



# The Federation of The Downs & Northbourne Church of England Primary Schools



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14<sup>th</sup> June 2018

## The Downs Parental Academy Consultation Responses – May 2018

Forms returned as of Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018:

<b>YES</b>	29	<b>NOT SURE</b>	24
<b>DON'T MIND</b>	15	<b>NO</b>	20

Questions at parent information meeting	Response
Where does the money come from?	Money currently comes from the DFE to the LA and then to schools. Schools have to buy back services from the LA. As an academy the money will come direct from the DFE and schools can decide what services to purchase and where from, looking for best value for money. As an academy additional funding can be bid for from the DFE which is not available to LA schools
Staff contracts and how will these be affected?	Staff will retain their current terms and conditions
How will schools afford all the legal costs?	Any school converting to an academy gets a conversion grant to cover costs involved in the process
Two funded posts – CEO and CFO - how can this be afforded, what due diligence is carried out to ensure costs can be afforded, how will we know if we will make savings?	An external consultant is providing support to ensure all due diligence is carried out and that the schools involved are financially viable. This work is continuing. It is unlikely schools will make savings in the first year to 18 months as all service contracts will need to be aligned but economies of scale will mean that schools will be no worse off.
Will schools retain their own budget or have to bail out other schools?	All schools retain their individual school funding which is determined through the national funding formula. It is up to individual schools to manage their budgets as they do now.
Trustees – who would want to be a trustee?	As with your school local governing body, trustees are local people with an interest in their local area's education provision.
Timescales?	There is still a long process, consultation to complete and many legal hoops to go through but could potentially be early in the next academic year if the green light is given.
It would be helpful to have more information on this but overall I think it will be a good idea to convert to academy status	Hopefully you were able to attend one of our parent meetings.
If the school is moving to a trust will there be any need for the federation to remain. As a parent I feel there is very little benefit to my child in particular on a financial level	The plan would be to enter the academy as a federation as we share one governing body. The federation enables us to operate a minibus, employ a family liaison officer and have access to regular forest school activities all of which the children and families benefit from in terms of access to services and reduced transport costs. Much of the resources that the children use in school are bought on an economy of scale due to being able to bulk buy for both schools.



If the school thinks it is a good idea then we support it. Would make more of a community within Deal and the school would get control of expenditure	Thank you for your support
The meeting at school was most informative. The governors seem to have a balanced view and I am happy to trust them to act in the best interest of the school	Thank you for coming to the meeting. Glad it was informative.
Whatever is best for the school	The academy proposal allows all schools to work together in the best interest of all the children of Deal.
Will there be redundancies? Will people have to reapply for jobs?	Terms and conditions of employment for staff will not change.
At the moment The Downs has a good reputation and our concern is that the schools reputation will be affected. The long term future of the school is also a worry. Would there be any closures and/or mergers?	All the schools proposing to join as an academy have good reputations and a combined interest in providing the best for the children of Deal would only allow each school to go from strength to strength. Working with the local authority we know that pupil numbers are stable and all schools currently sustainable.
By being in a large academy, I am worried that The Downs will lose its unique way of teaching and its main core values over time to a large corporate group who will want all 7 schools to be the same	The academy trust is a charitable trust and not operated by paid directors. Each school will retain its unique identity, core values and way of teaching. The Trustees will be local people who are interested in serving their community and ensuring the children of Deal have the best educational offer.
Think it will be good for the children but not sure how it will effect staff	Terms and conditions of employment for staff will not change.
Will joining an academy have an effect on the pupils in a negative way i.e. like Goodwin laying off teachers?	Academy status does not bring additional funding and school income remains broadly static as costs rise. Joining together increases opportunities for economies of scale which will help us to continue to balance our budgets. Working closely together means that if staff changes have to be made, we may be able to redeploy staff elsewhere, which is less significant for them. This will be assisted by the geographical closeness of the 7 schools.
The advantages haven't been outlined to the point we can make a decision	Hopefully you were able to attend one of our parent meetings and this has helped you form a decision
I understand that the schools are being pragmatic but am concerned at the lack of available financial and logistical information. I am disappointed that the schools did not engage with parents at an earlier stage	Conversion is an ongoing process and we are developing a more detailed financial assessment of the impact. Governors wanted to be confident that there was a way forward that they could recommend to parents before consulting.
I feel it should be left as a primary school. Academy's should be for secondary	The current political agenda is that all schools (primary, secondary and special) will be part of academy trusts independent of local authority control. In due course, it is likely that we will be required to become an academy. Standalone academies are no longer an option. Once a number of academy trusts operate in the area a new one will not be able to be created. We would then be required to join an academy trust chosen for us. This may be one that operates remotely from another location and not understand our local community.
The Downs CEP should remain a Church of England Primary School. It would be a shame if it was to change as all pupils thrive at this school	Each school would retain its own identity. The Downs will remain a Church of England Primary School. Any Church school entering the academy trust will retain its Church of England status. This cannot be changed. The diocese will appoint three of the five members of the Company to ensure that this remains the case.
It's important that each school keeps its own identity. The Downs will lose its C of E status for example	



<p>We have no interest in the proposal and believe it to be ridiculous. Essentially academies could be drawn into curriculum changes due to central government influence/funding. We would also not be able to control/uphold any religious views/beliefs; therefore our children would be further indoctrinated to the central government agenda. Therefore I strongly disagree to the proposal</p>	<p>Initially the academy trust proposes to follow the national curriculum which is determined by central government. However, academies have more freedom in determining curriculum content and any future changes in government directive that does not work for our local community will be reviewed. Funding increases for academies as all the money comes direct from government to the academy trust and not via the local authority that retain a small amount of funding to share amongst all their LA schools. All Church Schools within the academy trust will retain their distinctive Christian ethos.</p>
<p>Too many schools in one new academy. Feels rushed and a logistical nightmare</p>	<p>Discussions about academies have been on governor and heads meeting agendas for several years. In earnest the last two and a steering group has been exploring in depth for 18 months. All the logistics need to be established before any of the schools will go ahead in order to ensure a smooth transition</p>
<p>Some reasons why we oppose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi academy trusts are no more accountable than sponsored academies</li> <li>• Lack of transparency, accountability and financial mismanagement are rife in academies</li> <li>• Academies don't have to follow the national curriculum</li> <li>• Academies are tax payer funded with little accountability to the community</li> <li>• Academies can set their own admission criteria (introduce Church attendance requirement)</li> <li>• Academies can set their own pay rates – less than LA pay</li> </ul>	<p>It is true that academies can do many of these things; but they are not required to do so. There are poor examples of behaviour in multi academy trusts, just as there are in maintained schools and in other parts of the public and private sector. But the majority of Multi Academy Trusts are well run, locally based and designed to work for the benefit of local children. DEALT will be accountable to the Secretary of State for outcomes and will be monitored by the Regional Schools Commissioner. Schools will continue to be inspected by OfSTED. Each school will continue to have elected parent governors – and decisions about how each school is run will be taken at local level. Parents have exactly the same opportunity to engage with the schools as they do now about the education of their child, and can complain to the school, the Trust and to OfSTED.</p> <p>DEALT proposes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to follow the national curriculum;</li> <li>• Pay all staff on national terms and conditions; and</li> <li>• Retain current admissions arrangements.</li> </ul> <p>Audited annual accounts will be published</p>

Thank you for all these questions. Please do continue to keep us informed of your thoughts and questions. We value your opinions and will take them into consideration throughout the process.

Yours sincerely,

Dr.A Eyden  
Chair of Governors.

