



## MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST PROPOSAL

# Parent Consultation

These are the questions posed by Parents/Carers at the formal information evening on Tuesday 19 May 2015.

We have attempted to answer them to the best of our ability.

There were two consultation questions:

1. What questions would you like answering?
2. What issues would you like governors to consider?

Responses to the second question were mainly in the form of questions, so we have answered them too.

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# 1. What questions would you like answering?

## 1. Questions about the proposed MAT

We are creating a 2 tier education system. Seems to be too Southbank centered. Danger of becoming too insular.

Why only Scarcroft and Knavesmire?

The proposed MAT seems very small.

Have all feeder primary schools been given the chance to join the MAT?

The catchment of Millthorpe is much wider than just Southbank, why isn't Dringhouses part of the proposal?

Would the MAT be welcome to existing catchment schools joining as full partners later?

Will the admittance criteria be set in stone?

Are you able to prove how the schools will work together for the betterment of the children? I.e. transition from primary to secondary (planners, homework, school site).

Will there be any change in class size policy?

At a broader level, how can you make any guarantees about future direction under other governing bodies? With specific regards to corporate sponsors, admission policies etc.

Other feeders - a concern that it will be more difficult to get in.

Query of position of other feeder schools (feel excluded).

## Answers

There are thirteen schools in the South Bank Cluster. At a cluster meeting in December 2014, it was agreed by all headteachers to institute a working party to consider academies in the light of a further two York schools consulting on becoming academies in addition to the four then established in York. All schools were invited to the working party: no school was excluded. Six schools took part in initial discussions; four brought it to their Governors, and in 3 schools, Governors decided to proceed to the proposal stage. The MAT can expand and it is now clear to us that many other schools in York are discussing similar structures. Other schools would be welcome to join at a future date, but at the moment no other South Bank Cluster school (including Dringhouses) feels this is the right time for them. If the phrase "admittance criteria" refers to the admissions policy, that will be identical to the existing York policy for the schools. However, the Trust is required to maintain this policy itself and the catchment areas would be subject to change in line with demographic changes. These would be negotiated with City of York. It is not possible at this stage to prove anything about the MAT, but we have outlined some of the ways in which we expect to make education better for children.

Changes in the ease of admission and the policy regarding class size do not relate to academisation but simply reflect the school's popularity and the financial pressures Millthorpe is likely to face whatever its status.

The guarantees are made in good faith, but cannot be guaranteed for perpetuity. The most likely method of providing assurance on the future ethos of the Trust would be a published document setting out its principles for working.

## **2. Questions about the management, operation and structure of the MAT**

Is there some form of agreement of how the MAT will operate between the three schools?

Where will the extra management time come from for managing the MAT? Will it take away from teaching?

If one school wanted to leave the MAT, could they?

Are there economies of scale when buying in services back from the LA?

Can other schools join the MAT?

How can you ensure that the trust stays run by local people as heads and governing bodies change? Is there some kind of constitution or articles of association?

Would there be a parental consultation and vote over proposals to any changes of school times and school term dates?

What would the constitution look like?

How will accountability be guaranteed?

What is the mechanism for help if a member of the MAT fails/is financially mismanaged?

How do you ensure the guarantees for posterity?

How do you change the Trust deed? Who votes and what majority is needed?

What are the powers and functions of the Trustees? E.g. could they override Governing Bodies or decide to impose only one Headteacher for all three schools.

Do the three founding members remain on the Governing Bodies?

### **Answers**

The relationship between the Trust and the Governing Bodies of the three schools is set out in the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association. These are legal documents established when a MAT is formed. The only management time taken up by the MAT is from headteachers and would most likely be directed to collaborative working, the benefits of which we have outlined. The Trust would not wish to retain a school who wished to leave the MAT. Other schools can join.

The first three Members are the current Chairs of Governors and would remain members of their own school's governing bodies, but they are unlikely to be Trustees for reasons of workload. A fourth member will be the chair of the Trust Board, once selected.

