

KATHARINE LADY BERKELEY'S SCHOOL

Q&AS RECORDED DURING THE ACADEMY CONSULTATION PROCESS

Associate staff consultation: 10th March 2011, 11am

1. What do you estimate to be the cost of the change ?

There is a government grant of £25k. The legal costs will be covered by a fixed package which costs £7500 from Rickerby's who have a strong reputation in this area. Other schools say the total is £30-40k.

2. Will you have to change the name, uniform etc?

No. The intention would be to be as seamless as possible. It is very different to the set up of the old style academies.

3. If a school 'piggy backs' onto us, do they pay?

No. While schools can move together (as for some in South Glos) and look at shared services, single governing body etc, you can also have a much looser and simpler agreement simply to work together on one aspect such as CPD. We could also partner with feeder primaries.

4. Are Rednock going through the same process?

Not sure. Their recent Ofsted category was satisfactory so they will have to link with another school to do so. My understanding is that they are talking about it. 24 out of 40 secondaries in Gloucestershire either have or are in the process of converting.

5. Is there a danger that LAs won't survive?

Possibly, but the vast majority of primaries are not looking to convert so the LA must exist for them. Secondaries need to work with the LA to ensure traded services are effective and are available to buy from them.

6. Will the role of governors be the same?

Essentially yes. As we are a VA school there is not a huge difference whereas for a community school it is much more significant change.

7. It seems to essentially be about money but do we have the capacity to change and manage new investment?

We do most of this anyway, so yes. The additional funding will be more about ameliorating the current financial pressures than a spending bonanza!

8. Will there be extra capital money available for investment?

Not that we know of as yet. Still to be announced.

9. When will any staff changes for 2012-13 be considered?

If we do not convert, we will need to be considering further staff reductions in September.

10. How would you summarise the pros and cons?

The benefits are the short term financial benefit which is particularly significant in our context; the longterm financial benefit of not paying VAT or the 10% contribution; the opportunity to source services according to needs and possibly the advantage of not having to follow any extremes of the national curriculum that it is clear won't have a long shelf life. In terms of risks, there are unknowns in both converting and not converting as the whole education and local authority scene is changing.

Teacher consultation meeting, 10th March 2011, 3.00pm.

11. Could there be a local pool for cover supervision?

The WFR agreement on teaching staff 'rarely covering' doesn't cover academies but we would not wish to chip away at national agreements. We would still need to employ cover supervisors but the pool idea is a good idea.

12. Could any roles currently done by teachers go to non teachers?

No because WFA in place and all tasks already passed over. There has been a suggestion that head teachers could be non teachers with a business background but I believe heads must understand the core business of teaching and learning.

13. You argue very persuasively as to why things are unlikely to happen but this is not backed up by why they won't happen. There is a risk that these things will be gradually eroded.

There are risks in converting and risks in non converting. We may have to do it anyway eventually.

14. Will our views be taken into account in the final decision? Will there be a staff ballot?

Your views are very important and will be taken into account along with those from students, parents and the wider community but there will not be a staff ballot.

Questions received since the staff meetings.

15. My question is what succession management has the Governors got for their new role as directors and what is their skill base for taking on this new role??

One of the issues that will need to be addressed, should the governing body make a formal application to convert, is the make up and size of the governing body. The guidelines suggest that while the governing body could be slightly smaller, it must still be made up of representatives of staff, parents and the foundation, the latter still holding a majority of seats. In other words, it is unlikely to be significantly different to today. In making this move however and taking into account a current vacancy, it

would be right and proper to assess the skills needed by an academy board and look to bring these in as soon as possible.

16. Further to tonight's meeting, could I ask what the governing body post academy status would look like? You cited it as one of the safeguards against the erosion of our pay and conditions, but would it exist as it does now, or would there be a different constitution? This could weaken our safeguarding and therefore increase the possibility of unfavourable changes being adopted.

