

CONSULTATION REPORT

1. Background

The Governing Bodies of five schools have been considering a proposal to convert their schools and to join an existing multi academy trust, Children's Endeavour Trust.

1. Abbot's Hall Community Primary School
2. Bosmere Community Primary School
3. Chilton Community Primary School
4. Combs Ford Community Primary School
5. Freeman Community Primary School

The Governing Bodies of the five schools individually and collectively resolved in September 2019 to consult upon this proposal.

The Academies Act 2010 requires the Governing Body of a Local Authority maintained school to carry out a formal consultation on this proposal, as set out below.

5.1 Before a maintained school in England is converted into an Academy, the school's governing body must consult such persons as they think appropriate.

5.2 The consultation must be on the question of whether the school should be converted into an Academy.

5.3 The consultation may take place before or after an Academy order, or an application for an Academy order, has been made in respect of the school.

This report describes the consultation programme undertaken by the Governing Bodies, the feedback from this programme and summarised the outcome of consultation.

2. The Role and Responsibility of the Governing Bodies

The Department of Education Governance Handbook 2017 summarises the purpose of governance as 'to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.'

The DfE Governance Handbook further states that it is the responsibility of the Governing Body to develop 'a clear and explicit vision for the future set by the board, in collaboration with executive leaders, which has pupil progress and achievement at its heart' with a 'determination to initiate and lead strategic change when this is in the best interests of children, young people and the organisation, and to champion the reasons for, and benefits of, change to all stakeholders;

It also states;

'As the accountable body, the board is the key decision maker. It may delegate operational matters to executive leaders and governance functions to committees (including LGBs in a MAT) or in some cases to individuals, but the board as a corporate entity remains accountable and responsible for all decisions made and executive leaders operate within the autonomy, powers and functions delegated to them by the board.*

**the board should be taken to mean the accountable body for the school or group of schools: in local authority (LA) maintained schools, this will be the governing body.*

Therefore, it is within the remit of the Governing Body, given current Government policy, to assess the benefits and risks of academy status and to decide whether it is appropriate for their school.

3. The Purpose of Consultation

The purpose of consultation is for the Governing Body, in accordance of the Academies Act 2010 and the DfE Governance Handbook 2017, to present the proposal to stakeholders, to gather feedback on the proposal and to understand the level of stakeholder interest, support and objection.

The Governing Body can then determine whether there is any significant stakeholder objection to the proposal that would cause them to reconsider.

4. Consultation proposal

For Abbot's Hall, Bosmere, Chilton, Combs Ford and Freeman Community Primary Schools each to convert to academy status and join the Children's Endeavour Trust.

5. Consultation Process

The academy consultation ran from Monday, January 6th until Friday, January 31st, 2020, a period of four (4) academic weeks.

The five schools recognised that it was important for the consultation to be managed consistently and cohesively so agreed to run a coordinated consultation.

A summary of the consultation plan identifying the different stakeholders, how those stakeholders were consulted and what information was to be provided, is below.

Stakeholder	Approach	Information
Parents and carers of pupils attending the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter and consultation document sent to all parents and carers on Monday, January 6th, 2020. Five consultation meetings held on Wednesday and Thursday, Jan 15th -16th, 2020 Consultation survey opened midnight on January 16th, 2020 Consultation presentations published January 17th, 2020 Meeting Q&A summaries published Jan 24th, 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent & Carer Letter Consultation Document Consultation presentation Consultation on-line survey Meeting Q&A summary
Staff employed by the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter, consultation document and FAQs sent to all staff on Monday, January 6th, 2020 Two joint consultation meeting for all staff held on Wednesday and Thursday, Jan 15th -16th, 2020 Consultation survey opened midnight on January 16th, 2020 Consultation presentations published Jan 17th, 2020 Meeting Q&A summary published Jan 24th, 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff letter Consultation Document Staff FAQs Consultation presentation Consultation survey Meeting Q&A summary
Unions & professional associations for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint letter with copies of staff letters, consultation FAQs and survey sent to representatives on Tuesday, January 7th, 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Union letter Staff letter Consultation Document Staff Consultation FAQs
Other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint letter sent to local MP, Councillors and local Headteachers on Monday, January 6th 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint letter Consultation document

6. Consultation meetings

6.1 Parent/carer consultation meetings

There were five parent/carer meetings attended by a total of 84 parents and carers as follows;

School	Parent Meeting dates & times	Attendees
Freeman Primary School	Wednesday, January 15 th 9.30am	12
Chilton Primary School	Wednesday, January 15 th 2.00pm	8
Bosmere Primary School	Wednesday, January 15 th 6.00pm	20
Abbot's Hall Primary School	Thursday, January 16 th 9.30am	26
Combs Ford Primary School	Thursday, January 16 th 6.00pm	18

The format of the five meetings was similar. The Headteacher of the host school welcomed parents and made introductions to the Headteachers from the other four schools, the Trust CEO and project manager.

