

## Dales Academies Trust (DAT) - Survey Monkey Comments

As at 8 September 2017

The questions and answers below are a summary of the feedback received on the online Survey Monkey questionnaires as at 8 September 2017.

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### Ainderby Steeple C of E Primary School

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### Bolton on Swale St Marys CE Primary School

#### Have you received enough information regarding our proposal?

Comment: I would like to see why other Church of England schools have chosen to opt out and see clearer benefits for our school both financial and for the pupils.

Answer: Different CofE schools may decide to apply to join the Trust in coming months and years and we would be delighted to work with other Church (and non Church) schools. Regarding the benefits for pupils and staff please refer to the main body of the report and appendices within this report.

#### Any other comments?

Comment: I understand why we entered into the consultation process to find out more information, but I would like to think that if the proposal is not financially profitable then we would walk away like other local C of E schools have done. I think we have a good school with a strong financial grounding and good results and don't see why we would benefit from entering into an academy. I can see the benefit for staff in sharing ideas but I think they can already do that through the Swaledale alliance and think we would still attract pupils and teachers to such a good school. The reason I chose this school for my children was the Christian ethos and warm feel that myself and my husband got when we visited and the personalised attention that we didn't feel our children would get at other schools. I would be afraid entering into an academy would put this individuality at risk and the pressure to combine smaller schools to make bigger more financially stable ones would be greater. I understand we

have a good financial status and are not under threat. If we entered into an academy the money would all go into one pot and our needs for a peace garden or an outdoor play area would come way below other older schools in disrepair that might need a new roof or windows and fear we would miss out whereas we can allocate where money currently goes ourselves. I am very sceptical about the benefits but trust the governors and head teacher to make the right decision for our school.

**Response:** This proposal is not about taking away anything from the school and we see this as an opportunity to enhance provision and enrich the learning experiences. The school will still receive and manage its own budget and governors and leaders will be held to account for their expenditure probably more than they are now. Please note academies cannot make a profit. You may have a surplus and it could be a school is generating a surplus to pay for significant items for example improved outdoor play space.

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### **Eppleby Forcett CE Primary School & Middleton Tyas Primary School**

#### **Please confirm the status that best describes you?**

**Question:** Are these really the most important questions for this survey? Does school get more funding by moving into Academy status?

**Answer:** The consultation takes many different forms and this is just one element of the way stakeholders can feedback and respond to questions. The school will not receive additional grant funding as a result of becoming an academy however it is able to access funds (through a competitive process) it couldn't as a maintained school for example on capital projects. There is also a hope that the costs would be reduced by stronger and better buying power.

#### **Have you received enough information regarding our proposal?**

**Comment:** We received a generic letter but no further updates. For someone with little experience, I don't feel as though we've been provided with enough to make an informed decision. The QA session was rearranged and the new date wasn't convenient - there has been no update provided by the school and the

impression I have is that everything has already been decided and the consultation just a formality.

**Response:** We are collating the consultation feedback and an interim response to the questions asked at meetings of parents/carers and the community was shared on the school websites immediately prior to the summer break. The final report will be distributed mid-late September.

**Comment:** I have only seen the letter sent to parents and the article in the D&S this week.

**Question:** Financial implications, what will not be provided now by the authority?

**Answer:** The schools are working through the services, which will continue and will cease. At present, we are clear that payroll will be moving and the LA can no longer provide insurance other than this we are not aware of any other services not available from the LA.

**Comment:** More explanation about the cost of the process and recruitment procedures. And why there is a need for this for our school in Tyas.

**Response:** The primary schools all receive a grant of £25k to support the transition costs. This covers fees for example linked to services such as legal, finance HR and project management. The Trust also received additional capacity funding from the DfE to help the set up phase and year one particularly as it is recognised there are one off costs that hit in year one.

Recruitment of the CEO was via a national advert and was led by both the Diocese of York and Leeds. A representative Headteacher from the group of schools was also involved in the recruitment panel and decision-making.

At Tyas there is already a close working relationship between some of the schools proposing to join the MAT and it makes sense for us to come together in this new way to formalise some of these relationships and ensure we are stronger together. We believe there are significant benefits to staff and pupils and this is outlined in the main narrative of the report.