With respect to there being local people running the schools: the Trust composition includes an LA appointee and three places reserved for local residents. Three places are also reserved for a governor of each school and these are likely to be local people. The final three places are for the headteachers. This composition would be set out in the Articles of Association although this can be changed by the Members. Examples of the articles of association are available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-model-memorandum-and-articles-of-association>

Accountability at the level of the Governing Body would be the same as it is now. Many governors are also parents, and all Governing Bodies have elected parent positions. Beyond the Governing Bodies, there is a further level of accountability at the level of the Trust which in effect replaces the local authority as employer and guardian of standards. There is also accountability to Ofsted, to the Education Funding Agency, which funds academies, and to the Regional Schools Commission.

If one academy within a MAT fails, the first recourse is to the Trust. If the Trust does not secure improvement, the Regional Schools Commissioner has the power to transfer a failing academy away from a MAT to another one. The government has recently announced its plans to forcibly convert failing local authority schools to academies and give them a MAT sponsor, so the situation is similar for academies and local authority schools.

Guarantees: we have found that the guarantees cannot be written into the articles of association as the government expect the model articles of association to be used. Instead, the Trust would create a document setting out its commitment to the guarantees. It is not possible to ensure the guarantees in perpetuity, as any such document can be changed by the Trust. Similarly, it is not possible for local authority schools to guarantee no changes to their policies, as governing bodies have the power to change all policies. This level of flexibility (whether the school converts or not) is considered essential to allow schools to develop policies in the best interests of students in a rapidly changing environment. The structure and composition of the MAT would be designed to allow the Governing Body to continue to make such decisions in the interests of students in the future.

Trustees control the powers delegated to governing bodies and by exercising those powers are able to override Governing Bodies even to the point of dismissing them. Similarly, local authorities have similar powers and can override or dismiss Governing Bodies if a school is failing. In our proposal, maximum powers will be delegated to the school Governing Bodies and the six Trustees composed of Governors and Headteachers form a majority of the Trust.

Buying back of services is already done from a range of providers and not just the local authority. We do expect some small economies of scale from doing this as a MAT rather than three individual schools.

All schools including local authority schools now have the power to change the timing of the school day and term dates. Just as with local authority schools, this would be subject to a consultation. We have no plans to do this.

### **3. Questions about alternatives to a Multi-Academy Trust**

Have other forms of co-operation been considered i.e. Memorandum?

Can governors get info about the North York schools - they have a Memorandum of Understanding in place at Park Grove School that allows the schools to procure services together and develop and challenge staff and leaders.

Could other models be considered? Just one choice? 3 schools - is it sustainable among such a small group?

Why not join with another secondary school? Surely more expertise could be shared between Millthorpe and another secondary school?

Why work with primaries? Would there not be more advantage in working with other secondary schools?

#### **Answers**

Thank you for the suggestions about other models. We have already looked at some possibilities, but Governors will consider alternative models including a Memorandum of Understanding and Federations. A secondary MAT has advantages that a mixed MAT may not, but the ability to influence progress from age 2 to 16 is also very attractive. At present no secondary schools have indicated an interest in forming a MAT with Millthorpe School.

#### **4. Questions about Academies**

What are the regulations to determine how an academy can act?

How often are Academies inspected by Ofsted?

Is more information available from Charity commission and is this in the public domain?

#### **Answers**

The model articles of association are available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-model-memorandum-and-articles-of-association>

Academies are treated just the same as schools in terms of frequency of inspection by Ofsted.

The Charities Commission website is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>

#### **5. Questions about the consultation process**

What happens if two schools vote in favour and one against?

What if the three governing bodies disagree?

Does it have to happen now?

Should not such an important decision be made by a ballot of all parents at all 3 schools - as done regarding uniforms?

Will the results of the parent consultation be published?

#### **Answers**

Each governing body will consider separately what it would do in each of the various possibilities: all schools resolve to convert; only one of the other schools resolves to convert; no other school resolves to convert.

Conversion will only happen if the Governing Body resolves to convert. Should the Governing Body resolve to convert, it would not happen immediately; indeed we estimate the earliest possible conversion date to be 1 November 2015.

On the question of a ballot, the decision on whether to convert rests, by law, with the Governing Body. To reach this decision they are consulting in a number of ways with a wide group of people, including parents, staff, trades unions, prospective parents and community stakeholders. They have committed to read and take into account all responses they receive through this process.

Governors primary consideration is to identify and evaluation the case for and the case against, and to weigh these up accordingly. They do not feel that knowing the number of opinions one way or another would be particular helpful in this process. Parents have the right to vote for one of the four elected parent Governors on the Governing Body to ensure their views are adequately represented.