The CEO of Children's Endeavour Trust gave a presentation outlining

- the reasons for the proposal
- the benefits of being part of an expanded Children's Endeavour Trust
- Trust's governance, leadership and management.
- How staff would be affected by the proposals
- what would remain the same in each school

Then parents and carers were given the opportunity to ask questions of the panel of Headteacher, CEO and project manager.

A summary of the Questions & Answers from the five meetings was then published on Friday, January 24th and is attached as appendix A.

6.2 Staff consultation meeting: October 8th

There were two meetings held at 4.15pm at Stowmarket FC on Wednesday, January 15th and Thursday, January 16th, attended by a total of 64 staff.

The format of the five meetings was the same. The CEO of Endeavour Trust welcomed staff and made introductions to the Headteachers from the five schools and project manager.

The CEO of Children's Endeavour Trust gave a presentation outlining

- the reasons for the proposal
- the benefits of being part of an expanded Children's Endeavour Trust
- Trust's governance, leadership and management.
- how staff would be affected by the proposals
- what would remain the same in each school

Then staff were given the opportunity to ask questions of the panel of Headteacher, CEO and project manager.

A summary of the Questions & Answers from the five meetings was then published on Friday, January 24th and is attached as appendix B.

7. Consultation survey

The Governing Bodies carried out a survey of parents, carers, teachers and support staff using an online survey form, which was open from midnight on Thursday, January 16th and closed at midnight on Thursday, January 30th

The survey comprised the following questions:

Which role applies to you? *(Parent/Carer, Teacher, Support staff)*

Which school applies to you? *(List of five schools)*

Did you attend a consultation meeting? *(Yes or No)*

Q1 **What do you like about your school?** *(Open answer)*

Q2 **Do you support the proposal of your school converting to academy status and establishing the Children's Endeavour Trust?** *(Yes, Maybe, No or Don't know)*

Q3 **Please explain your response to question 2.** *(Open answer)*

Q4 **Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposal?** *(Open answer)*

7.1 Survey participation rates

By the close of consultation at midnight on Thursday, January 30th, a total of 95 parent/carer, 40 teacher and 49 support staff survey responses had been received, broken down as follows

School	Respondent Type	Universe (No.)	Responses (no.)	% Response Rate
Abbot's Hall	Parent/carer	405	18	4.4%
	Teacher	22	12	54.5%
	Support Staff	49	12	24.5%
Bosmere	Parent/carer	338	22	6.5%
	Teacher	16	7	43.8%
	Support Staff	32	7	21.9%
Chilton	Parent/carer	172	7	4.1%
	Teacher	11	2	18.2%
	Support Staff	18	5	27.8%
Combs Ford	Parent/carer	397	21	5.3%
	Teacher	22	8	36.4%
	Support Staff	44	6	13.6%
Freeman	Parent/carer	200	27	13.5%
	Teacher	12	11	91.7%
	Support Staff	28	19	67.9%

The average response rates across all schools were about average for a primary schools' consultation at 6% for parents/carers, 48% for teachers and 29% for support staff. (It should be noted that the number of pupils on roll (NOR) is used for the parent/carer universe).

It is worth noting that Freeman had the highest participation rates by all three respondent types: parents/carers, teachers and support staff, which were also amongst the highest recorded in consultations run by this advisor.

7.2 Breakdown of Q3 responses

The responses to Q3 "Do you support the proposal of your school converting to academy status and joining Children's Endeavour Trust?" per school and per respondent type were as follows;

7.2.1 Abbot's Hall

School	Respondent Type	Responses (no.)	Response to Q3 as number and % of universe							
			YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Abbot's Hall	Parent/carer	18	13	3%	5	1%	0	0%	0	0%
	Teacher	12	12	55%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	12	10	20%	1	2%	0	0%	1	2%

To summarise;

- Of the 18 parents that responded to the question of whether school should convert to academy status (3% of the universe of pupils), nearly three-quarters (13) said YES and five (5) said MAYBE. There were zero NOs.
- Of the 12 teachers that responded (55% of teachers in the school), all said YES to the question of whether school should convert to academy status.
- Of the 12 support staff that responded (25% of support staff in the school), 10 said YES and there were zero NOs.

