



Monks Orchard Primary School Academy Status Consultation

The purpose of this meeting:

- To clarify what an academy is and what forms academies take.
- To discuss the potential risks and benefits of a conversion.
- To share discussions that have already taken place.
- To seek your views as part of a consultation process.

What is an academy?

Academies are independent, state-funded schools, which receive their funding directly from central government, rather than through a local authority.

The day-to-day running of the school is the responsibility of the head teacher or principal, but they are overseen by individual charitable bodies called academy trusts.

Some trusts are responsible for just one school, these are called Single Academy Trusts (SATs).

Some trusts are responsible for more than one school, these are called Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs)

The site and land are leased to the academy trust by the local authority.

All staff are employed by the trust not the local authority.

Why talk about academies now?

In the white paper “Educational Excellence Everywhere,” March 2016, the government is very clear about how it sees the future of education.

“...we will move to a system where every school is an academy.”

And later...

“...we expect that most schools will form or join MATs as they become academies and that many existing Single Academy Trusts (SATs) will see the benefits of setting up or joining a MAT too.”

What are our options?

We remain a local authority maintained school.

We convert to a stand alone academy.

We join an established multi-academy trust.

We form a new multi-academy trust with other schools.

What are the benefits of becoming an academy?

The government argues that academies drive up standards and “...that academies are the best type of school for talented people to improve outcomes for pupils.”

By removing schools from the control of local authorities head teachers gain more control over the curriculum, pay, the length of the school day and term dates, and greater autonomy to meet the needs of their children rather than complying with local authority needs.

By setting up or joining MATs schools can benefit from:

- shared training and development.
- sharing of expertise and best practice amongst a larger group of colleagues.
- enhanced career opportunities for staff and therefore better retention.
- more efficient ‘back office,’ systems.
- economies of scale leading to more funds available for use in the classroom.
- more robust systems of governance.

Concerns about academies

Opponents to academies argue that:

- academy trusts are private companies and the conversion of schools into academies is the privatisation of education.
- as they are not under local authority control academies are not accountable to the local community.
- academies can set their own admissions criteria, which has led to fears of selection.
- parents have no right of appeal to the local authority about decisions made by academies, only to the academy trust and the secretary of state.
- some MATs have a reputation for imposing 'one size fits all,' curriculum and staffing structures on schools, so they actually end up with less autonomy.

The Education Select Committee report on academies and free schools, Jan. 2015, concluded that "There is at present no convincing evidence of the impact of academy status on attainment in primary schools."

Last year's KS2 data shows that, generally, high achieving schools have remained high achieving and low achieving schools have remained low achieving regardless of their status.

What are our options?

We remain a local authority maintained school.

We convert to a stand alone academy.

We join an established multi-academy trust.

We form a new multi-academy trust with other schools.

Discussions so far.

- The governing body have been discussing academy status, on and off, for a number of years now.
- The announcement by the chancellor earlier this year that every school must become an academy, restarted those discussions.
- The school is currently in a position of strength and so we have the freedom to make choices.
- The clear “direction of travel,” is towards MATs and we must consider this as an option.
- We have had informal discussions with a number of established local MATs, and one potential new MAT, about their experiences of conversion, their current position re other schools joining their trusts and their ethos, vision and aims.
- We have contacted the DfE who have stated that, if we choose to convert to academy status we would be able to go down the standard converter route – i.e. we would not be forced to join a specific sponsor trust.
- The governing body believes that, if Monks Orchard were to convert to academy status, the best option would be joining a local MAT. A MAT which shares our ethos, vision and aims, would allow the school to keep its identity and a high degree of autonomy. A MAT that would bring benefits to Monks Orchards as well as us bringing benefits to the MAT.
- As a result of these discussions we have made the decision to consult with parents, carers and staff.

Consultation

We now want your views on these two questions.

1. **Should Monks Orchard Primary School convert to academy status or should it remain a local authority maintained school?**
2. **If the school were to convert to academy status, which form of academy should it convert to?**

We have set up a page on the school website where you can find a brief statement and a copy of this presentation.

To contribute to the consultation e-mail:

consultation@monksorchard.co.uk

Please write 'Academy,' in the subject box.

If you do not have access to e-mail you can submit your views in writing, using the Governors' post box in the office.

The closing date is noon on 21st November

Questions

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