

**Conversion to Academy Status as part of a  
Multi Academy Trust  
Consultation  
for all stakeholders learners, staff, parents/carers, community**

**Acklam Grange School  
Linthorpe Community Primary School**

**Report on Stakeholder Consultation**

**Consultation started:** Friday 20 October 2017

**Consultation ended:** Friday 24 November 2017

Deadline for support, views, questions and concerns: Friday 24 November at 3.30pm

## **Overview of consultation**

Consultation opened: Friday 20 October 2017 and closed: Friday 24 November 2017 with deadline for support, views, questions and concerns: Friday 24 November 2017 at 3.30pm

## **Stakeholder notification and provision of information:**

- Parent Mailings: Thursday 19 October
- Documents on Websites: Friday 20 October
- Texts to Parents: Friday 20 October
- Letters to partners: Friday 20 October
- Staff Meetings:  
Acklam Grange School: Monday 13 November  
Linthorpe Community Primary School: Tuesday 7 November
- Stakeholder/Parent Information Evenings:  
Acklam Grange School: Tuesday 14 November at 6.00pm  
Linthorpe Community Primary School: Wednesday 15 November at 6.00pm
- Student Broadcast:  
Acklam Grange School: Tuesday 14 November

**Routeways/vehicles for stakeholders to submit their questions, views, queries** from Friday 20 October to close of consultation:

- By email to specially designated email addresses
- In writing marking letters 'Academy Consultation'
- At Stakeholder/Parent Information Evenings
- By appointment with Executive Headteacher/Headteacher

## Summary of Feedback received:

<b>Staff Meetings:</b>		
Acklam Grange School	Full staff attendance	1 question relating to pensions
Linthorpe Community Primary School	Full staff attendance	1 question relating to pensions 1 question – If the current HT would remain. 1 question – School name change 3 Comments – positive response re: school being a partner in establishing the MAT, not joining one.
<b>Stakeholder/Parent Information Evenings</b>		
Acklam Grange School:		
Invitation reply slips	6 responses with comments received	Conversion in MAT a good idea (1) Hope that it is not of detriment to student learning (1) Will the school uniform change? (4) Will the school day change? (1)
Meeting	4 parents attended	Questions relating to set up of a MAT and factors which would cause an academy to close
Linthorpe Community Primary School		
Invitation reply slips	13 responses with comments received	Would the MAT affect choice of secondary school (1) Questions relating to: Curriculum (4) Assessment (4) Uniform (1) Financial Arrangements (2) Extra-Curricular Activities (1) Holiday dates (2)

		Happy for the School to become an Academy (1)
Meeting	8 parents attended	<p>Questions relating to:</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>CEO Personnel / Salary</p> <p>Trust Members</p> <p>Trust Expansion/Free School</p> <p>Staffing Terms &amp; Condition</p> <p>School Name/Term</p> <p>Dates/School Trips</p> <p>Admissions</p> <p>SEND Provision</p> <p>Scheme of Delegation/Articles of Association</p> <p>Comments at the end of the meeting were supportive of the MAT.</p> <p>(Majority of questions were made by one individual)</p>
<b>Student Broadcast</b>		
Acklam Grange School	Broadcast to whole school	No comments or questions received
<b>Emails to designated address</b>		
Acklam Grange School	1 received	<p>Will the school uniform change?</p> <p>Will the school day change?</p>
Linthorpe Community Primary School	None received	
<b>Letters to school:</b>		
Acklam Grange School	None received	
Linthorpe Community Primary School	None received	

<b>Appointment with Executive Headteacher/Headteacher</b>		
Acklam Grange School	None requested	
Linthorpe Community Primary School	1 appointment with Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher / Director of Finance	1 question around consultation timeframe, should the school have to close (eg failed school, financial issues)

Questions posed during the consultation were addressed throughout, particularly during the two Parent Information Evenings, but are also covered in our FAQs document, which was posted on both websites at the start of the consultation. Below are some pertinent points from the FAQs document, which also address these questions and queries:

**Impact on learning:**

**How would converting to an Academy benefit the young people?**

Becoming an academy will give the school more freedom to make decisions about the best way to provide an outstanding education for the children. This can allow for more unique and innovative approaches to teaching and learning, improving the experience and performance of the children as a result.

**How are the young people affected on a day-to-day basis?**

In many ways, the young people will not notice any difference. The academy may keep the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. They will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all children. However, in time the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the experience for the children.

**There is no evidence that academy conversions improve standards so why are you thinking of applying?**

Converter academies, like us, need to demonstrate consistent high standards to be able to convert. There is an expectation that they continue to improve standards following conversion. The significant majority of converter academies do this. Research also demonstrates the impact that these converter academies have when they have sponsored other schools. Our plans are focused on ensuring that we share the best practice, continue to develop and evolve together and meet the needs of our communities. We will also be in a strong position to support schools that are not

meeting the needs of their young people and communities yet. We believe that through converting now, we are able to create the formal collaboration that sustains our current strengths and supports further growth.