7.2.2 Bosmere

School	Respondent Type	Responses (no.)	Response to Q3 as number and % of universe							
			YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bosmere	Parent/carer	22	16	5%	0	0%	5	1%	1	0%
	Teacher	7	7	44%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	7	6	19%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%

To summarise;

- Of the 22 parents that responded to the question of whether school should convert to academy status (6.5% of the universe of pupils), nearly three-quarters (16) said YES and five (5) said NO.
- Of the 7 teachers that responded (45% of teachers in the school), all said YES to the question of whether school should convert to academy status.
- Of the 7 support staff that responded (22% of support staff in the school), 6 said YES and there were zero NOs.

7.2.3 Chilton

School	Respondent Type	Responses (no.)	Response to Q3 as number and % of universe							
			YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Chilton	Parent/carer	7	4	2%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%
	Teacher	2	2	18%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	5	1	6%	2	11%	0	0%	2	11%

To summarise;

- Of the 7 parents that responded to the question of whether school should convert to academy status (4% of the universe of pupils), just over half (4) said YES and one (1) said NO.
- Of the 2 teachers that responded (18% of teachers in the school), both said YES to the question of whether school should convert to academy status.
- Of the 5 support staff that responded (28% of support staff in the school), they were split between all four possible response.

7.2.4 Combs Ford

School	Respondent Type	Responses (no.)	Response to Q3 as number and % of universe							
			YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Combs Ford	Parent/carer	21	11	3%	5	1%	1	0%	4	1%
	Teacher	8	4	18%	1	5%	2	9%	1	5%
	Support Staff	6	4	9%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%

To summarise;

- Of the 21 parents that responded to the question of whether school should convert to academy status (5% of the universe of pupils), just over half (11) said YES and one (1) said NO.
- Of the 8 teachers that responded (23% of teachers in the school), four (4) said YES to the question of whether school should convert to academy status. Two (2) teachers did not support the proposal.
- Of the 6 support staff that responded (14% of support staff in the school), two-thirds (4) responded YES to the question of whether school should convert to academy status. There were zero NOs.

7.2.5 Freeman

School	Respondent Type	Responses (no.)	Response to Q3 as number and % of universe							
			YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Freeman	Parent/carer	27	9	5%	7	4%	5	3%	6	3%
	Teacher	11	2	17%	6	50%	2	17%	1	8%
	Support Staff	19	3	11%	6	21%	6	21%	4	14%

To summarise;

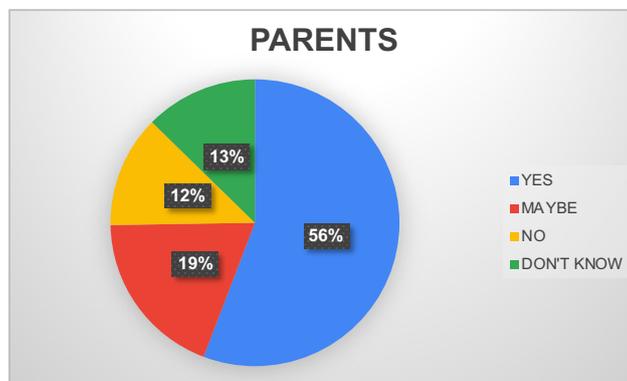
- Of the 27 parents that responded to the question of whether school should convert to academy status (14% of the universe of pupils), one-third (9) said YES and five (5) said NO.
- Of the 11 teachers that responded (92% of teachers in the school), the same number, two (2) responded YES and NO to the question of whether school should convert to academy status. Over half (6) responded MAYBE.
- Of the 19 support staff that responded (68% of support staff in the school), nearly one-third (6) responded NO to the question of whether school should convert to academy status. The same number (6) responded MAYBE. There were two YESs.

7.2.6 All schools

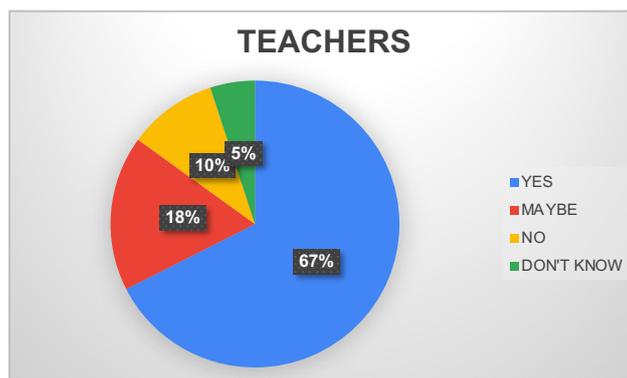
School	Respondent Type	Universe (No.)	Responses (no.)	% Response Rate	Response to Q3 as number and % of responses							
					YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
					No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All schools	Parents/carers	1512	95	6%	53	56%	18	19%	12	13%	12	13%
	Teachers	83	40	48%	27	68%	7	18%	4	10%	2	5%
	Support staff	171	49	29%	24	49%	10	20%	6	12%	9	18%

To summarise the overall results

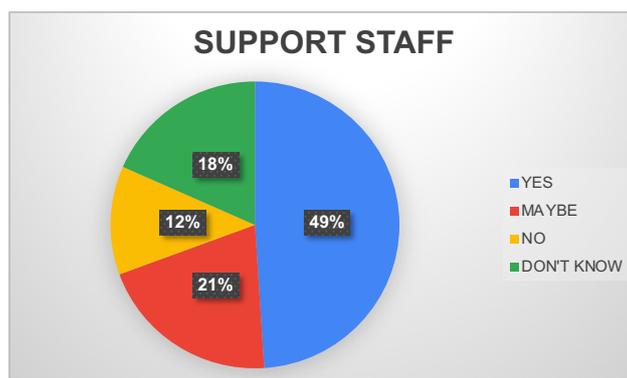
- 56% of parents that responded were in favour and a further 19% possibly in favour compared with 13% not supporting the proposal for their school to convert to academy status.



- 68% of teachers that responded were in favour and a further 19% possibly in favour. Only 6% of respondents did not support the proposal.



- 49% of support staff that responded were in favour and a further 20% possibly in favour compared with 12% not supporting the proposal.



- Of the staff groups Abbot's Hall were the most likely and Freeman the least likely to be in support of the proposal.

7.2.7 Impact of attending the consultation

It is interesting to note the variation in support for the proposal between those that attended the consultation meetings and those that did not.

- Of the 95 parent/carer survey respondents, 42 attended a consultation meeting and 53 did not. There is a significant increase in likelihood to support the proposal among attendees (78%) versus those that did not (38%) compared with the average of 56%.
- Similarly of 40 teacher survey respondents, 28 did attend a meeting and 12 did not. Teachers that attended were more likely to support the proposal (75%) versus those that did not (50%) compared with the average of 68%.
- For support staff of the 49 survey respondents, 22 did attend a meeting and 27 did not. 60% of attendees supported the proposal versus 41% of non-attendees versus an average of 49%.

A reasonable hypothesis from reviewing the comments in the survey, is that those that attended the meeting wanted to find out more about the proposal and were subsequently convinced or at least reassured by the presentation and subsequent Q&A.

8. Consultation summary and recommendation

The consultation on the proposal has been comprehensive and there has been meaningful engagement with stakeholders.

There has been little objection to the proposal in any school or among any stakeholder type.

In summary, all five the Governing Bodies are advised that the outcome of consultation has not demonstrated any significant objection that should cause them to reconsider the proposal for their schools to convert academy status and join Children's Endeavour Trust.

APPENDIX A: Q&A from the parent consultation meetings

APPENDIX B: Q&A from the staff consultation meeting

APPENDIX C: Survey data table

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF PARENT CONSULTATION Q&A

Introduction

Consultation meetings for parents were held on the proposal for five primary schools to convert to academy status and join and expanded Children's Endeavour Trust. There were five meetings as follows;

School	Parent Meeting dates & times	Parent/carer Attendees
Freeman Primary School	Wednesday, January 15 th 9.30am	12
Chilton Primary School	Wednesday, January 15 th 2.00pm	8
Bosmere Primary School	Wednesday, January 15 th 6.00pm	20
Abbot's Hall Primary School	Thursday, January 16 th 9.30am	26
Combs Ford Primary School	Thursday, January 16 th 6.00pm	18

This document is a summary of the questions asked at the meetings and the answers given. Where helpful, questions have been collated and additional information has been provided in response to the questions raised. The letters in brackets after question indicate at which school parent meeting it was asked.

STRATEGY & GROWTH

1. Why does the Government believe that academies are the right way forward? (CF)

That is a difficult question to answer and perhaps should be directed to Ministers and Members of Parliament.

However, it is understood that, at the heart of the policy, is the belief that school improvement is more effectively and sustainably achieved through school-to-school collaboration and partnership whereby school leader and teachers share and develop best practice based on evidence of success.

As at October 2019 35% of all primary and 77% of all secondary schools are academies or Free schools and it is expected the current Government will accelerate the academy programme.

2. Why do governors want the school to become an academy? (AH)

One consequence of the academy policy is that funding for Local Authorities to support maintained schools has decreased significantly at a time when there has been a reported 8% reduction in school funding over the last 9 years. This has resulted in Local Authorities like Suffolk County Council being less able to support schools and having to focus resources on under-performing schools.

This has meant that schools like the five primary schools proposing to join Children's Endeavour Trust are trying to sustain and improve school performance and pupil outcomes in a landscape of greater scrutiny and challenge by the Department for Education (DfE), Ofsted and Local Authorities with less external support and reduced funding. The model of partnership working between clusters of schools has been adversely affected by schools joining multi academy trusts, where they focus their collaboration.

