

Bronte Academy Trust (BAT)

Academy Consultation Report June 2016

**Prepared for: The Governing Bodies
Prepared by: Gail Khan Associates
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Contents:

1. Introduction to the consultation:	3
2. Aims of the consultation:	3
3. Consultation materials:	3
4. Consultation events, audience and timeline:	5
5. Key outcomes:	7
6. Conclusion and recommendations:.....	10

Appendices:

1. Stakeholder/ Staff academy frequently asked questions
- 2a. Pupil consultation feedback – Haworth Primary
- 2b. Pupil consultation feedback – Oakworth Primary
- 2c. Pupil consultation feedback – Lees Primary
3. Staff consultation presentation
4. Staff consultation notes/questions
- 5a. Parent/carers letter
- 5b. Parent/carers presentation
- 5c. Parents/carers questions
- 6a. Online Survey Monkey Questionnaire
- 6b. Online Survey Results Table

1. Introduction to the consultation:

1.1. This report outlines the reason for the consultations undertaken and summarises key findings. Information is presented under the following headings:

- The Aims of the Consultation
- Consultation Materials
- Consultation Audience, Events and Timeline
- Key Outcomes
- Conclusions and Recommendations

1.2. Key stakeholders have been consulted on the proposal for the potential conversion to Academy status for Haworth, Lees and Oakworth Primary Schools alongside the creation of a new Multi Academy Trust (MAT). The consultation period commenced on 18th April 2016 and concluded on the 10th May 2016.

1.3. The findings included in this report are based on comments and suggestions made and questions raised during a series of consultation events.

1.4. Copies of all answers to questions raised in the meetings are included in the appendices.

2. Aims of the consultation:

2.1. The consultation exercise had a number of strategic aims:

- To inform stakeholders of the scope of the proposal and provide information on both short and long-term implications, risks and opportunities
- To ensure that a wide range of stakeholders were able to contribute their views and ideas and ask questions
- To collate and analyse the views put forward to inform consideration by the Governing Bodies

3. Consultation materials:

3.1. PowerPoint presentations:

A series of PowerPoint presentations were developed for each audience to give all stakeholders consistent and relevant information as a starting point to inform the discussions.

Staff and Trade Unions had an additional focus on staffing/HR issues and implications for them whereas the parents' consultation focused more on what it could mean for pupils as well as providing more information on Academy status.

Key areas covered in the presentations were:

- The rationale for conversion and the local proposal
- Background from the Department for Education and what are the key requirements to convert and the benefits and opportunities of converting to an Academy.
- Governance structure
- Curriculum opportunities
- Staffing implications
- Financial considerations
- Legal implications for land, buildings, staff and governors
- What happens next
- Questions & Answers

A copy of all the presentations can be found between Appendix 3 and 5b.

3.2. Parents/Carers Letter:

To support the parental consultation, a letter for all parents/carers was developed and sent out. The aim of the letter was to allow parents the opportunity of giving their thoughts about the school converting to Academy status and to raise any concerns they had.

Parents/Carers were given the opportunity of sending in feedback either by phone, email, online or in writing. Response to the letter directly was minimal however parents have contributed to the consultation via attending meetings, email and online.

3.3. Stakeholder FAQ's:

A frequently asked questions document (see Appendix 1) was prepared for the parents/community consultation events. The aim was to give as much information as possible about all the practical things parents could want to know, ranging from whether there would be new uniforms to what it could mean for the pupils' learning experience. This document complemented with the presentation and question and answer session gave parents a thorough understanding of what an academy is and what it could mean for the Schools.

3.4. Online Survey

Survey Monkey was used as an online vehicle to gauge reaction to a set of questions linked to the proposal for the three schools to become academies and to create a new MAT. A set of 6 questions were posed to stakeholders with an opportunity to respond anonymously. There was a further space in addition to the questions for additional comments.