**Comment:** Do not understand what changing to an academy entails or why the school needs to do it!!

**Response:** We have uploaded copies of our presentations and the frequently asked questions to help support the understanding. Copies can be found on our website under 'key information' MAT Consultation. Schools choose to consider academy status for many reasons and at Middleton Tyas/Eppleby Forcett the Governors have chosen this option after significant research and due diligence.

**Question:** More about the impacts and benefits to the children. Whether we still have a choice in this rather than it being forced upon us. What the situation will be between Middleton Tyas and Eppleby in future. How it will impact the school financially and what effect it will have on the choices that are made for our children.

**Answer:** In the main body of the report (section 4) we have prepared a section on finance and accountability to help answer some of the questions raised during the consultation. Overall across all the schools what we aim to achieve through formalising the structures within a MAT is that children receive better opportunities and access to things they perhaps don't or can't do now. We are also keen to continue our relationship with similar small, rural schools.

**Comment:** I feel already a lot of decisions been made and we are now just been notified... maybe when it was a proposal would have been better.

**Response:** It is difficult on the timing as we need to have as many answers as possible for all schools in order to inform and share the detail that we have as part of this consultation.

**Comment:** No meeting held for parents yet.

**Response:** We appreciate your original meeting was postponed with a re arranged date held on the 19<sup>th</sup> July. We wanted to ensure the right people could be present to answer potential questions and the first date unfortunately could not work for everyone.

**Question:** What are the benefits? All I've heard is that the management benefit financially from these arrangements and that the school itself just gets another layer of management.

**Answer:** The main benefit is formal collaboration. We have already committed to the headteacher working with Richmond Church of England Primary and this partnership has been extremely successful. There is substantial research that shows this has benefits for staff through shared practice and CPD and leads to

improved outcomes for children. We are extremely keen to work more closely with like-minded schools, who share our vision and values, and are excited to be part of the first converters whereby we will be able to help shape the direction of the MAT. This MAT will help to protect vulnerable rural schools in the area and provides security for church schools. There will also be opportunities for significant financial savings through access to funding that is ring-fenced for academies and through shared buying power and economies of scale.

Question: Lots of questions sent in and waiting for meeting (recently cancelled)

Answer: These were all responded to as part of the interim report which was circulated to stakeholders on the school website immediately prior to the summer break.

Comment: The information was thorough as an introduction to the proposal.

### **Should we keep the school name the same?**

Comment: I think it's important for schools to keep their individual identity for several reasons. Children are proud of their schools and like to be associated to them, it would be confusing if several schools were called the same, even with different sub titles. I can understand why a failing school would want to rebrand but I think it's important for a good school to carry it's name and associated reputation. The proposed Trinity name isn't a progressive name and I personally find it quite dull.

Question: Why are you even considering changing the name? The name identifies with the village where many of the children who attend live.

Answer: There is a need to rename as we move into the Dales Academies Trust, as we will no longer technically be a Federation, although we will continue to operate in the same way. A shorter name will avoid unflattering abbreviations and aid practicality/efficiency in many areas of school life. Whilst we are a distinct, unique school, we are moving into a new period of formal partnership with an established Executive Headteacher (not acting). This is an opportunity for all three schools to share an identity whilst still retaining their individual identity and the reference to the name of the village where the school is situated.

Question: After so much change recently we just need to stabilise. No more changes please. What is wrong with keeping our name? Are all the other schools in the list changing? Is this more to do with the MAT or the shared head?

(see page 5)

Comment: It's already changed once to include the Eppleby name. Silly to change it again and wasted money which should be used in the classroom.

Question: For what/whose benefit? Is the relationship with Richmond Church of England to be formalised (part of the Federation?). We have just had a recent name change and a change of logo.

(see page 5)

### **Should we keep the school uniform the same?**

Comment: It is expensive for parents to change the uniform.

Response: Please be assured we realise any changes to uniform are expensive and if the uniform changes this would be done in consideration of cost and over a period of time.

Comment: My children have uniform handed down from other families that will last them for the next few years. So much uniform is wasted already. I do not plan on buying any new uniform. We have an identity already. No need financial or aesthetic to change. Just a waste of money and paperwork.