Each of the Governing Bodies is fiercely protective of their schools and want to retain control of their school's destiny. However, these five schools have a track record of working well together and the five Governing Bodies have, for nearly 3 years, been actively exploring how their schools could work more closely in partnership.

They have investigated different options including;

1. To **establish** their own multi academy trust.
2. To **join** a large multi academy trust.
3. To help **create** an expanded local multi academy trust.

Having given careful consideration to each of the options, the Governing Bodies felt that working to create an expanded multi academy trust such as Children's Endeavour Trust would secure the benefits of being part of a larger multi academy trust while protecting the individuality of each of their schools.

3. What are the risks or disadvantages of the proposal? (AH)

For the schools proposing to convert to academy status and join CET, the first risk is associated with not proceeding with the plan. As described in answer 2, schools are dealing with an increasingly challenging educational landscape with limited resources to be able to sustain standards effectively. The second risk is that of joining the wrong multi academy trust. Governing Bodies have carried out a very thorough investigation to identify the most appropriate Trust in CET and a robust due diligence process to understand the implications and potential risks of Trust membership.

On balance, each Governing Body believes that the risks of the status quo are too high for not to join a multi academy trust and that the risk that CET is the wrong multi academy trust is very low.

4. If approved when will the schools convert and the expanded CET established? (B CF)

Governing Bodies will consider the outcome of consultation and make a final decision at meetings on February 5th. The hope is that schools will convert to academy status on April 1st, 2020 but this is subject to completion of a range of legal, regulatory and operational tasks involving the DfE and Suffolk County Council.

5. What are the plans for future growth of Children's Endeavour Trust? Is a Trust of seven schools sustainable? What is the average size of a MAT? Will CET remain primary only? (B CF F)

The CET trustees and the governors of the five schools proposing to join, recognise that expanding from two seven schools is a major task that will require hard work over at least a year to settle everything down. There are no immediate plans to expand further in the number of schools, beyond the Suffolk geographical area or into the secondary phase. A lot of work has been done on the trust business plan which shows that CET is very sustainable with seven schools.

However, the larger a MAT the greater the efficiencies and resources it can secure for its member schools. The guidance and advice on optimum size do vary but the schools understand that pupil numbers of 2,500 (which CET will almost be) is considered a critical mass. It is worth noting that MATs of 3,000+ pupils receive significant additional capital funding.

So, if another local school that shared the CET vision and ethos sought membership the trustees and leadership group of Headteachers would consider carefully the benefits of another school joining and whether it has the capacity and resources to support that school through conversion.

6. Can any school join CET and can we be made to take a school? (CF)

Only schools that share the CET vision, ethos and values would be considered for membership and only then if there were clear benefits and CET had the capacity and resources to integrate the school. The trust can't be forced to accept a school but there may be circumstances when CET, as an approved sponsor, would agree to take on an under-performing school because it felt it could improve the school for the benefit of its pupils.

7. Why might the plan be turned down by DfE? (B)

The leadership group of Headteachers has been working hard since May 2019 on the business case for an expanded CET of seven schools including detailed plans covering school improvement, teaching & learning, leadership, governance, finance and business management. Dialogue with the DfE prior to and since the submission of the applications has been encouraging.

However, the final decision rests with the Regional Schools Commissioner based on feedback from the Headteacher Board.

8. How will the CEO and CFO be able to manage the massive growth from two to seven schools? (B)

The CEO has been chairing the leadership group that has been working since May 2019 to plan the transition from two to seven schools. These detailed plans were part of the business case for DfE approval, which has received positive feedback thus far.

More recently a working group of school business managers, bursars and the Trust CFO has been established to plan the transition of the finance, business management, payroll and administrative functions. The schools have also retained the support of an experienced academy project manager throughout.

The CEO is being mentored by an experienced multi academy trust CEO and is in the midst of completing the National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership (NPQEL), which is designed for Executive Headteachers and CEOs in leadership roles across more than one school. The CFO was specifically recruited because of their experience and track record in financial management of larger multi academy trusts.

9. What is the process for a school to leave the trust? (AH)

The approval of the Secretary of State for Education is required for a school to leave an multi academy trust. It can only join another MAT, again with the approval of the Secretary of State. It is a lengthy and complex process, which emphasises the importance of identifying the right trust to join.

TEACHING, LEARNING & CURRICULUM

10. How will the curriculum change? Would all CET schools be required to teach the same curriculum? (C)

Each Headteacher retains control over the curriculum in their school and there is no requirement for schools to teach to same curriculum. While schools no longer have to follow the *National Curriculum*, it is expected that all the schools will stay pretty closely aligned, particularly in numeracy and literacy. The National Curriculum is broad but schools will have the flexibility to vary the balance of the curriculum to meet their needs and interests of their pupils. For example, a school may teach a little less of the history curriculum to make time for music.