4. Consultation events, audience and timeline:

Tool	Target Audience	Dates
Staff briefing (Oakworth Primary)	Staff	Early December 2015
General session with Staff (Haworth Primary)	Staff	2 nd December 2015
Governor meetings (Haworth Primary)	Governors	9 th December 2015 6 th January 2016 2 nd February 2016 21 st March 2016 10 th May 2016
Staff briefing (Oakworth Primary)	Staff	January 2016
Invitation sent out to Parents/ Carers for information evening on 1 st March (Haworth Primary)	Parents/ Carers	8 th January 2016
Catch up session with Staff (Haworth Primary)	Staff	19 th January 2016
Session with Staff (Haworth Primary)	Staff	22 nd January 2016
Informal staff meeting (Lees Primary)	Staff	27 th January 2016
Letter to Parent/Carer sent jointly by all three schools	Parents/Carers	8 th February 2016
Text sent to Parent/Carers (Lees Primary)	Parent/ Carers	8 th February 2016
Text sent to Parent/Carers (Haworth Primary)	Parent/ Carers	8 th February 2016
Two Governors at Oakworth Primary attended a Parents Evening	Parents/Carers	26 th February 2016
Text sent reminding Parents/Carers about information evening (Haworth Primary)	Parents/Carers	1 st March 2016
Parent information evening (Haworth Primary)	Parents/Carers	1 st March 2016
Governors attended Parents Evenings to discuss academies at Haworth Primary	Parent/ Carers	9 th March 2016 10 th March 2016
Staff consultation session (Haworth Primary)	Staff	14 th March 2016 18 th March 2016

Meeting with NUT Rep (Haworth Primary)	NUT Members	11 th April 2016
Academy consultation letter sent to Parents/Carers	Parents/Carers	15 th April 2016
Online survey	All stakeholders	18 th April 2016 – 10 th May 2016
Text sent to staff (Lees Primary)	Staff	21 st April 2016
Text sent to remind Parent/Carers about consultation meeting on 26 th April (Lees Primary)	Parents/ Carers	25 th April 2016
Joint Staff presentation(s) / meeting(s)	All School staff (unions in attendance)	26 th April 2016
Joint Parent/Carer & Community meetings	Parents/Carers and community	26 th April 2016
Text sent to Parents/ Carers (Lees Primary)	Parents/ Carers	27 th April 2016
Pupil consultation meetings	Pupils	5 th May 2016 (Haworth Primary) 9 th May 2016 (Oakworth Primary) 10 th May 2016 (Lees Primary)
Teaching Staff Drop In Session (Oakworth Primary)	Staff	5 th May 2016
Meeting with Lunchtime and HOSC Staff (Haworth Primary)	Staff	5 th May 2016
Headteachers meeting with Unions	Unions	6 th May 2016
Update and additional information sent to Parents/ Carers (Haworth Primary)	Parents/ Carers	9 th May 2016
Staff Drop In Session (Oakworth Primary)	Staff	11 th May 2016
Letter to Parents/ Carers (Oakworth Primary)	Parents/Carers	12 th May 2016
Text sent and information for Staff in pigeon holes (Lees Primary)	Staff	12 th May 2016
Text sent to Parents/ Carers (Lees Primary)	Parents/ Carers	13 th May 2016

Text sent to Parents/Carers and Staff (Haworth Primary)	Parents/ Carers & Staff	13 th May 2016
Meeting for Support Staff (Lees Primary)	Staff	16 th May 2016

5. Key outcomes:

5.1. There were a number of consultation events which took place over the formal 3 week consultation period (as well as that done prior) and as a result a robust amount of data has been captured and collated for review and consideration. A copy of all the questions raised are included in the relevant appendices enclosed with this report and the outcomes below aim to give you an overview of the key outcomes for consideration by governors to help your planning going forward.

5.2. A total of 37 respondents completed the online survey. Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) support the proposal for Haworth, Lees and Oakworth Primary Schools to convert to academy status and form a Multi-Academy Trust.

5.3. Staff

Staff received a formal presentation from the Jo Padgin Chair of Governors at Oakworth and Gail Khan (see Appendix 3). This highlighted the rationale for academy status, the proposal, the emerging vision for the Trust as well as the detail on the academy process including what it means for staff and pupils. A lead representative from the LA's HR team was also present at the staff meeting in a supportive role as the current employer.

Staff reaction to the proposals was positive. Questions were raised at the consultation events and meetings and these were mainly around pensions, child care vouchers, maternity pay, employment contracts, job security, pay, conditions, workload and due diligence data. Three members of staff asked if the process was continuing following Nicky Morgan's announcement on 6th May. The full statement was then made available on staff notices, to clarify the situation. The questions raised were then added to the master list which can be seen in Appendix 4.

62% of the 37 respondents to the online survey were also staff members. Over three quarters of staff members (78%) support the proposal for Haworth, Lees and Oakworth Primary Schools to convert to academy status and form a Multi-Academy Trust.

In the main, staff could see the benefits academy status would give to pupils for the curriculum and how it would benefit the schools in the longer term.

Staff were comfortable with the responses shared regarding pensions and trade union recognition by the trust.