The results of the parental consultation will be published in full, with this current report as a part of it.

## **6. Questions about buildings/grounds**

Will all the land/grounds be protected?

### **Answers**

Yes. The land will be leased from City of York on a 125 year lease and remain in their ownership.

## **7. Questions about the Local Authority**

Will the withdrawal from York by the academies weaken the LA further?

LA is mediating influence - Trust Board robustness questionable?

### **Answers**

The MAT does not represent a withdrawal from City of York local authority. The proposal embeds York influence in the MAT by reserving a position for a local authority representative of York's choosing on the Trust Board. We feel that the creation of the MAT could strengthen the local authority as an education provider: once up and running, we would have sufficient expertise and capacity across the MAT to share this with other schools in York for school improvement. The LA is currently relying on two academies (Archbishop Holgate's and Manor) to deliver its school improvement and training programmes from September, so there is precedent for this.

We do not feel there is any reason to think the Trust Board may not be robust. Its membership would combine experience in all the key elements needed in school governance.

## **8. Questions about post 16 education**

Would there be any scope for post-16 education at Millthorpe/ the MAT?

Would the creation of a MAT give more autonomy to make positive changes such as a creation of a sixth form in Millthorpe?

Chances of more apprenticeship schemes for school leavers and Year 10 and 11 (underachievers and other children).

### **Answers**

The Governing Body has not discussed any post-16 expansion at Millthorpe and has no plans for it.

Given the current excellent post-16 provision in York, this would not be welcomed by the current post-16 providers and it would be a challenge to create a large enough sixth form to provide the wide range of choice students want. We do not know if being an academy would make this easier or not.

The availability of apprenticeship schemes for school leavers would be unaffected by any academisation.

## **9. Questions about funding and finances**

Are we confident that, in a crisis, the national funding body would be able to respond appropriately to our needs?

The services provided by the LA will benefit from economies of scale, which academies will have to buy in. Has a forecast been done to calculate the extra cost - legal, HR etc. My worry is that if these extra costs have been underestimated it could not only wipe out the 2% excess funding, but eat into the pupil funding.

Who decides how much each school gets in funding and what are the criteria?

### **Answers**

In a crisis such as a fire, an academy would use the insurances it took out and not rely on any hoped-for funding from the Education Funding Agency. We feel confident that the Regional Schools Commission would not want to see a school inoperative for any extended period and would offer emergency help.

We have calculated the additional costs of LA services (which are set out in a City of York document) and included them in the figures presented at the parents' evening. The services we already buy from other providers have the same cost for academies as for local authority schools.

The funding for each school is set in the initial funding agreement and is calculated using the City of York funding formula. Only by agreement would any be retained at Trust level to procure services or equipment more cheaply than individual schools could alone.

## **10. Questions about SEN provision**

How will the support for SEN (without an educational health care plan) children be maintained?

Will there be a financial rather than an ethical decision taken on the level of support for children with SEN?

How can you guarantee safeguards for the provision of education for a child with a high requirement (expensive) of educational needs? E.g. full time TA and other additional services provided by LA.

Will there still be at least the same level of funding for special needs?

How are SEN pupils going to have access to centralised services such as speech therapy, mental health support etc?

### **Answers**

The funding for SEN for academies is no different than for local authority schools so the SEN provision would be unaffected. Millthorpe is very proud of its inclusive provision and this will be protected for all children with SEN, both those with an education and healthcare plan and those without. The SEN provision at Manor CE Academy has functioned in an exemplary way since its academisation so there is precedent in York to show this.

## **11. Questions about the curriculum**

What changes might there be to the curriculum? New exam boards?

Will MFL still be an important part of the curriculum at Millthorpe?

If the curriculum is changed will this disadvantage other feeder schools/children?

Change to curriculum? - Can make more changes with no LA control.

What are the guarantees regarding changes to curriculum and use of unqualified staff?

How would this affect curriculum? What 'freedoms' would there be?

### **Answers**

As a maintained school, we already have considerable freedom to make appropriate changes to the curriculum. Academies must be able to demonstrate that they offer a "broad and balanced" curriculum in accordance with Section 1 of the 2010 Academies Act. We feel our current curriculum is very suitable and we are unlikely to make major changes. However, there are already many curriculum changes being made at national level which will impact upon Millthorpe regardless of any changed status. For example, the current Year 9 will take more challenging GCSE qualifications in English Language, English Literature and Mathematics with a 9-1 grade structure instead of an A\*-G structure. We will have to adapt our KS3 and KS4 curriculum to suit the new qualifications, but we feel the current option choices offer a wide yet affordable mix for our students and we will seek to retain this. Modern Languages are taken by all in KS3 and everyone enters a qualification. About 75% of our students take a GCSE in at least one Modern Language and this will continue. Any changes to our KS3 curriculum will be independent of a change to academy status and therefore benefit all of our children and not just those from Scarcroft and Knavesmire. Closer working with Scarcroft and Knavesmire will help our teachers of Years 7 & 8 to improve and benefit all of our children. There are no guarantees with regard to changes to the curriculum: it is a professional duty of ours to provide the most appropriate curriculum for the mix of students we get. With respect to the use of unqualified staff, please see the answers to Question 13.

## **12. Questions about staff views**

Will the teachers have the chance to say how they feel about the proposal? Will their views be taken into account? What do staff feel?

### **Answers**

Teachers are having a similar consultation process to parents: a meeting with questions asked and issues for governors raised (and answers provided), a survey, and drop-in sessions. Staff have also been encouraged to share their views with our staff governors on an informal basis. Staff views will be collated separately from parents and taken into account by all governors. We will have a complete picture of the range of staff views once the consultation is complete.



### **13. Questions about staffing**

Will there be more need for support staff and staff to move from school to school.

Will the terms of employment for new staff be the same as those currently employed?

Can you guarantee us you won't employ unqualified teachers?

Realistically how long will the guarantees last? Can you guarantee that qualified teachers will be employed?

Is there any chance of unqualified teachers being used on wide spread basis?

Will you be employing unqualified teachers to teach our children?

#### **Answers**

We do not anticipate more need for support staff. Any appointments at Trust level would only be made if it were more efficient to work at that level than at school level and at the request of the schools in the MAT.

We do not expect to alter any terms of employment for new staff.

Millthorpe has already made use of suitably skilled unqualified teachers for temporary part-time positions. We will continue to do so if it is not possible to secure a qualified teacher for that post. Given the current difficulties in teacher training we consider it sensible to retain the option to employ a good unqualified teacher for a temporary vacancy when the alternative may be much worse for children. We would certainly not appoint unqualified teachers to full-time or permanent vacancies. These decisions will be made on a case by case basis and are not affected by academisation.

### **14. Questions about primary places**

Where will the new primary school be built? And is the idea that it would be part of the MAT?

How does the proposal link to the issue of lack of primary school places in Southbank? Is there any plan to provide primary school places on the Millthorpe site?

Concern about a new school being built on Millthorpe's site? A concern about outside space reducing.

#### **Answers**

The provision of primary places in South Bank is an issue for the local authority and is not contingent on the academisation proposal. The local authority consulted the whole of the South Bank cluster on their views and is currently assessing a number of options including building on Millthorpe's site. Should that prove to be the preferred option by the local authority, Millthorpe Governors would also have to approve it. Any new primary school built would have to be an academy or free school by law, and the local authority would have to tender for a MAT to run it. If the current academisation proposal goes ahead it is likely that the MAT would make an application to run any new primary school in South Bank.

## 15. Other questions and concerns

Q: How would the headmaster see his own position at the school if the proposal is rejected?

A: I would remain delighted to be leading a successful and improving secondary school in York!

Q: Harder to guarantee future. Guarantee not really valid.

A: Any guarantee can fail. The governors have made the guarantees in good faith and intend to formalise them in a public document. Many changes would be possible even if the school remained within the local authority.

Q: More elected representation on Trust Board.

A: We will look into this, but the recent reforms to all school governing bodies have reduced the number of elected representatives in favour of ensuring governing bodies have the full range of skills needed for their governance work. The key quality of the Trust Board is effectiveness rather than representativeness. Members, Trustees and Governors would be expected to pursue the interests of the school and its learners just as Governors do now.

Q: Shared inductions and being part of one organisation would dilute individuality of schools.