See question 15. As a VA school, the changes in operation and focus of the governing body would not be as significant as for say community schools, but nevertheless, it is important that we really understand any changes in duties and liabilities should we convert. The issue of the makeup of our Trust Body (which will be a legal requirement) and how it relates to the Governing Body and existing Foundation, has yet to be addressed. When we visited Pates they had been very pragmatic on this and the Trust Body was made up of the Head, Chair and Chair of Finance who simply signed the Trust funding agreement and delegated all other matters to the GB.

Parents consultation meeting, 23rd March – (35 parents attended)

17. LA may not always be able to provide the bought back services – could we end up having to pay private rates for these services ?
The risk is the same for a maintained school but the Heads' Association is working with the LA to ensure services are available and in any case, unlikely that all primaries will convert so the LA provision will need to continue.
18. If the amount of future LACSEG is unknown, what is the risk, in the longer term, that maintained schools will be better funded than academies?
As Academies are a flagship policy it would seem unlikely and in any case there may be a national funding formula that will change the basis of funding anyway for all schools.
19. (Observation) The saving on VAT would mitigate that risk
Agreed.
20. During the transition the governors need to be more visible and available, expectations carefully managed and communication improved.
Agreed.
21. How would the change of status impact on the local community?
We are talking to WCSF about the proposed sports development and SDC about their involvement with the sports centre. I agree that conversion gives the opportunity for the school to become more a part of the local community.
22. Staff pay and conditions - FE colleges went through a similar change during the 80s. After the honeymoon period trade union unrest became and continues to be a weekly event. How can you be sure that this would not be the case with academies?
We have gone as far as we can in giving assurances that we will continue to abide by national agreements but we understand staff concerns. The incorporation of FE

meant a sudden transition from tight LA control to self governance and freedom resulting in administrative difficulties and unhealthy competition. We already have self governance and most of the freedoms such that there will be little change in the administrative demands and we expect no change in the relationships with other schools. The circumstances now are different.

23. What increase will there be in bureaucracy and will you need more admin staff?

No, we don't believe so.

24. How will the role of governors change and how will the skill set be maintained

Because we are VA, the change in what we will need to do is not that significant. We will continue to use vacancies as the opportunity to review the skills and experience we need to be effective.

25. Might the change in status affect the likelihood of obtaining funding from alternative sources (eg. assoc. With Olympics)?

We don't think so but there is little evidence to go on.

26. Might some of the staff leave because they have disagreement in principle with academy status?

We would hope not but it is a risk.

27. If we changed to a different type of school [foundation] would that enable us to claim the VAT back?

Yes.

28. Have you any idea of what new things you might do on the curriculum?

Unlikely to do anything significant although we might divert slightly from the national curriculum if it is unhelpfully prescriptive such as on lists of historical dates. We would not wish to loose our current excellence so not sure why we would want to do anything different.

29. How would you spend £560k?

As our funding is reducing and we are making staffing cuts this year it is much more about avoiding further cuts and maintaining what we do now than a spending bonanza.

30. Who will appoint the new GB?

The old GB.

31. Who are the members of the KLB Foundation?

MC ran through current trustees and their backgrounds as detailed on the school website.

32. With reduced capital funding, the saving on VAT will not be so great?

VAT is applied on all capital expenditure which also comes from revenue funding so the difference will be significant.

33. You have briefed the pupils – are their expectations high on what might happen?
We hope not, but noted. We receive feedback at the school council tomorrow on their views.