"I feel that this will be a very positive partnership, which will lead to a range of very exciting opportunities". Member of Staff, Online Survey

5.4. Trade Unions

Trade unions were made aware of the proposal for academy conversion and invited to attend the staff consultation meetings. Representatives were present from the NUT, NASUWT, Unison, NAHT and ATL. A subsequent follow up meeting on the 6th May was held which included the same unions, this focussed particularly on the proposed relationship with the Trust assuming conversion happened.

The Headteacher at Oakworth Primary responded to a written query from the GMB union on 7th December 2016, promising to consult with them in due course should an application go ahead.

5.5. Pupils

The School Council's at each of the three schools (which included a group of pupils representing all the year groups) participated in a discussion about what it means to become an academy. Questions raised and discussed were mainly around the curriculum, uniform, website, extra clubs, joint days, and how the three schools would work together both in terms of pupils and teachers.

Overall, the School Council's responded positively saying that they thought becoming an academy was a good idea as long as their schools kept their own identity.

Further questions raised by the pupils / points to note can be found in Appendix 2a – 2c.

5.6. Parents/Carers & the Community

There was an opportunity for parents/carers and the community to meet with the Headteachers and members of the Governing Bodies on the 26th April. 12 parents/carers in total attended. Questions raised from the parents and carers are highlighted in Appendix 5c.

A letter and frequently asked questions paper had already been sent out to parents and carers and this was posted on the schools websites and copies were made available on the evenings.

In the online survey, 42% (5 out of 12) of parents support the proposal for Haworth, Lees and Oakworth Primary Schools to convert to academy status and form a Multi-Academy Trust. 5 parents and 1 member of the community do not support the proposal.

Overall, feedback was constructive and positive with some parents seeing more benefits than barriers to the proposed conversions.

Questions raised at the consultation centred around the governance structure, curriculum, funding and the Trust.

Some key areas of concerns were around decision-making responsibilities and that it seems like a done deal. Other key areas for Governors to consider included:

- Who decides how much funding goes to each school and what it is used for?
- How have the members and trustees been recruited and who decides who takes these roles? Can parents contribute / have a say about these roles?
- What changes may happen in relation to the curriculum?
- Will the schools still receive grants / funding for SEN and Pupil Premium?
- What is the impact on pensions for staff?
- We haven't heard much about how the changes will affect the children on a day to day basis. What are the benefits for the children?

One parent who was unable to attend the consultation meeting sent a letter prior to the meeting addressed to the Headteacher at Lees Primary expressing their concerns over the school's decision to convert to academy status and partnering with the other two schools to which we responded to via email directly.

Following the announcement of the Government withdrawal of the universal academisation programme, a parent emailed the Headteacher at Oakworth Primary to ask if the school was still going ahead with conversion. The full terms of the Secretary of State's announcement were highlighted. The parent stated that overall he was in favour of conversion for the future of the school.

To ensure that all relevant information has reached parents (as some of those attending the joint consultation meeting felt that they needed more information about the impact of academisation on the day-to-day running of the school and also on the financial implications) parents received a detailed letter from the Headteacher at Oakworth Primary on 12th May.

Haworth Primary held an Information Evening for parents on the 1st March which 8 parents attended. The school received unanimously positive feedback from the 8 parents who attended the meeting.

A parent sent a letter to the Headteacher at Haworth Primary expressing their support for the proposal.

"The MAT that the school is hoping to form seems to be of a group of schools who will be able to work well together." Parent, Haworth Primary

Overall the feedback received from parents/ carers and community was extremely constructive.

5.7. Governors

There was one Governor who responded to the online survey; he/she does not support the proposal for Haworth, Lees and Oakworth Primary Schools to convert to academy status and form a Multi-Academy Trust.

6. Conclusion and recommendations:

The consultation with key stakeholders has been comprehensive. There has been no significant objection to the plans to convert to academy status and the proposal has received overwhelming support from those staff and parents that responded to the survey. Almost two-thirds 64% (23) of respondents are in favour of the proposal with 22% (8) of respondents against the proposal.

Therefore the Governing Bodies are advised that the consultation has not demonstrated any significant objection to the plans for Haworth, Lees and Oakworth Primary Schools to convert to academy status and form a Multi-Academy Trust.

All these questions are included in Appendix 4 and 5c for Governors to read.

In conclusion, recommendations to be considered by Governors if you decide to progress with the conversion are:

- Ensure all stakeholders are kept up-to-date on a regular basis so that they are kept fully informed.
- Keep communication regular, using letters and the school website as a constant means of communication.
- Consult throughout your conversion ensuring regular updates to key groups are received/delivered.

Prepared by Gail Khan, 17 June 2016

Appendices (see separate files):

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