Comment: No need to change the uniform again.

Comment: Middleton Tyas uniform and PE kit is very smart.

**Do you agree that the Secretary of State should enter into a Funding Agreement for Eppleby Forcett Primary School and Middleton Tyas Primary School?**

Question: I don't understand what this means. Does it mean the money to run the school goes directly to the school and they can spend it as they wish?

Answer: The Funding Agreement is part of the contractual arrangements schools/academies and the Secretary of State enter into as part of the transition to academy status. It commits to the school being funded for future years and highlights roles, responsibilities and legal obligations.

Comment: Not clear on the implications of this

Response: The main implication for the schools would be at the point the Funding Agreement is signed the school cannot withdraw/remove itself from the MAT.

Question: More information needed about what changing into Academy status means if it's just changing the name from Swaledale Alliance to Academy status then fine. But if it's taking away the Local Authority support then not sure. The Darlington schools that have changed to academy status have not done well on their Ofsted inspections if there were outstanding academy's locally it would be a positive move!!

Answer: The schools would still be part of the Swaledale Alliance but as academies they would be removed from Local Authority control and accountability would be with the MAT. The LA retains statutory duties around things like Special Education Needs and admissions. The schools will continue to buy in too many of the services it does now as a maintained school.

Comment: Until we know what this question means I'm unable to answer!

Comment(s): I need more information about this. What does that even mean?? What is this Funding Agreement? More information required.

Response: The funding agreement is a contractual document with the Department for Education and Academy Trust and articulates the basis in which the trust academies will be funded.

Comment: I think it should be more carefully considered and wait till the MAT is up and running before joining so we can see if it is what we actually want.

### **Any other comments?**

Comment: It was bad enough being lumped in with Eppleby. Now I can see it will be taken over by Richmond which is a failing school. This is no longer the village school it used to be and which the village has supported for many years.

Question: How will the Trust recruit the CEO in charge of the Trust? If we will have the same set up with governors/trustee's what's the point. I thought rural schools could opt out? What is Melsonby doing? What is Brompton school doing?

Answer: The Trust along with Bradford Diocese Academies Trust have made a shared appointment. Damian Chubb is the proposed CEO of DAT and joins the two Trusts in September. Each school will have governing bodies as they do now and the make up will be the same with Foundation governors as well as parents and staff. We cannot comment on the plans of other schools at this stage; however, there may well be an opportunity for additional schools to join the MAT in the future.

Comment: The School is not Eppleby Forcett it's Eppleby Forcett and Middleton Tyas. The Middleton Tyas part is the main school!!

Response: We updated the questionnaire to reflect this as soon as we were made aware.

Comment: I don't think we are being very well informed about this at all!

Response: If there is anything specific you feel hasn't been answered or shared during the consultation please let us know and we will respond as a priority.

Question: I don't agree in schools being forced into academy status and feel we are being dragged along by the c of e school in Richmond rather than choosing it for ourselves. Not convinced it will benefit the schools and why can't we wait to see how it pans out rather than rushing in straight away?

Answer: This is not the case and no one is being 'dragged in'. The Governors have made a decision based on a significant amount of research and due diligence and believe it is in the best interests of both schools to progress with academy



status. This is also led by the Diocese of Leeds and York and not by Richmond Primary school.

Question: Complete lack of information and consultation makes me believe we are being sold a lie. Be honest. Be up front. Tell us how our school, our children, and not least our amazing team will benefit from being a multi-academy trust.

Answer: At the consultation meetings, we shared a lot of detail on the benefits (and risks) of being part of a MAT, which stimulated much debate. This information has been shared online and we will continue to communicate on this as we progress.

Question: I've not seen any information about this proposed change up to now. This needs to be more widely publicised.

Answer: Until now there hasn't been anything to communicate and going forward we will continue to ensure all staff, children, parents/carers and community stakeholders are informed / updated as much as possible.

Comment: Yes, too many to write here. I'll email.

Response: Hopefully we received your email and have responded within this overall report or directly via the email.

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### **Kirkby Fleetham CE Primary School**

#### **Should we keep the school name the same?**

Comment: I think the link with East Cowton should remain and probably remain reflected in the school title. Even if they are no longer technically federated.

