**Academy Conversion Due Diligence – June 2017**

**Purpose and Scope of Due Diligence**

As we look forward to the opportunity for Brannel School to become part of the NET family, it is essential for the Governing Body to be able to confidently assure all of the school’s stakeholders that its decision to join NET is in the best interests of the school and its students, both present and future. In this we are seeking not the opinions and thoughts of individuals, but the collective ‘core’ of the organisation.

Due diligence is not about trying to predict the future or securing specific agreements or conditions on conversion. It is about accurately securing an understanding of the key values of NET so that the core values and principles of Brannel School are guaranteed on the basis of those values.

In January 2016, governors of the school consulted with all stakeholders to agree key criteria which any successful MAT would need to meet. These criteria represent the views of the school community as to which of the school’s values are non-negotiable.

Our due diligence falls into 10 key areas which match those identified in the criteria agreed with our stakeholders.

1. The role of the school within the community.
2. Brannel’s commitment to working with all its Cluster Schools.
3. The opportunity for all children in the school to make good progress and achieve academic success.
4. A commitment to inclusion, including providing or hosting specialist provision on the school site.
5. Appropriate and reasonable accountability, focusing on ‘earned autonomy’ and trust.
6. Commitment to a Local Governing Board with an ongoing strategic role in the development of the school, including its finances.
7. The role and potential for the school to collaborate actively with other schools and organisations.
8. Brannel’s unequivocal commitment to enhance the future opportunities for young people based upon the impact of social disadvantage including projects aimed at raising employability skills and aspirations, such as the Brannel Challenge.
9. A sustainable and developmental approach to the future, ensuring a pro-active response to change and risks.

**Section 1: The role of the school within the community.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Question | Response |
| 1 | How does NET view the role of a school in a community such as the China Clay? | As can be seen from our website, NET places the education of all children and young people, regardless of their starting points in life, as central to its vision. Children are not educated in school alone, and schools must reach out to become the beating heart of their communities. All NET academies are expected to play this crucial role, not only serving their communities through providing support and services, bur also using their resources to act as vibrant and cultural focal points which enrich the lives of everyone within the community. This role is even more critical in areas such as the China Clay, in which the needs of children and their extended families are complex. A great school in the heart of the Clay can achieve a huge amount to overcome the significant challenges the community, and its young people, face. |
| 2 | How would NET encourage Brannel School to continue to develop its role in the community to further benefit all members? | Without knowing the full range of what is being offered currently, it would be presumptuous to comment on exactly how the offer would be extended through Brannel’s membership of NET. It is envisaged that all the resources available to NET academies would be available to Brannel and its community. This would include access to all the services and provision offered in Newquay if that is deemed to be of benefit. NET will continue to encourage all its academies to play a central role in their communities by being outward facing and welcoming to all. |
| 3 | How would NET support the activities already being offered by the school? (e.g. Cinema, Christmas Fayre, July Fest, Fireworks) | Through the Chair of the LGB who is to be a Board member, invitations to events could be issued to the wider NET membership, including all staff. Through the Trust, a culture of shared services will develop and we are confident that Brannel could call on the central team for whatever support is required, as can all NET academies. |

**Section 2: Brannel’s commitment to working with all its Cluster Schools.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Question | Response |
| 1 | Does NET support the ongoing collaboration between schools in the Brannel Cluster? | Whilst Newquay Tretherras and Newquay Junior are part of NET, we have always believed that being part of a trust should not limit the range of other partnerships that schools are part of. It is especially important for a secondary to work closely with **all** its partner primary schools in the interests of children and the continuity of their education. NET ‘s core vision, as stated on our website, is that education is a seamless and continuous journey: with that in mind, NET will fully support and encourage Brannel to further develop its role in the Brannel Cluster. We are conscious of the fact that the primary school children in other schools in the cluster will become NET’s responsibility in future and NET believes we need to support them regardless of the trust their primary school belongs to. |
| 2 | How will NET balance the potential tension between ‘Trust’ collaboration and Cluster collaboration? | See above, this is not viewed as a tension. NET will not seek to make Brannel’s collaboration with other NET academies mutually exclusive. It will be for the NET Executive Team and the SLT in Brannel to manage as the partnership grows, if it becomes apparent that a tension is occurring. NET believes that the trust is a partnership of equals with each school retaining its distinctive identity and ethos but is further enriched and strengthened through close collaboration within a trust, and beyond. It does not operate as an exclusive, possessive club. The CEO has already spoken to the CEO’s of other trusts operating in the China Clay schools about greater inter-trust collaboration. This will be explored further. |
| 3 | How could NET enhance the opportunities already on offer for children in the Brannel Cluster? | This is a huge question and the easy answer is to say in whatever way we can! See answer to Q2 above. All the resources of NET (including its human and non-human resources) become available to Brannel young people and its staff. Once Brannel join NET, its children, staff and community become of equal, paramount importance to everyone as we foster the collective strength and shared responsibility mission. The Executive Team will establish working groups of staff who will devise shared approaches to enrichment opportunities. Joint trips and visits, productions and events come immediately to mind, but with joint teaching and learning opportunities, the possibilities are endless. |

