



Academy Consultation



Hungerhill School

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Introduction

On 7th April 2011 the Governing Body of Hungerhill School passed a unanimous resolution to enter into formal consultation regarding the conversion to Academy status from April 1st 2012. This document is designed to help to explain why the Governing Body are exploring this option, and to inform you how to contribute to the consultation process. Links to this and further information are available on the school website at www.hungerhillschool.com

What is an Academy?

Academies are publicly funded schools that operate outside of local authority control. They:

- are directly funded by central government instead of receiving funds via a local authority. They therefore receive additional finances that are currently held by the Local Authority and are able to decide for themselves how this money is spent
- are run by an Academy Trust, which can have the same composition as the governing body of a school
- have more freedom to determine the school curriculum
- exercise greater control of their own affairs, such as deciding on the lengths of terms and the school day
- are employers of their own staff and can set their own pay and conditions for staff. (Hungerhill already has these powers as a Foundation/Trust school) Hungerhill Governors have no plans to move away from existing terms and conditions
- hold their own lands and assets (Hungerhill already holds its own land as a Foundation/Trust school)

Traditionally, Academies were schools that were run by external sponsors, often from a business background and responsible for raising standards. This is no longer the case.

Under current legislation, there are two new types of Academy :

1 : Sponsored Academies.

These are schools that have decided they need the extra capacity a sponsor might bring to help improve standards. Generally, the sponsor would have a major say in the constitution of the Academy Trust and the way the school operates. In this way the school might lose some of its autonomy and become part of an 'academy chain'.

2 : Converter Academies.

Schools that are graded by Ofsted as ‘outstanding’ or ‘good with outstanding features’ can convert to Academy status. These ‘converter academies’ do not require a sponsor, but are required to work with at least one partner school to help it to raise standards. ‘Converter academies’ enjoy all of the freedoms of Academy status and set up their own Academy Trust to hold the land and assets on behalf of the Governing Body.

Hungerhill School is exploring the possibility of becoming a ‘converter’ academy’. It has no intention of becoming a ‘sponsored academy’.

Why become a “Converter” Academy?

Hungerhill School has always committed itself to being a school at the heart of the community. This is shown through its membership of the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust. The educational landscape is changing rapidly both locally and nationally with many schools becoming, or proposing to become, academies. As a result, the Governing Body is considering whether to convert to academy status in order to protect and further develop the achievements of recent years. In this way it can be seen as the natural evolution for the school, taking into account the current political and educational context.

The school will also be able to decide how best to spend the monies currently held back by the Local Authority. This has been calculated to approximately £500,000. The Governing Body believes that direct control of this extra money will give enhanced financial security at a time of increasing pressure on public funded budgets.

As an academy Hungerhill School would still be totally committed to providing the highest quality education for its pupils and the best service for the local community.

How would a new Academy operate?

Hungerhill is considering converting to Academy status and because we are a successful school we do not need a sponsor. The Governing Body would continue to lead and manage the school. Therefore, the governance of the school would remain with stakeholders including staff, parents and the wider community.

As an Academy the school will remain committed to working within the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust. Indeed, it will enable us to play an even more integral role in some of the developments proposed by the Trust.

It is also being considered whether Hungerhill should become part of the Schools Co-operative Society (SCS), established by the Co-operative College. This is an international network of schools committed to the following values:

- Self help
- Self responsibility
- Democracy
- Equality
- Equity
- Solidarity
- Honesty
- Openness
- Social responsibility
- Caring for others

As part of the SCS we would provide support for other schools and also access best practice, not only in this country, but internationally. In this way we would be fulfilling the requirement of an academy to work with other schools.

Other key aspects:

- Change of status would take place from April 1st 2012
- The school will retain its current 11-16 status, but as an academy it could convert to 11-18 if finance could be found to extend the buildings to accommodate post-16 students
- The school would adhere to our current catchment areas and our current admissions policy

Summary

By becoming an academy the school would remain at the heart of the community. It would continue to enhance its provision, as well as maintaining its autonomy in terms of control of resources and decision-making.

It is the intention of the Governing Body to give all stakeholders the opportunity to contribute to the consultation process. Should you wish to respond you can do so in writing by submitting your views to the school reception, marked Academy and for the attention of the Chair of Governors.

Alternatively you may respond via e.mail to academyconsultation@hungerhillschool.com

The deadline for responses is 4pm on Friday 15th July 2011.