Response: We agree and would certainly want this to be the case.

**Any other comments?**

Comment: It seems like an exciting thing for the school to become part of - particularly from the beginning.

Comment: If this is the only way to keep small village schools open, then I guess it is the best way to go!

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**South Otterington CE Primary School**

**Have you received enough information regarding our proposal?**

Question: There have been no details on how the schools will be run, how finances will be distributed, how and who will be responsible, changes in staffing including terms and conditions, maintaining teaching numbers etc etc.

Answer: We did distribute a copy of the presentation shared with parents at the meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> July and the responses to all questions asked just prior to the summer break. We can confirm the leadership and staffing will remain the same as will the local governing body. Terms and conditions for staff will remain the same.

Comment: I would like to be kept updated, there is a lot to take in I felt the evening was very well presented

Comment: I would like to know why on earth is such a lovely school is even considering this - I am absolutely astounded. It is VERY worrying.

**Should we keep the school name the same?**

Comment: This has nothing to do with the changes proposed as is the school uniform questions. I am more interested in the school provision and accountability to all.

**Do you agree that the Secretary of State should enter into a Funding Agreement for South Otterington Primary School?**

Comment: This is privatisation of education through the back door. Its asset stripping with publicly owned assets passing to privately owned organisations without accountability. Academies are under no obligation to provide the same terms and conditions for teachers. This is a corrupt race to the bottom.

Comment: We should remain independent.

**Any other comments?**

Comment: I feel this is being slipped past parents without full information or consequences being openly discussed. It feels like a done deal behind closed doors

Response: This is not the case and we have shared information as soon as we were able. At the parents meeting in early July we also agreed to have another update meeting in September.

Comment: There is no positive evidence whatsoever that academies provide better outcomes for pupils. This is yet another example of snouts in the trough. Shame on the organisers of this sordid enterprise.

Comment: This is an exciting time for the school. I hope it will benefit all children and staff over all the school sites. I can see no ill effects to the children as nothing really changes; this is the main thing in my opinion, as long as staff and children are happy then I am happy to support the conversion.

Comment: My main concern is that, as an outstanding primary school, we will be joining with schools who do not have an outstanding status, whilst I am sure parents of the other school will be very happy about this, it may have a detrimental effect on our school.

Answer: Three schools proposed to go into the Trust are Outstanding. Croft, All Saints and South Otterington, with seven others all being Good. Richmond Primary may be in an Ofsted category currently however, it has experienced significant

improvements over the last two years including better results / performance than many of our primary schools.

Comment: 100% disagree

Comment: Hopefully the new headteacher will continue to see the importance of small schools working closely together. Exciting times ahead.

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### **Croft CE Primary School**

#### **Should we keep the school uniform the same?**

Comment: This does not bother me too greatly and if the school wanted to change the uniform I would accept this.

#### **Any other comments?**

Question: I feel this is fragmenting education, dramatically increasing middle management roles, increasing paper work and reducing staff security. In reality will it improve existing teaching? The paper work might look great but will the pupils of all abilities see any improvement?

Answer: We hope this will be quite the opposite. The MAT aims to remove bureaucracy and to enable leaders to lead and teachers to teach focusing very much on the classroom and improving the outcomes for pupils. At Croft we see a fantastic array of opportunities for staff and pupils by being a part of the MAT.

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### **Barton CE Primary School**

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## **Ravensworth CE Primary School**

### **Have you received enough information regarding our proposal?**

Question: More detailed information on the implications to all staff members. Salary, job descriptions - will they be amended? Workload expectations, job security. Why have we all not been spoken to individually and been given a full & frank explanation as to why Governors and senior management think this is a good idea when the government have postponed plans to force some schools to convert to academies? Our school is not a failing school and so this exercise is not in my eyes necessary.

Answer: Staff will transfer as is with no changes to their existing contracts of employment, same job descriptions, same roles, same pensions etc. The trust will recognise all Unions and national agreements. We have held a staff meeting and there will be an opportunity to have another meeting in September should this be something staff want, whether collectively or one to one.

### **Do you agree that the Secretary of State should enter into a Funding Agreement for Ravensworth Primary School?**

Comment: Transferring to Academy status will have a serious detrimental effect on the unique ethos that our school currently has

### **Any other comments?**

Comment: I am very disappointed in the Headteacher and the Governors for considering academy status. I am on the whole a forward-thinking member of staff. After one year the TUPE agreement is not worth the paper that it is written on and so I cannot accept that our jobs are safe regardless of any reassurances that you give. There is a fine line between work life balance and once Governors start to interfere with staff salaries, the line has been crossed. This is our livelihood and I think it is very wrong to assume that we will all agree. This is consultation but not 'meaningful consultation' as I get the impression that the decision is already made which saddens me considerably.

Comment: All Saints Academy parental consultation letter states that they are already working closely with the schools on the list. Very mis-leading, I've never heard of this school. There is at least one school on the list that have had more than one poor ofsted & as a result have a stigmatised name. Why would the

management of our school want to be closely associated with a poorly performing school? This is an expensive exercise and I personally feel that the money would be better spent on our own pupils where we have more control over how we use it. I am very against this proposal and feel it is very sad that our unique village school could be swallowed up into a faceless Academy run by a management team that we never see but they have complete control of our school's destiny. All Saints Academy is a fledgling Academy of only 2 years who are still 'finding their way' in my opinion they are not established enough to embark on this chapter. Should this go ahead, it is likely that I will seek alternative employment so strong are my views.

Answer: All Saints is working closely with the schools proposed to go into DAT and has been since before their governors made the decision to join the Trust. The Trust won't be faceless and the CEO and Trustees will be as involved locally as Governors and Headteachers want them to be. The proposal is to delegate as much as possible to the schools so you retain the same control as you do currently whilst appreciating there is a new layer of governance with the Trustees.

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### **Richmond CE Primary and Nursery School**

#### **Have you received enough information regarding our proposal?**

Comment: I think it would have been useful for other options other than the Diocesan MAT to be considered.

Answer: The school and Diocese has considered options for a long time. The Church of England is clear that a Church school must go in to a Church MAT where one exists in the area.

Comment: Cannot read the proposal

Response: If there are materials published that you cannot open from the website we would be happy to print a copy out and post to you.

Comment: All information we had originally was that you didn't want to be an academy.

Response: As have stated due to our Ofsted status we have no choice but to become a sponsored academy.

Question: Implications for staffing, SEN, management. What are the expected gains? I was unable to come to the meeting though so these questions may have been covered there. I will try to get to one of the others.

Answer: Hopefully you feel this question has been responded to within other responses but if there is anything further please email Gail at [gail.khan@gka1.co.uk](mailto:gail.khan@gka1.co.uk)

Comment: Unable to attend meeting as working, so feel I have little to no information at all.

Response: We have shared all presentations online and provided an interim response to the questions asked at the meetings prior to the summer break so hopefully this has helped. If you require any further detail please don't hesitate to contact the Headteacher via the school office.

Comment: I don't have the school ping and this email went into junk. I've asked for paper letters but never receive them.

Response: Please do contact the school office, as we would like to resolve this matter for you.

Comment: Information provided could be clearer and more detailed. It would also be helpful if there was a link on the school website where more information can be obtained.

Answer: All the information is available within our 'Virtual Office' section and under general letters.

Comment: How the children will be affected by academy status

Response: Children at Richmond will continue to receive a high quality education from the staff at the school. We believe that academy status will only enhance this giving pupils the opportunity to work with others more closely, to learn from each other and to share experiences to inform their own learning. We believe greater resources will be made available (physical and financial) which will see further investment into the classroom for children.

Comment: It seems there were issues discussed at the meeting, which I was unable to attend.

Response: A copy of all the questions asked at the meeting are collated and included in Annex 7.

Comment: Information given is all very generic and doesn't focus enough on specific changes that will be made to our school.

Response: Initially changes will be minimal and the greatest changes will be seen in the school office. We are considering a name change and therefore the logo/uniform may change in the future. Parents will be kept fully informed of any changes. We want to achieve outstanding education and outcomes for pupils within our school and since our last inspection we have moved forward significantly in our journey to achieve this. Academy status with DAT is another vehicle to help us on this journey to achieve outstanding.