**Section 3: The opportunity for all children in the school to make good progress and achieve academic success.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Question | Response |
| 1 | What, if any, elements of learning will Brannel School be expected to implement as part of NET? | None at the moment. It will be an immediate priority once Brannel join NET to work on a shared language for, and model of, teaching learning and assessment. We know Brannel already use SISRA and this will continue. We see the partnership growing organically and that Brannel will bring its own expertise to the table. Directors of Teaching and Learning across all the academies will work together on developing a more cohesive and unified approach. |
| 2 | How does NET intend to balance the demands of national accountability against the needs of students (e.g. EBacc uptake)? | NET does not have, and never has had, a policy of forced EBacc. The needs of students are paramount. National accountability is not the driving force for our curriculum decision making process, but we are mindful of it. |
| 3 | Will students at Brannel School be expected to attend the Newquay Tretherras sixth form? Will students who attend the sixth form receive special transport costs? | We will not expect Brannel students to join the 6th form but we will encourage them to do so, if that is their best option, and is in their best interests. We will provide transport either free or at a very small cost. |

**Section 4: A commitment to inclusion, including providing or hosting specialist provision on the school site.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Question | Response |
| 1 | Is NET equally committed to providing specialist provision on the school site? | Absolutely. The current CEO is a Member of the SPT and wholly committed to working closely with them. NET is fully committed to inclusion and will fully respect and support Brannel’s commitment to the ARB as its moves into the SPT, but remains on the Brannel site. |
| 2 | How can NET support students with additional needs at Brannel School? | Using joint services, SENDCO training and support. The Wave provision at NT is a model of good practice and we are confident that Brannel’s SENDCo will enjoy being part of a wider team, sharing resources and expertise for the benefit of all. It will be an advantage to all academies if we jointly employ specialists to support children with additional needs. |
| 3 | What arrangements, if any, will there be between the schools to support students who are persistently disruptive? | We will use the protocols in the current Behaviour Partnership to support students in every way possible as an alternative to permanent exclusion. We will use our strong partnership with the Acorn Academy Trust (part of the KTSA) to extend the ways we can do this. The NET EXEC Team will examine ways of managing disruption and how academies can support each other in developing innovative and successful provision. That said, we reserve the right to permanently exclude children when/if all the resources and approaches at our disposal are exhausted. We will however seek to collaborate closely with the Acorn Trust over alternatives to this. |

**Section 5: Appropriate and reasonable accountability, focusing on ‘earned autonomy’ and trust.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Question | Response |
| 1 | How will the Headteacher and Senior Leaders be held to account for their performance? | The Headteacher and Chair of the LGB will conduct the Performance Management of the Senior Leaders in the school. The PM process and outcomes are reported by Headteachers to the Staffing Committee each autumn. Targets set will be drawn from the key performance objectives in the school development plan, and these will be reviewed annually. The CEO and Chair of the Board will conduct the PM of the Headteacher with an external SIP. Headteachers report termly to the Board on the termly Data Dashboard and are expected to provide the Board with an account of progress made since the last Dashboard. |
| 2 | What systems and policies, if any, will be expected to be implemented across the staff of the school (e.g. performance management)? To what extent will the school’s current systems be taken in to consideration? | This will be a gradual process. Inevitably it is expected that all policies will be aligned across the Trust so that everyone is treated equally in the Trust. Policies, however, are drafted by the NET Executive Team before being approved by the Board. The Headteachers are expected to contribute to collective policy formation. The Executive Team will examine the priorities for alignment in the first year. Results analysis, SEF completion and PM will be driven by statutory dates. HR policies will be aligned and NET will be advised by its HR provider. There would have to be good reason for an academy to ignore these policies but, as with everything, this will be discussed and resolved at senior level. |

**Section 6: Commitment to a Local Governing Board with an ongoing strategic role in the development of the school, including its finances.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Question | Response |
| 1 | Does NET support a strong local governing board with representatives from the local community? | Of course. See the agreed Scheme of Delegation which has been discussed fully with the Head of Brannel. |
| 2 | What powers and decision making authority will the LGB have? | See the SoD as above. |
| 3 | How will NET support the school in developing parental engagement? | The LGB will have representatives drawn from parents and the local community. NET encourages its academies to engage parents through a variety of means: through events and activities, consultation groups and the use of social media, amongst others. |

