific learning difficulties which means that there is the full range of abilities including pupils from selective schools who attend these schools. Ultimately, LSEAT promotes the best quality of teaching and learning for pupils of all ages and abilities and is committed to working with schools who are designed to best meet the needs of the pupil cohort.

**10. Do the other schools follow the National Curriculum?**

**Response:** Most definitely! They are schools delivering high quality education to prepare

children and young people to transition successfully to mainstream schools or onto sixth forms, colleges and employment, having taken GCSEs and other nationally recognized qualifications.

**11. Will the quality of education at the colleges have any impact on Belmont?**

**Response:** The Trust is a separate entity from the colleges. College education is for post-16 pupils and will not directly impact the schools. However, again, the decision for Bexley, Orpington and Greenwich Colleges to amalgamate with Bromley College was based on the successes of this college and the impact on all of these has been positive as can be seen by learner outcomes and stakeholder feedback.

**12. Will Belmont School take predominantly SEN pupils or have a significant increase in pupils with special needs?**

**Response:** The Admissions Policy for Belmont School will remain the same. The criteria for admissions will remain the same as it is now.

**13. Will pupils from the SEMH schools or Horizons Academy (permanently excluded pupils) come to Belmont School?**

**Response:** There is no intention for pupils reintegrating from Horizons Academy to specifically move to Belmont School and the process for pupils who have been permanently excluded securing a new school is through a Fair Access Meeting which means they can go to any school in Bexley and no school can take more than their fair share. There is therefore no possibility that there will be an increase in SEN pupils caused by joining LSEAT.

**14. Will joining the Trust stigmatise the school and discourage parents from wanting to send their pupils there?**

**Response:** Belmont is the most over subscribed school in Bexley. The Bexley community has schools which reflect the local society. Belmont pupils will move on to secondary schools which reflect this society. Belmont prides itself on being an inclusive school which reflects the local community and that will remain the same. The quality of education, the building, the staff and the ethos will remain unchanged.

**15. Have Belmont Woodside Federation followed the right processes?**

**Response:** Yes. The application for conversion has been discussed and reviewed by an independent Head Teacher Board who have approved it and granted academy orders. The processes expected for any school converting to academy and joining a Trust has been followed by the school.

**16. Why were some parents who contacted the Local Authority not given reassurance around consultation processes?**

**Response:** The school is working with a small number of named contacts in the Local Authority who are supporting the conversion and not all LA staff will know the detail of actions taken to date. This is not unusual as Bexley Council is a large organization with lots of staff who may not be close to the detail.