Comment: Was always told not going to be an academy so what would it mean for the pupils

### **Should we keep the School name the same?**

Comment: Can I suggest if it has to change its Richmond CofE Academy

Comment: I do not oppose a name change but believe we should keep C of E in our title

Comment: I think that this is a great opportunity to re brand our school and allow it to move on from the 'special measures' label.

Comment: I am ok with a name change provided either C of E or Church of England remains in the title. We are a Church of England school, we profess to being proud to be so, and therefore the name should reflect that.

Comment: Because our school is fine the way it is, even if it is turning into an academy



- Comment: I am in two minds regarding the school name! I can see why it has been thought of as an idea (to help remove the stigma caused by the OFSTED classification and because we are sharing an executive headteacher with Middleton Tyas/Eppelby Forcett schools). However, I am not sure that the rebranding will necessarily help locally (the school will always be known as Richmond C of E). I think continuing with the work started in the last couple of weeks identifying our progress by getting this out via social media and the press is more likely to make the community aware that we are now a "Good" school and will encourage parents to consider us when applying for a place for their child.
- Comment: Strongly dislike new logo/name
- Comment: Good opportunity to re-launch the school and have people talking about us for positive things not just the special measures school
- Comment: 'Rebranding' is rather meaningless in my view and suggests a need to depart from something.
- Comment: No need to change it!
- Comment: New is good. A big rebrand and fresh start will gear up some excitement in both parents and pupils if done in the right way.
- Comment: The school has a bad stigma. I think it's a great to evolve and start a fresh.
- Comment: I think it's a good opportunity for a fresh start.
- Comment: I've said yes because there is no option for a name change but keeping 'Church of England'.
- Comment: I would have voted No if I was sure that C of E would be in the new school name as it was an opportunity for a fresh start.

Comment: Can see that it would give the school a fresh image. Need details of the consultation with parents and staff.

Comment: We must certainly keep Church of England in the name. The school has a very happy relationship with the parish church, which should be cherished

Comment: Should include the word academy

Comment: We need to begin a fresh if we are becoming an academy

### **Should we keep the School uniform the same?**

Comment: Suggest a staggered change

Question: If you are changing the name of school then the badge needs to change, which means as a parent the extra cost of uniform. Will school help with the cost? Also, having 2 primaries' and 2 secondary's in the local area along one road we do NOT want the same colour of these schools this was why the colour was navy blue?

Answer: The logo/uniform may change in the future. Just to reassure parents and carers that whatever change may take place, the existing uniform will continue to be worn until no longer required and any new uniform will be phased in over time. Parents will be kept fully informed on any proposed changes.

Comment: On a practical level, our school uniform works well, offers various options and is affordable for our families as they can purchase the uniform with logos or buy the appropriate colour without the logo easily. If we were to change I feel that we would have children who would continue to wear the old uniform and some who would embrace the new, resulting in a poor image of the school in the local community. With having two other school in the town I feel that it is important that we have a different colour uniform to them, which is currently achieved.

Comment: But tighten up on variations within, and encourage smart appearance - shirts tucked in, shoes not trainers etc

Comment: Don't like the logo the castle is much nicer

Comment: This all relates to whether the name is changed! If it is, then the uniform will have to change to some degree. If the name is not changed then I do not see the requirement to change the uniform. I do like the example of the potential uniform change that is up near the school office (although I am not sure the younger children should wear ties). But if brought in I do think that some help for parents should be provided (for example one new jumper given to each child) especially as the change is likely to happen within the middle of the first term of a new academic year.

Comment: I have no problem with changing the uniform however, this should have been made available for parents to buy ready for the September term, as this is not keeping down costs as we will have to buy uniform to tide us over until the new uniform is ready which is totally unfair.

Comment: New proposed girls uniform much smarter

Comment: I think a new more modern uniform would help give a fresh face to the school to get rid of the negative image. Perhaps hooded jumpers with the dream, believe, achieve on them.

Comment: The school needs to have a new image.

Comment: Change of uniform would be costly and unnecessary from a parent's point of view.

Comment: As above, however this needs to be implemented at the minimum cost to parents, especially important to get them 'on side' for all the upcoming changes.