11. How will the curriculum be managed to encourage arts and music? (AH)

As explained in answer 10 schools will be able to adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils. One advantage of the trust is that teaching staff with expertise in music and arts will be able to share ideas and resources with other colleagues, which will enrich the arts in other schools. Similarly, brilliant visiting teachers could be commissioned across more than one school.

SEN & OTHER PROVISION

12. How will SEN provision be affected? What guarantee do parents have that SEN provision will improve? (B F)

Academies have the same statutory responsibilities for children with SEN or an EHCP. The funding follows the child and the Local Authority retains statutory responsibility for the quality of provision.

Being a school SENCO is usually combined with another leadership or teaching role so the opportunity for those SEN leaders to work with colleagues in other schools to share good practice, experience of different needs or even ways to get funding or support from other agencies will be invaluable. That group will be also be able to look at jointly commissioning of specialists such as speech & language therapists or educational psychologists, offering a critical mass of regular work. This will mean that the quality of provision in the trust will be enhanced. If parents are unhappy with the quality of SEN provision, they can still raise concerns with Suffolk County Council SEN teams

13. What will happen with the Freeman pre-school? How will pre-school and wrap-around provision be affected? (F CF)

Existing pre-school provision will be unaffected by the proposal and as each school retains control over its wrap-around provision there will also be no change.

14. What are the CET values regarding the health and wellbeing of the children? (AH)

All the schools share the view that children can only learn and thrive if they feel they are in a safe, happy, supportive and nurturing environment that is committed to developing the whole child: academically, intellectually, artistically, physically, socially and emotionally. Each school will achieve this in different ways but the opportunity to work in partnership will lead to the enrichment of each school and equip all staff to get the very best out of every child.

FINANCE

15. How is the funding allocated? (CF)

All academies and maintained schools in Suffolk are funded on exactly the same funding formula, so there will be no change in funding. However, school will be able to retain the element of that funding that is held back by the Local Authority.

An important principle agreed by all the schools is that they will retain all their funding, reserves and other income. So, schools will be allocated the funding in exactly the same way as now.

16. Has the 'top-slice been agreed? How is the CEO salary funded? Who will scrutinise the central cost to stop them spiralling? (B AH)

None of the Headteachers wants to see funding diverted from their school unnecessarily and so the leadership group has been involved in developing and recommending the Trust central budget. This budget is based on the costs of trust staff and services that is necessary to run the trust and the cost of the services the schools want the trust to commission on their behalf. This cost is then converted to a % of funding (excluding SEN and pupil premium) called the trust central charge. This trust central budget will be reviewed annually by the leadership group giving Headteachers high level of control. The CEO post (or its equivalent) is a required by the DfE and is funded by the Trust central charge

17. Will schools have greater access to funding as academies? (AH)

Academies are funded using the same formula as maintained schools so there is no additional funding. However, academies can bid to the DfE for capital funding and appear to have greater success in doing so than Local Authorities. The trust has also bid for additional funds worth £100k to support its expansion as a multi academy trust.

18. Would each school get the £25k conversion grant? Will the conversion grant be shared equally between the schools? (CF)

The five converting schools will each receive £25k conversion grant, totalling £125k. The schools agreed to pool those funds so they could commission support and services such as project management and legal services as a single entity, securing economies of scale. It expected that the cost of converting the schools will be close to £125k.

19. How will CET buy better services than Suffolk County Council provides? (B)

Suffolk County Council provides much of its services through third parties such as SchoolsChoice or Vertas, which schools commission individually. As a single commercial entity buying for seven schools, it is expected that the trust will be able to secure economies of scale on services such as HR, payroll, building maintenance and IT.

20. What happens if the trust fails and goes bankrupt? (AH)

The trust is subject to a much greater level of external scrutiny of its financial governance and management than as a Local Authority schools. This is designed to reduce the likelihood of any multi academy trust getting into financial difficulty. However, in the extremely unlikely event the trust became insolvent the schools would be transferred to another multi academy trust.

OFSTED & SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

21. Will schools still have individual inspections? (AH CF)

Yes.

22. What is the impact of one school under-performing on other schools? (AH)

Each school is a unique, single entity for the purposes of Ofsted inspections, the reporting of pupil attainment and progress and other inspections and assessments. One school under-performing in any area would not affect another school in the trust. However, were several schools in a trust under-performing the DfE would almost certainly seek to review the trust's effectiveness.

23. Will being part of CET help Freeman improve its Ofsted judgement (from RI)? (F)

Yes. Ofsted reports identify what a school's required areas of improvement but not the ideas, plans and resources to do so. Freeman will be able to draw upon the combined expertise, resources and support of Headteachers and teachers from the other six schools.

