

1. Parents' Consultation Evening Booking System – Carl Spencer
2. Academy Trust Status Presentation – Chris Southall
3. Refreshments and opportunity to discuss issues and decide upon any questions to ask panel
4. Issues posed and questions asked to panel

# Academy Trust Schools



# What is an Academy Trust School?

- Publicly funded independent schools free from local authority control.
- All schools not in the OfSTED category of 'special measures' or carrying a budget deficit greater than £100,000 can apply to convert to the status.
- It is expected that through Academy Trust status schools work in collaboration to raise standards.
- The Academy Trust is a charitable company, limited by guarantee.
- Members of the Trust are responsible for giving broad oversight, registering land and appointing the Governing Body (also called Trustees or Directors).
- There are normally only a small number of Members but there is no limit to the size of the Governing Body providing it has at least three governors.
- The Governing Body should have at least 2 parent governors, one third can be staff governors (including the Principal) and there can be up to 3 co-opted governors.
- The shortest timeline to convert to Academy Trust status is 3 months.
- There is a legal requirement for schools considering the status to consult other parties.

## Converting academies in Leicestershire:

- 6 schools have converted
- 4 in the pipeline
- Others are seriously thinking about conversion: perhaps 20 gone or going by the end of the year?

## Also:

- Studio school in Coalville; expecting another next September in Hinckley
- Interest in an 11-16 free school in Market Harborough?

## The Government's ambition is for all schools to become academies

*"I would like, in due course, for academies to become the norm"* Michael Gove

Substantial numbers have already converted in:

- Lincolnshire
- Derbyshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Currently 1400 conversions Nationally

***"The pace of conversion in Leicestershire is steady but picking up"***

# Why are schools converting?

## Technical freedoms

- Curriculum
- Timings of term and school day
- Staff pay and conditions
- Ability to purchase services directly

But also:

- 11-16/19
- Catchment areas

## Leadership and responsibility

- The next stage up for this school
- Don't want to ask permission from the Local Authority

## Money and geography

- Financial benefits for some
- Dynamics of the local area

## Impact on the LA

- The LA is not responsible for academy schools. At all.
- Academies take a share of the LA budget (and a bit more) – regardless of how much they previously received from the Local Authority
- This will impact on the LA's ability to provide services from next April, and may do so radically over the next couple of years

## Impact on maintained schools

- What you stay with will not look like what you have now
- The difference between academies and maintained schools in the future might be less than you imagine
- The change might even be felt more in maintained schools if they are not expecting it

## Sponsored Academies

Still an option but none at present in Leicestershire

## Converter Academies

- Single School Academy
- Multi School Academies
  - Vertical grouping (Primary, secondary, upper schools grouped together)
  - Geographical grouping: but how local is sensible?
  - Co-operatives and umbrellas: schools brought together under faith or philosophy

## New school Academies

- Free schools
- Studio schools (HE/FE)

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## New school Academies

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- Register interest online
- Notify LA
- Consult
- Formally apply to DfE
- Appoint solicitors
- Academy order passed
- Manage conversion process (TUPE, conveyance & Commercial Transfer Agreement)
- Agree funding/sign funding agreement
- Convert

## Pleas from the LA:

- Consider carefully who to go with or whether to go alone
- Early contact with LA Conversion Team
- Be realistic on a conversion target date – the property issues are worse than moving house
- Regular contact with your Legal reps, the LA and the Dept. of Education

*At some point we may have to hold up an academy conversion if schools do not consult with us before they set a target date for conversion*

# The thoughts I want to leave with you

Please consider the question of academy status as a real and pressing one for your school

Are you clear if you were to go how would you go, and with whom?

If you are thinking of staying please be clear it will be with a very different type of local authority

- Sub-committee formed recently to look into the advantages and disadvantages of a potential move to Academy Trust Status
- The sub-committee has met three times to date and members of the committee have also attended a special staff meeting regarding Academy Trust status and a Parents Forum.
- In addition college Principal Chris Southall has had a meeting with the Brockington family of schools and attended diocesan and LA briefings.
- The sub-committee has reviewed a wide range of support and advice materials from such diverse sources as the Local Authority, the local Diocese, DfE, NUT, UNISON.

# Advantages of Academy Trust Status

Advantages raised included:

*Greater freedom over setting college policies*

*Greater freedom from LA services – at a time when LA services are reducing significantly*

*More freedom to choose who we engage with, beyond the local community*

*More funding direct to college with greater flexibility over how and where to allocate funding - this might enable better pupil to teacher ratio*

*More freedom to develop financial incentives for staff and to protect staff pay and conditions*

*The ability to be more innovative in developing the college curriculum*

*Status would enable a quicker move to 11-16 if desired*

Disadvantages raised included:

*Having to purchase LA services such as HR, Legal, SEN support though, as noted above, these are being reduced by LA*

*Lack of clarity over pension payments – particularly for non-teaching staff*

*Having to pay VAT – though this is normally covered by increased central grant*

*Finding capital funding for expansion if the school did move to 11-16*

*Need to consider transport arrangements for students*

- Information shared with staff
- Information shared with parents
- Views of Full Governing Body sought
- No further action? Formal consultation process started?

- What are your views of Academy Trust Status as Parents?
- What are the issues for Brockington College and its pupils?
- Do you have any questions that you would like answered at this stage?

**WEDNESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY**