



Birdsedge
First School



Appendix 6c– Parents/Carers & Community Consultation Feedback

Consultation with Parents/Carers and the wider school community highlighted a series of questions which are outlined within this appendix. The consultation process included a letter and a set of frequently asked questions being sent home to every parent/carer, a copy of all information was uploaded on to each of the school websites (which included an online survey) and there was an opportunity for parents to attend pre-arranged meetings on the 8th and 9th March 2016 for the middle schools and 18th and 20th April for the first schools.

Stakeholders were able to provide feedback in person, via the survey, via email or in the post.

In total across the four schools 73 parents fed back to the consultation. This included 23 online, 1 via email and 31 parents/families/stakeholders one of the three formal meetings and we also spoke to 18 at the Birdsedge parents evening.

Questions and answers recorded included:

1. Will the conversion affect the Y6 SATS?

No, we can reassure you that staff and pupil focus for year 6 is absolutely on their SATs. Every effort has always been to ensure the very highest of standards and quality and we will ensure there will be no staff consultation timed around the SATs period. School is operating as normal throughout the consultation & conversion process.

2. Why is there only one first school from the Shelley Pyramid in the proposed MAT?

A second first school has now decided to join the Trust. At this point we are unable to say who but we would hope to confirm this either just prior or immediately after the Easter break. It is important their staff and pupils/parents know first.

3. 25k will be contributed by the Government to assist conversion, how much will it cost in total and where will the remainder of the money come from?

We are confident that the £25k that is allocated to each of the four schools will cover all costs. We are making efficiencies by using the same legal practice and programme manager and where possible joining up meetings and



consultation events. Any monies that remain unused can remain in the Trust budget.

4. Other than more autonomy for the school and the fact the current Government want Good/Outstanding schools to convert to academies, are there any other reasons for conversion?

The reasons all schools in our proposed Multi Academy Trust are considering academy status is:

- to ensure we remain in charge of our own destiny and we can model our MAT on the values and ethos that make this partnership of schools so outstanding for the pupils.
- because the Local Authority capacity is disappearing
- we want to shape the provision to meet the future needs of our children, families and communities based on a local/collaborative proposal of working together and building on existing good practice
- school to school support of our choice
- to develop and share the expertise of all staff to further improve effectiveness and outcomes for children
- to formalise existing partnerships

5. If the current Government are not voted in during the next Parliament, will academies revert back to LA run schools?

We do not know the answer to this question as this is some time off and policy we are sure will change over the next four years, however what we would say is that academies were originally a Labour policy and with the education role significantly reducing over the coming years with local authorities it is highly unlikely to return to the LA

6. Have pupils at Scissett been given enough information and asked for their opinion?

They have yes. On Monday 7th March the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and Gail Khan presented the proposal to pupils in an assembly, this was followed by a question and answer session. The pupils then returned to their class bases where their class teachers had further time to discuss things and for pupils to complete a questionnaire. Their feedback will be shared in the



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final consultation report after Easter which will be made available online for all stakeholders to access. Similar exercises took place at all schools with conversations in assembly, via student council and completion of questionnaires.

7. Have the governing body already decided this is the way forward?

They have made the decision to propose conversion and to apply to the Department for Education for an academy order. Governors will listen to feedback through this consultation and review their plans should this be required.

8. Who appoints the trust board?

In the set up phase it will be the Governors and Senior Leaders of the schools forming the MAT which will identify Trustees for the Board. We are appointing Trustees based on a professional skill set which includes education, finance, business strategy, health and well-being, HR etc

9. What will the accountability framework be going forward?

Ultimately the Trust Board will be accountable for the running of the MAT. Through a scheme of delegation they delegate responsibilities using their powers to local governing bodies and the school leadership teams. This is reviewed at least annually.

10. What if stakeholders have a different view to parents about the day to day running of the MAT?

We value the input of all stakeholders and particularly parents. The Trust will always listen to stakeholders and will endeavour to act in the best interests of the whole organisation. Parents will still be involved in the local governing bodies.

11. What about 1st schools that don't join the MAT?

There are a variety of MATs emerging within our pyramid and nationally so there is choice for first schools. It is of course up to each individual school if / when and how they decide to become an academy and they will identify the best route forward for their school community. We will continue to work with all the first schools in our pyramid whether they are foundation schools, academies or community schools.

12. Will there be any change to school services e.g. educational psychologist?

Not initially. We may in the future decide to change some of our services but this will be based on the quality of service provided and overall value for



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money. One of the benefits of becoming a MAT is we hope to generate some financial efficiencies to reinvest back into the classroom.

13. I'm not keen on change.

- a. **How can we influence and inform this proposal?** By doing what you are doing now; participating in consultation events, asking questions and finding out more.
- b. I'm even more uncomfortable if I don't receive communication. School is doing well at the moment – keep it up!

14. Will this change protect middle school status?

We can't say it will protect middle school status but we do believe academy status puts us in a better position to be in control of our own destiny.

15. What does it cost to become a MAT?

- a. **What do we get access to?**
- b. **Is it an additional cost to the school?**

Each school gets access to a grant from the DfE of £25k. We believe this funding will cover the costs of set up. Typical costs we will need to meet include: fees for legal advisers, a project manager, pension reports and financial management systems.

16. Are we learning from others?

Yes. We are networking and attending events with other MATs who are forming which are organised by the Regional Schools Commissioner. Our lawyers and project manager are also sharing best practice examples as we move forward.

17. Are we learning from Shelley College? Is it sustainable?

Yes we are and yes we believe it is sustainable. Over the course of the coming weeks and months we will do much more work on the sustainability and we have a working group set up to look at this in detail.

18. Would we employ non qualified teachers?

No.

19. Will any school change their curriculum meaning that they could have gaps in their knowledge coming from first school and/or going to high school?

At present there are no plans to change the curriculum. Through regular liaison at Pyramid meetings any proposed changes would be discussed way in advance of any implementation so we could be assured there was no detrimental effect on learners when they moved schools.



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20. Will decisions be forced on us by majority rule?

No one wants to force a decision on anyone and this is one reason we consult with parents and carers. As leaders and governors the schools do need to make decisions that they feel are in the best interests of the children. We move forward in coming weeks and months we will continue to gain information and listen to stakeholders to enable us to make the right decision. We can walk away from this until we sign the funding agreement which at the moment wouldn't be until at least Late October/early November 2016.

21. How will time spent on converting impact the school / teaching time?

There should be minimal impact in school particularly for teachers. The Headteacher and bursars may be attending meetings during the working day but the bulk of meetings is done at evening meetings.

22. If a school in the MAT fails financially, will the other schools have to dig them out of the hole?

Part of being a MAT means you take collective responsibility to support each other. If a school finds itself in difficulty financially (planned or not) the MAT (which will include all schools) has a responsibility to support that school.

23. How will this impact the pre school/wrap around care site that is within school grounds?

This will be managed through the new lease arrangements for the school and Trust. Prior to conversion we would arrange to have a sub lease in place so that provision can continue as is now. The school will work with you over the coming months to explore this further.