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT & ADMISSIONS

24. How will transition into secondary be affected? (F)

The proposal will have no affect on relationship the schools have with their secondaries or the arrangements for transition.

25. How will admissions be affected? (C B AH)

Admissions will be largely unaffected. Schools will retain their admissions policies and parents will still apply for place through the Local Authority admissions arrangements. The only change is the trust will be the admissions authority rather Suffolk County Council (SCC). In simple terms this means SCC will be offering places on behalf of the schools, having used their admissions policy to allocate places fairly.

26. Could school term dates and hours change? (F C CF AH B)

Schools will retain control over their term dates and school days. As now it is expected that schools will align their term dates to the local arrangements, which are often led by the secondary school. However, the trust will seek to ensure there are joint Inset days to enable staff from all schools to come together for professional development and training.

GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

27. Will the Board of Trustees grow in number to govern a larger MAT? (B)

CET was deliberately established with a small Board of Trustees to enable recruitment of further trustees as the trust grew in size. Governors of the five joining schools have been invited to nominate themselves as trustees and several have expressed interest.

Trustees are responsible for

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational and wider performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

Trustees are chosen for their individual and combined skills and expertise across education, school standards, pupil support and safeguarding, finance, HR, strategy, compliance and asset management. A list of current trustees can be found on the CET website at <https://www.childrendeavourtrust.org.uk>.

PARENTS

28. Can Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) work together? (F)

Yes, absolutely. It would be great to see the PTAs working together and sharing ideas and resources for fundraising. Each PTA would be separate from the trust and will retain control over the funds they raise.

29. How will CET work in partnership with parents? (AH)

A school's Headteacher, teachers and staff will continue to be the main port of call with and point of contact for parents. It is not anticipated that CET will be dealing with parents direct although parents thought it was helpful it could look at CET updates and information.

STAFF MANAGEMENT

30. How do staff feel about the proposal? (B)

Staff are being consulted at the same time as parents, so their views are not yet known. However, staff have been updated about the proposal and given the chance to ask questions. Their informal feedback has been broadly supportive.

31. How does the Springfield Teaching School Alliance fit in? (CF)

The TSA provides CPD for teachers from a range of schools and is separate from the trust. It will continue to do so. Springfield has also successfully bid to be an *Initial Teacher Training* provider, which means the trust will be able to recruit and train its own teachers.

32. What has been the impact on staff turnover at the founding schools since they converted? (AH)

Neither Broke Hall or Springfield have seen a change in staff turnover since they converted in January 2019.

33. Will you be able to sack experienced teachers and bring in inexperienced teachers? Who will oversee trainee teachers? (AH B)

No. Experienced teachers are a vital resource in developing less experienced teachers. The schools will continue to recruit and deploy trainee and New Qualified Teachers (NQTs) as now. Each Headteacher will make sure that the school have the capacity and expertise to support trainee and new teachers.

CONSULTATION

34. How is the consultation with children going to be managed? (F)

That will be a decision for each Headteacher. Most pupils tend to ask if the uniform is going to change or if their teacher is going to change. Given neither is going to happen as a result of this proposal

35. Is this a done deal? (C)

No final decision has been made and the consultation is genuine. The Governors of the five schools are proposing the schools convert to academy status and join the Children's Endeavour Trust because they believe it is the best interests of the schools, pupils and staff. The purpose of consultation is to establish if there is any significant objection that would make Governors reconsider the proposal. Parents, carers and staff are encouraged to complete the survey so that Governors have the fullest picture of what stakeholders think.

36. What would happen if the majority of parents in a school objected to the proposal? (B)

If a majority of a school's parents objected, as measured by the survey, the consultation report would advise governors that of this fact and provide information on the reasons given. It would then be for governors to consider the reasons for the objections and whether they outweighed the reasons for and benefits of proceeding with the proposal.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF STAFF CONSULTATION Q&A

Introduction

Consultation meetings for staff were held on the proposal for five primary schools to convert to academy status and join an expanded Children's Endeavour Trust. There were two meetings held at 4.15pm at Stowmarket FC on Wednesday, January 15th and Thursday, January 16th, attended by a total of 64 staff.

This document is a summary of the questions asked at the meetings and the answers given. Where helpful, questions have been collated and additional information has been provided in response to the questions raised.

1. How will funding be allocated and budgets set?

All academies and maintained schools in Suffolk are funded on exactly the same funding formula, so there will be no change in funding. However, school will be able to retain the element of that funding that is held back by the Local Authority.

An important principle agreed by all the schools is that they will retain all their funding, reserves and other income. So, schools will be allocated the funding in exactly the same way as now.

