



Sawley Infant School & Nursery & Sawley Junior School



Academy Conversion Consultation Report

Why did we consult?

The Governing Bodies of Sawley Junior School, Sawley Infant & Nursery School, Dovedale Primary School and Shardlow Primary School are proposing to establish a Multi-Academy Trust.

The primary concerns of the Governing Body are for the welfare of the children that attend the school and to ensure the quality of educational provision. The Governing Body believes that academy status will assist in this undertaking and benefit the school for the following reasons:

- It will give the school access to additional funding which is currently retained by the local authority.
- Converting as a multi-academy trust rather than a single school brings additional financial benefits.
- Closer collaboration between schools will provide opportunities to develop initiatives which might be too costly or time consuming for an individual school.
- Purchasing services and resources across a group of schools reduces costs and enables services to be more tailored to our needs.
- Freedom to agree and establish our own curriculum and share staff expertise across the four schools.

Consequently the Governing Bodies of Sawley Junior School and Sawley Infant & Nursery School voted to support the following resolution:

The Governors seek for Sawley Junior School and Sawley Infant & Nursery School to become an academy and strive to create a Multi-Academy Trust with Dovedale Primary and Shardlow Primary Schools.

Following the passing of the resolution the governors committed to consulting with all stakeholders.

Who did we consult?

The following stakeholders were informed of the consultation via letter. The consultation period was from March 31st to May 21st 2014 a total of seven and a half weeks. The stakeholders included:

- Employees
- Parents/carers
- Derbyshire County Council
- Unions: NAHT, NUT, NASUWT, ATL, Unison, GMB
- Local MP Jessica Lee (Conservative) and Catherine Atkinson (Labour candidate)
- Sawley Before and After School Club
- Local churches
- The Long Eaton Academy
- The Wilsthorpe School
- Friesland School
- SSEN
- Road Crossing Patrol
- Local childcare providers

How did we consult?

Letters were sent to all the above stakeholders and meetings were held for employees and parents on the 8th April and 30th April. Other stakeholders were asked to submit questions and opinions via email, letter or appointment.

Letters, power-points, questions, answers and a parent leaflet were shared.

Questions posed by employees and related answers?

1. Is the academy trust able to be taken over by a sponsor?

No. The academy order is with the MAT. A sponsor would have to approach each individual school and obtain an agreement. None of the schools in the trust would appeal to a sponsor.

2. Is a secondary school academy trust able to veto our trust and take them over?

No. They can apply to be part of the Multi Academy Trust but would fall under the control of the already formed trust.

3. What is the status of the trustees, especially if the governing bodies still have delegated responsibility?

The trust has responsibility for all the schools within the trust. They have the same responsibilities as directors of a company i.e. financial and development. This is much the same as the local authority role at the present time.

4. Can staff move schools within the academy?

If positions came up at other schools then staff would be able to apply for another position if they wanted to. If a position came up and the schools thought that one person from one school could do that job it would be discussed at length with that individual.

5. Do transfer of terms and conditions involve a break in service? Redundancy?

Information from HR indicates that there is no break in service and if redundancies are made, the lengths of service with the LA and with the academy are both taken into account. As the new employer, the MAT is required to take on the employees on their existing terms and conditions of employment; it is prohibited from making any changes to the terms and conditions of employment of the transferred employees if the sole /principal reason for the variation is the transfer.

6. Do trusts get inspected? If an Academy school begins to drop in standards will this mean that our school is poorly considered as part of the trust?

All schools in the trust will be inspected separately determined by the Ofsted schedule. Ofsted will need to meet with a trust representative to ascertain how the trust is supporting the school being inspected. Just as they presently meet with a LA representative.

7. Who makes the final decision? Can the LA turn an application down?

The final decision is made by Lord Nash who is appointed by the DFE to consider all academy applications. The LA cannot stop an application. There is a set of criteria that is used to determine an academy order:

- the last 3 years' exam results, which must be above floor standards, and whether they are above, or moving towards national averages
- comparison with exam performance in similar schools and those in the local area
- The most recent Ofsted inspection, which must show that you are an outstanding school or that you are good with outstanding features. We will look in particular at what Ofsted says about the school's capacity to improve and the effectiveness of the leadership team
- assurance that the school is in good financial health
- any other information the school thinks would help their application and any exceptional circumstances that the DFE should be aware of.

8. If somebody is employed by another academy school would they become a new employee and therefore take on a new role contract?

Terms and conditions can only be changed for roles/jobs that are completely new and have been created by the academy i.e. speech and language, IT technician etc.