**Will responsibilities in relation to Special Education Needs (SEN) and exclusions change?**

No. Responsibilities as an academy in relation to SEN and exclusions will be just the same as they are now. A child with a statement of SEN/Education Health Care Plan can nominate an academy as their school of choice. Schools converting to academy status can retain the admissions criteria they currently use. These arrangements and related processes must at all times comply with the School Admissions Code.

**School organisation:**

**Will our schools change?**

We want to continue to be great schools where every child is valued. We therefore do not intend to change except in ways we think will improve the schools even more. For children, it is unlikely that they would see much, if any, change in their day-to-day school lives. Academies have more freedom than other state schools over their finances, curriculum, length of terms and school days. However, we do not intend to take any such steps at this stage and would engage with parents/carers, staff and students if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future.

**Would the school/academy have to change its name, logo or uniform?**

No, in our MAT this will be a decision for the academy.

**Will the school be open for more weeks in the year?**

We will continue to be open for 38 weeks per year as required by current legislation. This can be reviewed by the MAT in the future. In addition, the MAT will endeavor to set holidays which are consistent with other schools and academies in the locality.

**Will the school day be change?**

There are no plans to change the current schools days.

**Will the academy follow the National Curriculum?**

Yes, but it would have more freedom to try different things in the curriculum and make sure that what is taught is relevant to our student/pupils and their specific needs

### **What inspection regimes and assessment data information do academies have to provide?**

All academies are inspected by Ofsted using the same framework and timescales as for state maintained schools.

Academies still have to take part in national tests, teacher assessments and public examinations as they apply to state maintained schools.

Also, results are reported in performance tables in the same way as they are now.

### **How will admissions to the school be affected?**

The school will become its own admissions authority but this will still have to be clear and fair and in line with admissions law and the national School Admissions Code. The Local Authority will continue to have responsibility for making sure there are sufficient places locally and will coordinate the admissions process for all schools. This means parents/carers will still only have to complete one application per child. We will look at this, in partnership with our stakeholders in our first year.

The MAT will manage its own admissions process and publish the academy's admissions policy on an annual basis on their website. Any changes to the policy will need consultation in line with the School Admissions Code.

### **Will students from other primary schools be able to apply to Acklam Grange School?**

Yes. Whilst the MAT is co-founded by Acklam Grange School and Linthorpe Community Primary School, applications from all students will be welcomed and will be allocated in line with the School Admissions Code and the admissions process coordinated by the Local Authority.

### **Will pupils from Linthorpe Community Primary School still have a choice of secondary school?**

Yes. Secondary school places will be allocated in line with the School's Admissions Code and the admissions process coordinated by the Local Authority.

### **Will the school remain non-selective?**

Yes - academies are non-selective schools. Academies are required to follow the law and guidance on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as if they were maintained schools. It is the aim of the MAT to ensure that our academies provide high quality, inclusive education for local children.

## **Set up of a MAT and factors which would cause an academy to close:**

### **Who makes the decision to become an academy?**

The governing body.

### **Are academies bound by the same rules and regulations as other schools?**

Academies are required to follow the law and guidance on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions.

### **Will each school/academy have its own Headteacher?**

There is a Headteacher in every school/academy.

### **What happens if the Headteacher leaves?**

The academy trust will work with the academy's governors to appoint a new headteacher.

### **How will parents have a say in the running of the academy?**

Parents and families will continue to be represented on local councils through elected governors.

### **How does governance work?**

There will be three tiers of governance:

- **members** – members of a company limited by guarantee (like the MAT) are similar to the shareholders in a company limited by shares. They are the 'guarantors' of the academy trust and promise to pay £10 towards its debts should the academy trust be wound up without enough assets to satisfy its creditors. The role of a member is a 'hands-off, eyes on' role, similar to the governance role of the local authority in a maintained school. Members will have limited powers which will include the right to wind up the academy trust, amend the articles of association, appoint other members and appoint and remove one or more trustees
- board of **trustees** – responsible for the success of the MAT – results and finances., appointing governors to local councils and individuals appointed to make strategic decisions about the day to day running of the academy trust have three names:
  - they are directors because the academy trust is a company
  - they are trustees because the academy trust is a charity (albeit one that is exempt from registering with the Charity Commission)

- they are governors because the academy trust is responsible for running the school(s).
- local governing bodies or **local councils** (LCs) for each academy school – oversee the performance of the individual academy.

The MAT will support the principle of ‘supported’ or ‘earned’ autonomy and the scheme of delegation will reflect the level of support that each academy will receive from the members and the board of trustees. Broadly speaking, a school that is good or outstanding will see little change.