Other questions and comments received via email

34. Thank you for the information. Even if it only benefits the school financially for 2 years, it seems a logical step to take. Unfortunately I am unable to attend the meeting, my husband may be able to, as yet he is not aware of the date suggested. In theory it sounds positive and if the teachers and governors are behind it I would support their judgement.
If there is anything significant from the meeting on the 23rd I would be interested, as I am sure many other parents, to be kept informed please.
Many thanks for inviting parents in on the decision process.
35. This is good news, you and Mr. Harris know what is best for the school and if you think it is a good idea as both a parent and governor then I am right behind you!
36. Just a quick line to say that I believe that academy status for the school would be a step in the right direction as it would give you (the school) a bit more freedom to concentrate on the things that I feel would benefit the pupils, like English, maths, and the sciences and also IT.
37. I don't have much to say apart from I support the idea of academy status. It appears to offer a lot to the school and I'm confident you and the governors have the skills and vision to make it a success.

Students' response as presented at the School Council meeting on the 24th March

Year	TG	Comment
Y7	EJB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of uniform would be good. • Majority for no uniform, or some of it to change. • RE: would it still be compulsory? • Don't mind. • More sports choices • Use funds to get Windows 7. • More languages available (choices).
Y7	SKR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys thought money good for equipment eg. hockey. • Majority didn't want a name change. • More trips if possible / laptops. • Drop a language earlier (second language). • Of those interested, 4/5 wanted it.
Y7	KRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep second language (majority). • Keep holidays as they are. • If money available spend on dining facilities. • Laptops for students. • Christmas holiday longer for some. • Majority positive.
Y7	RCB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half not bothered. • Half wanted to start the school day later.
Y7	NMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the group thought it good (3 / 4). • More money spent on more activities in school and out. • Class sizes to be reduced would be good. • More options. • Not to change the school day.
Y8	MJG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most felt not affected. • Don't mind. • Money would be good. • Still confused about change, what does it mean?
Y8	VKM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most like the idea. • Changing subjects to add variety would be good. • Not RE. • Choose your language – not have to be French.
Y8	NJO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority say yes to change. • Some see no difference / good for equipment. • Smaller class sizes would be good.
Y8	SWR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like more flexibility. • Not to stay with National Curriculum.
Y8	JTT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the group wanted it. • Buildings to be improved. • Not short course RE.
Y8	JCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE optional. • Choose more sports in PE (more choice) • Keep dates as they are • Art optional • Change name? I like it as it is.

Y8	CMM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50/50 for and against. • Like the money – short term. • If Mr Harris goes – changes we may not like.
Y8	PJC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No feedback
Y8	JEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No feedback
Y9	SAH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt things would be no different. • 18 for and 3 against.
Y9	GJB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would uniform change? • Money is good • How would it be spent? • What would be the negative of changing? • 50% want to.
Y9	LMM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend the money on canteen / Sports facilities. • 70 – 30 split for and against • Is it because we are under achieving?
Y9	SPO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money needs to be spent wisely.
Y9	KLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would it mean 6th form changes?
Y9	RJS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good in theory. • Money useful. • Make canteen better. • Noticeable change. • Sports – new facilities. • Most for it in theory.
Y9	ATY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sure of the point in changing • What is money to be spent on? • Sports facilities.
Y9	KAW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worried about limit for getting additional money. • In time would standards drop • More sports
Y10	SJA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like uniform change with seasons if available. • Not affected either way.
Y10	DCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most 20/5 for the idea. • No reason not to. • Uniform, would it change?
Y10	PAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For – money in the short term is good. • Didn't want name change.
Y10	CEB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep name. • Not bothered either way.
Y10	JTB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More money good idea (all but 1).
Y10	JVO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strong opinion.
Y10	LGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not discussed.
Y10	SMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes majority – 99%. • Holidays increased. • Shorter school day. • No RE – majority.

Y10	CTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No opinions.
Y11	LJM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority – all against in case Mr Harris leaves • Why not? Argument against.
Y11	RHD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No feedback
Y11	JMY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority against, not aware of the negatives.
Y11	VAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No feedback
Y11	PAH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% for – many unsure of benefits. • How will money be spent?
Y11	CMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not affect Y11 as much. • Positives seem too outweigh negatives. • Need brakes on a 'new head'. • Suspicious as not heard about negatives