9. What happens to the land that the schools occupy?

The land is transferred to the Trust via a 125 year lease and a pepper corn rent paid by the Trust i.e. nil.

10. How long will the pay and conditions be protected?

The Trust has no intention of altering pay and conditions for staff who TUPE over to the Trust.

11. Cleaning contracts. Will the cleaning staff still be employed and will the above be relevant to them?

All existing contracts will eventually be reviewed by the academy trust. As cleaning/catering staff have contracts with outside companies (i.e. County Caterers and County Cleaning) their contracts of employment will be unaffected by academy conversion.

12. How will the budget be allocated to individual schools?

The budget will be allocated to the MAT by the government funding agency. A % would then be agreed by the executive board to support shared needs (this could be HR, finance, legal support and shared collaborative work to improve outcomes for children).The remainder would be allocated according to number of pupils on roll as is presently the case.

13. How much extra work will this cause for schools?

Initially the work load will be intense but then once we have decided to go ahead each school will get £25,000 to help towards costs of conversion e.g. solicitors, project manager etc. This will then take some of the burden off the head teachers during the conversion process. Work load for teaching staff should not change.

Questions posed by parent/carers and related answers.

1. Is it only schools who are failing that can convert to an academy?

There are a number of different types of academies. These include: Sponsored Academies, Umbrella Trust Academies and Multi-Academy Trusts. There are a set of criteria that schools have to meet to be able to seek conversion these include:

- the last 3 years' exam results, must be above floor standards, and are above, or moving towards national averages

- comparison with exam performance in similar schools and those in the local area
- The most recent Ofsted inspection, which must show that you are an outstanding school or that you are good with outstanding features. The DFE will look in particular at what Ofsted says about the school's capacity to improve and the effectiveness of the leadership team
- assurance that the school is in good financial health
- any other information the school thinks would help their application and any exceptional circumstances that the DFE should be aware of.

Some schools that are under-performing are taken over by a sponsor either via direction by the DFE or via their own instigation. However, this does not relate to our school.

2. Will the academy select pupils?

The Multi-Academy Trust will adhere to the Derbyshire Admissions criteria and the admissions Code of Conduct. Parents will still apply via Derbyshire County Council. MAT will have responsibility for any appeals. There is no intention to introduce selection process as the schools are for the local community and the pupils within those areas. It was discussed to introduce into the admissions criteria, provision for the admission of siblings across the entire Sawley age range inclusive of nursery.

3. Will the uniform change?

No the uniforms will remain the same at each school. Although we may add the trust logo.

4. Will the Academy have the same school term/school holiday dates as all other local schools that continue to have links with the council?

Academies can set their own term dates and school day timings without consultation with parents or the local council. There are no plans to change school term/school holiday dates.

5. Will class sizes go up?

Not as a direct result of becoming an Academy. Other factors such as increase in catchment area population may cause class sizes to rise, but being an academy will enable the schools to plan their own response to this issue. Infant classes cannot rise above 30.

6. Will the governing body still have elected parents?

Parents will still be elected to the local school governing bodies and also parents will be on the Board of Directors of the Trust.

7. Will the school have a new name?

No, the school will retain its own name but will become part of the Multi- Academy Trust. We have been incorporated as Willows Academy Trust.

8. What impact does academy status have on special educational needs (SEN/D) provision?

An academy is expected to behave as if they were a maintained school in meeting the needs of children with SEN/D. Individually assigned funding for children with statements will continue to be paid as normal, through the LA. The LA will continue to have a legal duty to ensure that the statement of SEN/D is fulfilled and does this by paying the individually assigned funding and monitoring the provision made by the academy.

9. This is already a good school why do you need to convert?

As a governing body we are not complacent. It is important to look at all options in our pursuit of sustaining/raising standards. We will still be inspected by Ofsted. The school is constantly striving for improvement. What is of interest is – what would be available to us as an academy that could support this further.

Outcome of the Consultation

The local authority conducted a TUPE consultation on the 19th May. Union representation from NASUWT, NUT, GMB and Unison provided advice for employees.

Twenty parents attended the consultation meeting at Sawley Schools: the Infants received one letter opposing conversion and requesting additional information to which the Chair of Governors replied.

A letter was received from The Long Eaton School offering advice and support.

The Sawley Before and After School Club expressed concern over whether the Academy Trust would continue with the provision. The head teacher informed the organisation that there were no plans to end the service.

SSSEN also requested further information.

Unions have requested that the Trust adopts their recognition agreements. Union representatives that attended the TUPE consultation commented that the majority of members were positive about the conversion and had been kept well informed and supported.