None of the Headteachers wants to see funding diverted from their school unnecessarily and so the leadership group has been involved in developing and recommending the Trust central budget. This budget is based on the costs of trust staff and services that is necessary to run the trust and the cost of the services the schools want the trust to commission on their behalf. This cost is then converted to a % of funding (excluding SEN and pupil premium) called the trust central charge. This trust central budget will be reviewed annually by the leadership group giving Headteachers high level of control.

2. How will schools have the better buying power than SCC?

Suffolk County Council provides much of its services through third parties such as SchoolsChoice or Vertas, which schools commission individually. As a single commercial entity buying for seven schools, it is expected that the trust will be able to secure economies of scale on services such as HR, payroll, building maintenance and IT.

3. Has staff turnover changed at CET since conversion?

Neither Broke Hall or Springfield have seen a change in staff turnover since they converted in January 2019.

4. Will funding for Free School Meals continue?

Yes. No change except that the Trust will be responsible for the administration.

5. How will current services contracts be managed?

This is something the School Business Managers and Bursars are looking at. Those contracts that expire on March 31st, 2020 will be renewed, possibly as Trust-wide contracts.

6. Will we receive the SCC discretionary benefits?

Unfortunately, not although the Trust is looking at benefits it could offer

7. How long will the promises of things staying the same continue?

They will continue until such time as the leadership group agree that change is needed. The Headteachers are very much the 'engine room' of the Trust developing plans, policies and procedures they think will benefit the schools.

8. What happens to childcare vouchers?

The Trust has its own childcare voucher scheme manager so those staff with childcare vouchers will transfer across. Changes to legislation mean that new entrants to such schemes are no longer taken.

9. Can you pay extra into your pension?

This something you will need to check with your pension fund direct.

10. What is the timescale?

Governing Bodies will consider the outcome of consultation and make a final decision at meetings on February 5th. The hope is that schools will convert to academy status on April 1st, 2020 but this is subject to completion of a range of legal, regulatory and operational tasks involving the DfE and Suffolk County Council.

11. What will happen to sick pay?

No change. The current policies will transfer across.

12. Could a school join at a later date?

The CET trustees and the governors of the five schools proposing to join, recognise that expanding from two seven schools is a major task that will require hard work over at least a year to settle everything down. There are no immediate plans to expand further in the number of schools, beyond the Suffolk geographical area or into the secondary phase. A lot of work has been done on the trust business plan which shows that CET is very sustainable with seven schools.

However, the larger a MAT the greater the efficiencies and resources it can secure for its member schools. The guidance and advice on optimum size do vary but the schools understand that pupil numbers of 2,500 (which CET will almost be) is considered a critical mass. It is worth noting that MATs of 3,000+ pupils receive significant additional capital funding.

So, if another local school that shared the CET vision and ethos sought membership the trustees and leadership group of Headteachers would consider carefully the benefits of another school joining and whether it has the capacity and resources to support that school through conversion.

The trust can't be forced to accept a school but there may be circumstances when CET, as an approved sponsor, would agree to take on an under-performing school because it felt it could improve the school for the benefit of its pupils.

13. Will I get a long service award?

Yes. The trust will provide the same award as SCC as the time of eligibility

14. If I am a part-time member of staff how can I seek variation to my contract?

The same procedures as now will apply. Staff are allowed to make no more than one flexible working request in a twelve-month period.

APPENDIX C: SURVEY DATA TABLE

School	Respondent Type	Universe (No.)	Responses (no.)	% Response Rate	Response to Q3 as number and % of universe							
					YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
					No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Abbot's Hall	Parent/carer	405	18	4.4%	13	3%	5	1%	0	0%	0	0%
	Teacher	22	12	54.5%	12	55%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	49	12	24.5%	10	20%	1	2%	0	0%	1	2%
Bosmere	Parent/carer	338	22	6.5%	16	5%	0	0%	5	1%	1	0%
	Teacher	16	7	43.8%	7	44%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	32	7	21.9%	6	19%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Chilton	Parent/carer	172	7	4.1%	4	2%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%
	Teacher	11	2	18.2%	2	18%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	18	5	27.8%	1	6%	2	11%	0	0%	2	11%
Combs Ford	Parent/carer	397	20	5.0%	10	3%	5	1%	1	0%	4	1%
	Teacher	22	5	22.7%	3	14%	1	5%	0	0%	1	5%
	Support Staff	44	6	13.6%	4	9%	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%
Freeman	Parent/carer	200	27	13.5%	9	5%	7	4%	5	3%	6	3%
	Teacher	12	11	91.7%	2	17%	6	50%	2	17%	1	8%
	Support Staff	28	19	67.9%	3	11%	6	21%	6	21%	4	14%