A: We do not believe this. Preserving the individual characters and strengths of each school has been a fundamental consideration throughout the process so far and would continue to be as the structure of the MAT is developed. However, many aspects of induction are identical across all schools and it is these aspects which could be shared.

Q: Shared resources; will this cause a delay? IT services, HR services?

A: No. Each service would still carry a service level agreement to hold the service provider to account. Most changes would not need to be made straight away and could therefore be carefully planned to minimise disruption.

Q: Do you have examples of staff development/training from other MATs?

A: We have visited Hull Collaborative Academy Trust, whose staff feel they have excellent training and support from being in a MAT.

Q: Sponsorship in years to come; how will this be protected?

A: It is important to realise that sponsors do not generally give financial sponsorship but sponsorship of expertise or control. Sponsors usually take over failing schools regardless of their status. That is neither necessary nor desirable in this proposed MAT. The best safeguard against an unwelcome sponsor is high standards, and we feel this proposal gives us the best chance of preserving and improving our standards.

- Q: How can the education sector prevent commercial influence?
- A: As noted above, Governors need to be able to demonstrate at all times that they are acting in the best interests of the school and its students. There are a variety of safeguards in place for this purpose. This would continue to apply to Members, Trustees and Governors under a MAT structure.
- Q: Concerned that Year 9 pupils will have new exam changes as well as the Academy change - can you guarantee no changes to exam structure/learning while introducing new Academy status. (I have a Year 9 child).
- A: The changes to exam structure are driven by central government and exam boards. Year 9 will have new style GCSEs in English Language, English Literature and Maths which are significantly different from current ones. Planning is well underway for these. Students should see no immediate change in their education as a result of academisation.
- Q: Give specific examples of issues which have arisen/could arise which this model would deal with better than the current LA model?
- A: The school improvement service now provides very little support or challenge for good or outstanding schools. The MAT specifically ensures this will be provided internally. A MAT can employ teachers specifically to work across more than one school where this is beneficial, without one school having to take on all the employment liabilities.
- Q: What guarantees are there for admissions?
- A: We have said we will not change the admissions procedures. See previous answers about how the guarantees can be strengthened.
- Q: Is there any plan to involve Sixth Form Colleges or universities to provide care/safeguarding up to 25.
- A: No.
- Q: Why can't we do this anyway (in the LA)? For example, working in the current clusters that work very well.
- A: There have been several attempts to do this in the cluster, but schools have not shown commitment to following through because there has always been some reason why individual schools find it difficult. A more formal and deep partnership would ensure this type of collaboration becomes the default way of working.
- Q: Why guarantee no job losses - opportunity for streamlining and cost savings.
- A: Furthermore, our success is built on the excellent work and loyalty of our staff. We will not endanger this. It is also a statutory requirement of the TUPE process.
- Q: If schools aren't failing and it's not financially linked why is this being considered?
- A: The last five years have seen massive reductions in local authority funding and capacity. At the same time, the demands on schools have increased. This is now set to continue for a further five years and in addition real-terms funding for schools will decline. In our view working in association is the best response.

## 2. What would you like Governors to consider?

*All of these responses were in the form of questions. Some of these have already been answered. Where they have not, an answer has been provided*

### Already answered

What will the Trust's approach be to expanding their intake to address local need, given that the LA will no longer be able to direct the Academy?

Will the grounds be protected against being sold off the developers?

If Academies are the way forward, will other LA schools be able to join in?

Will children with special needs still be catered for?

Commitments around use of fields from sale.

What specific benefits cannot be achieved other than by becoming an academy?

Impact on transition for children from other feeder primaries and opportunities provided to those schools by Millthorpe. Will it introduce a two-tier system?

Will parents be given the democratic right to vote on whether their child's school should become an Academy?

### Questions in this section

Q: What mechanisms will you put in place to entrench the community ethos into the Trust's Articles of Association?

Q: In the Articles will there be a 'no sponsor clause'?

A: The Articles of Association are written according to a strict template (see previous answers). It is not permitted to insert custom clauses, so we will have to entrench the community ethos and no sponsor status in other ways such as a statement of principles document.

Q: Will there be further demands on already extremely busy/flat out staff?

A: The only extra demands are likely to fall on the headteacher, who regards these demands as furthering the improvement of the school.