### **What is a local council?**

Within a MAT, each academy school will usually have its own local council (LC). These have a similar status to committees of a maintained governing body and the only powers they have are those that are delegated to them by the board of trustees. This is normally formalised into a scheme of delegation. Whilst individuals serving on an LC may also be trustees of the MAT, retaining some distinction between the layers is important to ensure effective oversight and challenge. It is common for individuals serving on an LC to be referred to a ‘governors’, although technically the governors of an academy trust are the trustees. Whilst the LCs will usually have delegated authority to run the academy school, the board of trustees will be ultimately responsible for all academies it runs.

### **What are the memorandum and articles of association?**

The MAT is a charitable company limited by guarantee. Like all companies, the MAT will have a memorandum and articles of association. The memorandum sets out the names of the initial members of the MAT and the articles are the rules that will govern the running of the company.

### **Can an academy be closed?**

Academies are still subject to Ofsted inspections. Any school which is not making satisfactory progress or does not meet expected standards is at risk of intervention

### **Academy Funding and finances**

#### **Is an academy like a business?**

No. A business makes profit for its shareholders. An academy is a charitable trust which cannot make profit.

#### **What will happen to our school’s funding?**

The Department for Education meets the running costs for an academy in full. Academy funding is calculated on a like-for-like basis with local authority schools. Therefore the academy will have a

similar budget to that of its predecessor maintained school. With greater freedom to procure services from other providers and to realise cost efficiencies across the network, the academy will be able to make more efficient use of resources to support school improvement. Like other schools, an academy cannot run at a loss or agree a deficit budget, i.e. it has to break-even.

### **Will our school lose money?**

The school/academy would continue to receive its own budget and decide on how many staff it needs to employ and where they should work. This is laid out in the scheme of delegation. The MAT will work together to secure financial benefits from bulk buying and negotiate centralised contracts. These monies will be paid out centrally from academies' own budgets.

### **How will the school be accountable financially?**

An academy is governed by the rules and regulations for charitable trusts, e.g. we will be required to produce and file accounts and trustees cannot be paid. There will be robust systems with an audit conducted by an external independent auditor.

### **Will there be pay increases for the school leaders?**

In line with current governance arrangements, each Local Council will set the pay scale in conjunction with the Trust Board for their academy. They will pay the leaders from their own budget. These salary ranges will be set in relation to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document. The board of trustees will review central salaries and have the oversight of the spend of these public monies. This is not an exercise in creating "fat cat" salaries.

### **I have seen on the news that there have been academies that have had troubles with financial management.**

The MAT will monitor finances closely and the board of trustees will have financial expertise on it.

### **How does academy status affect SEN funding?**

SEN funding will come directly from the government through the Education Funding Agency. Funding allocated to a named child would continue to be funded directly by the local authority.

### **Does it cost to become an academy?**

Yes. There are legal costs associated with conversion, but the government provides each school with £25,000 to contribute towards these costs.

## **Staff Pensions, Pay and Conditions:**

### **If the school becomes a MAT who takes responsibility for the pension arrangements of teachers?**

The MAT will have an agreement with the Secretary of State making it a requirement to offer participation in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) to all teaching staff, just as if they were employed in a Local Authority maintained school.

The TPS runs teachers' pensions on behalf of the Department for Education. As the employer, the MAT would be responsible for collecting and paying employer and employee contributions to the TPS and for all other administrative responsibilities set out in the Teachers' Pensions Regulations.

The TPS determine the employer and employee pension contributions which cannot be varied. Any future changes will be decided by the TPS not the MAT. Benefits paid to teachers on retirement are not affected by academy status.

### **And for support staff?**

Currently, the funding agreement insists that academies must offer membership of the Teachers' Pension Scheme to all teachers and the Local Government Pension Scheme to all support staff. Currently, the funding agreement insists that academies must offer membership of the Teachers' Pension Scheme to all teachers and the Local Government Pension Scheme to all support staff.

### **What would the changes mean for staff?**

Staff would not notice significant changes in their everyday working lives. They already experience and champion the benefits of partnership work and that would not only continue but grow.

### **How will being an academy affect staff?**

After conversion, all staff at the school will be employed by the MAT. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. This is explained further below.

The MAT will adopt in full the National Pay and Conditions for teachers.

The MAT will recognise unions and professional associations.

### **How are the staff's contracts of employment protected?**

Legislation known as the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employees) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) is a piece of legislation designed to protect the rights of employees who may be subject to

a change in the legal identity of their employer. These regulations set out that employee terms and conditions such as pay, pension and policies are protected at the point of transfer, and the Academy inherits all rights, liabilities and obligations in relation to them. The regulations also provide that the current employer must consult with unions, professional associations and staff on the transfer. The future employer must also set out to the current employer any proposed changes that could affect employees. Examples include plans to re-organise staff or introduce new ways of working.

**November 2017**