**Section 7: The role and potential for the school to collaborate actively with other schools and organisations.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Question | Response |
| 1 | As part of joining NET, what networks and opportunities for collaboration are available to the school? | They’re pretty endless really. A major source of opportunity and partnership will be membership of The Kernow Teaching School Alliance. The KTSA will organise a full programme of training and CPD events and opportunities for all staff. The Exec will draw up the initial list of priorities for collaboration and networking. It will be important to arrange collaboration and networking for students too. Joint teaching/ staff exchanges are realistic possibilities if there is a shared approach to timetabling and setting calendar dates in the future. NET academies are very experienced at using PIXL strategies and there are considerable opportunities for a local PIXL network, led by NET academies. |
| 2 | How will NET support and sustain the collaboration and networks which the school has already established? | See Q2.2 above. It is not for NET to limit the successful partnerships which Brannel has established and developed over the years. Rather NET will encourage Brannel to sustain its networks and include other NET academies if this is appropriate. |

**Section 8: Brannel’s unequivocal commitment to enhance the future opportunities for young people based upon the impact of social disadvantage including projects aimed at raising employability skills and aspirations, such as the Brannel Challenge.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Question | Response |
| 1 | Does NET support the school strategy and programme known as the Brannel Challenge? | Completely: the programme is clearly making a difference and is highly regarded. We see no reason why it should not continue to thrive and develop within NET. |
| 2 | How will NET contribute to the Fantastic Futures agenda and provide even greater opportunities for students to develop their aspirations? | This might be something that is introduced in Newquay and more widely across Cornwall. NET believes that Brannel students will have access to a wider range of opportunities and raise their aspirations if they become part of a larger partnership of academies. With Brannel joining NET, the possibilities for developing our business arm and income generating strategies are greater. This might lead to the appointment of our own Enterprise and Employment Team. |
| 3 | Does NET support the opportunity for students to participate in meaningful work experience? | Yes. NT students in Years 10 and 12 have a week of work experience and some young people have more than that as part of their vocational courses. This is seen as an entitlement for all. |
| 4 | How will NET work with its schools in developing the school curriculum and ethos to embrace an ever-changing expectation on employability skills and attributes. | Through the NET Executive Team and regular meetings of school staff, as well as providing up to date CPD in the Kernow Teaching School, NET will aim to ensure that young people’s futures are central to our success. We will monitor destinations and NEETs carefully. As a larger group of academies, we should be able to secure a wider range of business support and hopefully, secure additional funding to extend the range of work related learning opportunities for all. Our links with Enterprise Advisers, our business and college links will continue to grow as the partnerships in NET develop. Each Autumn term as part of its annual curriculum review process, the NET QA Board will seek to ensure that all NET academies are providing a rich, dynamic, needs-led curriculum which fully prepares students for employment. |
| 5 | How will NET ensure that the students at Brannel School overcome any disadvantage they may have and compete favourably against their peers worldwide? | The achievement of all students regardless of their starting points is one of the fundamental values in NET. We are proud of our track record in championing the cause of disadvantaged youngsters and monitor their achievement thoroughly. We are extremely careful in allocating them additional resources which we see as their entitlement., All policies and discussions take account of their specific needs, and we will ensure that disadvantaged students in Brannel are given all the support they need to succeed. NET will work with Brannel on a clear Disadvantage Strategy which carefully analyses which measures need to be put in place in order that Brannel students can compete on a level playing field. The KTSA will commission research into best practice nationally. |

**Section 9: A sustainable and developmental approach to the future, ensuring a pro-active response to change and risks.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Question | Response |
| 1 | How will NET ensure that any improvement strategies put in place with the school will be sustainable and not place some students at risk as a result of short term ‘fixes’? | We have never done this and do not intend to start doing it. NET has never played the system with young people or placed them at risk because of a curriculum dogma or over reliance on performance tables. A curriculum must be designed with the needs of all young people in mind. |
| 2 | How can NET support the ongoing development of staff through professional learning and practice? | The Kernow Teaching School Alliance (KTSA) which Brannel will automatically join will offer a wide range of training and CPD for all staff across NET and our partner trusts within KTSA. NET will develop a Career Entitlement Offer for staff which will be offered to all staff as part of recruitment and appointment. |
| 3 | What can/will NET do to support the recruitment of excellent teachers, particularly in shortage subjects? | See above. We believe that offering a wide range of opportunities for refreshment and development will be attractive to potential employees. All future employees will be NET based and will be offered the opportunity to teach across our schools and across all key stages. The KTSA will continue to offer a high-quality School Direct Programme to grow our own talent. |
| 4 | Will NET allow for Brannel School to continue to engage with a variety of initial teacher training providers? | This will be an expectation. It is hoped that Brannel will also work with the KTSA School Direct Programme to grow our own talented team of staff. |
| 5 | How will NET tackle the ongoing funding issues in education through efficiency and pro-active income generation? | Joint procurement and economies of scale will help, but will not solve, the funding crisis. The Finance Committee will monitor school budgets carefully and charge the FD and Business Managers with 5- year budget forecasting, to ensure that school leaders are tackling the issues well in advance. Appointing our own Business Development Team should enable us to become more proactive about seeking additional sources of income. |