Q: If it weren't for the financial advantage, would the Head be recommending the change?

A: The financial advantage is small and realistically only ensures no detriment. The proposal is mainly being recommended on the other grounds.

Q: Why not just take the 25k - the only definite, concrete advantage/gain and spend it on the schools and not convert?

A: We disagree that that is the only concrete advantage. The £25,000 can only be spent on conversion costs. The suggestion amounts to fraud.

- Q: What safeguards are there for the future that sponsors won't be sought? That the Trust Board won't vote themselves a salary? and so on...
- A: There would be no incentive to seek a sponsor. A sponsor provides no funding and takes away control. If the Trust Board votes themselves a salary that would break the good faith of the guarantees the governing bodies have made and I would expect the individual schools to withdraw from the MAT.
- Q: Is 2% extra funding enough, what does that cover?
- A: The 2% funding covers such "free" services as Health & Safety (policies, advice & inspections), School Business Support, admissions appeals, Headteacher recruitment and insurances. In addition, as an academy we would incur some extra costs such as financial software license, additional HR services (e.g. pensions advice), possible increased pension contributions, and some optional services which would previously have been free. We have costed all these services at £41,500 per annum against the additional income of £81,693, so we feel confident the additional income will easily cover the extra costs.
- Q: The use of local tradesmen and service providers keep money in the local area. Has this been looked into? E.g. IT services and school dinners.
- A: We do use local IT services at Millthorpe already and make use of Bishopthorpe Road businesses for our site management sundries. Local sourcing of food is a key consideration in the re-tendering of the school catering contract which is currently underway. All of these would continue under the proposal.
- Q: How influential are the views of the parents - it feels like a decision has already been made. How will the views of parents be taken account of? Transparency please.
- A: Governors wish to repeat that they have not yet made any decision. The only vote so far made is to explore the possibility of academy status. In terms of the consultation process, Governors have undertaken to read every comment made by parents whether by letter, email, through the parents' evening or through the survey, and to take all of these into account before making a decision. These responses will also be published for everyone to read. The same will be done for staff responses. The meetings at which the responses are discussed by Governors will be formally minuted and the minutes published once approved. If there are ways in which we can be more transparent, we would be happy to consider them.
- Q: Is it the MAT that applies for grants (additional) or can schools apply individually for capital/other grants? Does one school application impact the application of others/the MAT.?
- A: The MAT would apply for the grants on behalf of each school and we believe applications from each school would be considered independently of each other.
- Q: How has information gone to prospective parents?
- A: Information has been on our website since 12 March and there has been a considerable media presence. All of the primary schools in the South Bank Cluster have been asked to notify parents through their weekly newsletters of the 9 June meeting for prospective parents.

- Q: If Governors decide to go ahead what are the next steps - what happens and by when?
- A: This is not yet decided. There will be a meeting of the full Governing Body to discuss the responses to the consultation in late June/early July. If necessary there may need to be a pause to find answers to any remaining questions. Either at that initial meeting or at a subsequent one, the Governing Body will take a vote on whether or not to proceed. It is expected that this will be done before the end of July. If the vote is to proceed there will be a period of establishing the legal documents and arranging the transfer of assets and staff from the local authority. The earliest likely date for conversion to an academy would be 1 November 2015.
- Q: Despite assurances will there not be a temptation for the Trust to give 'special treatment' or work more closely with Scarcroft and Knavesmire primary as opposed to Millthorpe's other feeder schools.
- A: We have 204 places available for entry in Year 7, and the total number of children in Year 6 at Scarcroft and Knavesmire is approximately 90. Given that the majority of Millthorpe students do not come from Knavesmire and Scarcroft, it would be counterproductive to neglect our other primary partners. Good transition from primary school is a key element of our success in KS3.
- Q: Can you guarantee that the current catchment for feeder schools will remain the same?
- A: They are almost certain to change as the demographic changes already predicted hit the primary school age group. City of York would have had to make changes regardless of academisation. The primary schools have guaranteed not to change the admissions policy and they will work in conjunction with City of York should catchment areas need adjusting for demographic change in the area or because of the construction of new homes.
- Q: Concerned that if new Academies built in Southbank area that other feeder LA schools will be pushed out?
- A: See the above answer. The provision of new primary places is essential in South Bank and this is the local authority's responsibility.
- Q: What is the government's real agenda behind breaking up the state school system?
- A: This is a question that should be directed at the government.
- Q: Concerned about 'exclusivity' of those in this mega academy.
- A: All the schools have reputations for being highly inclusive. The MAT is open to others joining.
- Q: TUPE will only protect staff for a given period of time e.g. a year, so the guarantee does not hold.
- A: The Governors have made their intentions clear on this issue.
- Q: Buildings insurance - costs? Expand on the phrase significant building problems.
- A: All risk insurance is included in the Academies Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA). Details of this can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/academies-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa#cover-included-in-the-rpa>. This includes buildings insurance among other things and would cost the school £23,500 per annum. This is included in the additional academies cost of £41,000 per annum mentioned above. Significant building problems would include boiler failure or a fire for example.

- Q: High maintenance costs - upkeep budget, will it exceed the 2% uplift or will there be a real terms cut in funds?
- A: Budgeting for maintenance is already our responsibility as a local authority school and is not dependent on the 2% uplift.
- Q: Size of the pot available to bid for regarding repairs and new buildings. Is it sufficient or could it be described as significantly less than current spending by all schools.
- A: The amount disbursed by the Condition Improvement Fund for academies in the 2013/14 year was £1.4 billion and 56% of academies applying received some funding. York's school capital spending plans for 2015-2017 do not include Millthorpe School.
- Q: If there is another Academy built nearby would the aim be to add it to the MAT?
- A: The MAT would probably bid to manage it, but it would be the Regional Schools Commission who would decide which MAT would be selected, not City of York.
- Q: Can it be written into the Trust document that it is not for profit and no sponsor?
- A: The Trust Articles of Association are a template document (see previous answers). It is written into them, and therefore a feature of all academies in existence, that they are charitable, not-for-profit Trusts. It is not permitted to alter the Articles of Association to say there will never be a sponsor. We would do this through a "principles of working" document.
- Q: At what level is Head/staff pay determined - by Trustees or individual Governing Bodies?
- A: Headteacher and staff pay is approved at Governing Body level.
- Q: Who owns the building under an Academy? If LA how is that managed (a lease etc.)?
- A: The Trust owns the buildings.
- Q: Do Millthorpe stand to improve their deficit situation by becoming an Academy? If so, what is the plan if Millthorpe does not convert?
- A: The additional funds on conversion may be helpful, but there is already in place a deficit reduction plan which, even with fixed cash per pupil income and increased staff salary, national insurance and pension costs will return us to a surplus balance by April 2018. The plan includes individual employee salary progression as part of its costs and no rise in cash per pupil as part of its income plan.
- Q: Will it create a new layer of bureaucracy?
- A: The additional layer is the Trust Board, and we view it as an additional layer of accountability and challenge. The Trust Board would take on many of the roles currently taken by the local authority.
- Q: Is it correct that the Governors at Dringhouses rejected becoming an Academy? If yes what did they reject - individual, MAT with Millthorpe Scarcroft and Knavesmire?
- A: You should direct this question to the Dringhouses Governors.

- Q: The capital pot available to Academies - is there any evidence it's easier to access for a good school/MAT? Any evidence this will result in more available than under LA system?
- A: We have no evidence that good schools are more likely to benefit from the Condition Improvement Fund. If an academy is making an application as part of a bid to expand, there are funds available to academies rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. For a comparison with local authority schools, see previous answers.
- Q: Why should successful schools in affluent areas contribute to impoverishing the LA.?
- A: The reduction in LA funds has been caused through the general austerity programme and the expansion of the academies scheme nationally, not through academy conversions locally, which have no effect on LA funding and only a small effect on LA services' income. The affluence of the South Bank is not reflected in the funding for Millthorpe School, which is among the lowest in the country.
- Q: What factors will take Millthorpe from good to outstanding? How will they be achieved better by converting to an Academy? Why can't they be achieved by being an LA maintained school working in close partnership with other schools?
- A: The factors are: continually improving teaching; dealing effectively with huge amounts of change in the assessment and qualifications framework; remaining financially buoyant in the next decade of austerity. The ways in which conversion might support these better have been dealt with in previous answers. Our experience of partnership working is that it needs to be deep for it to make a difference and a MAT requires the deeper commitment.