Comment: I'm not sure that 'don't know' is a correct form of answer! I would prefer to say I don't mind

Comment: I'm open to the possibility of smartening up the uniform.

Comment: I've said yes because there is no option for a name change but keeping 'Church of England' in the logo.

Comment: I've voted 'Don't know' as I feel this is a matter that should be decided by the parents when they've looked at the examples of new school uniform on display.

Comment: Can see that it would give the school a fresh image. Need detailed consultation with parents and staff.

Comment: At least keep something familiar to the children without expense to the parents

Comment: The logo on jumpers should maybe include the word academy and made compulsory to wear, girls wear the same skirt and boys wear black trousers!!

Comment: New name and new uniform

**Do you agree that the Secretary of State should enter into a funding agreement for Richmond Primary School?**

Comment: As far as I am aware we have no choice in whether or not to academies, the only choice we had was who with. The diocese has chosen what they wish that vehicle to be. It is therefore an irrelevant or unnecessary question with regards Richmond.

Question: I completely disagree with Richmond C of E becoming an academy and haven't read anything in any of your literature or online to demonstrate how becoming an academy will make any positive difference to the staff or children at this, or any other, school. You continually state that things will 'stay the same'. If so, what's the point? It's also interesting to note that you have failed to state that financially becoming an academy is costing the school more money than it would be to stay as a maintained school - at a time when there is a financial

crisis in school funding. Schools are already working closely and effectively in this area. I fail to see how the MAT would increase opportunities for collaborative working either. I appreciate that the school has a directive academy order on it and therefore has little choice - but what on earth are all the other schools doing? They can choose! What a silly policy!

**Answer:** Financially the school receives additional funds to support the conversion process and in Richmond's case we also receive additional school improvement funding to help move the school forward at a pace. That funding covers the transition costs for set up. Once we are up and running there will be new costs associated with becoming an academy but equally there will be some costs we don't incur and/or savings, which will be made as a result of not being a maintained school. A lot of work is being undertaken behind the scenes to inform all this planning both by the leadership and governors.

**Comment:** We are being forced into an academy because of our supposed OFSTED status. Despite all the hard work of the teachers, senior leadership team and other school staff their dedication has not been rewarded by OFSTED making another visit and providing us with the "Good" rating we deserve. If they had then maybe all the above changes would not be necessary!

**Comment:** I don't know and understand enough about academies to make that decision.

**Comment:** This is rather an obscurely worded question. I realise it means 'become an academy' but this is not at all clear. Also, I understand there is no real choice due to the current position of the school.

**Question:** Don't know what that means.

**Comment:** Because this is being done in pursuit of an ideology and it to benefit the pupils, present or future. It is a costly option and finances will be consumed in a costly conversion and to employ unnecessarily highly salaried individuals at the expense of resources that could be far better spent to benefit pupils.

**Comment:** I feel our school should be given a chance to have Ofsted return, this is a fantastic primary school with dedicated teachers to our children's learning and school environment and this needs to be acknowledged.

Response: We agree the school is fantastic and if Ofsted did visit today it would be a very different outcome. The outcomes for pupils have improved every year since the inspection and we know next time we do get a visit we will be at least Good!

Question: What's a funding agreement?

Answer: The Funding Agreement is 'the contract' between the Department for Education and the school/Multi-academy Trust. Once this is agreed and signed it is a legally binding agreement, which is specific to each school.

Comment: I really do not see the reason for change especially as the Ofsted report was incorrect

Question: Unsure of what a 'funding agreement' is - I find this question deliberately misleading. If it means do I want the school to become an academy then the answer is 'no'. I don't agree with academies. I think the school should remain within the LA. I feel this is the best for the pupils, teachers, parents and community.

Any public organisation that changes its ethos to that of profit-making does not have the best interests of pupils, parents and staff at its heart. Money that should go into the school, that should benefit pupils, will instead benefit shareholders or CEO's of academies who are earning more than Head teachers. As far as I can see, changing the school uniform is profit making. Some people do not have enough money due to benefit cuts and the general cost of living - those who are earning the minimum wage and struggling to provide for their families - now have to find extra money for a school uniform that can only be purchased through a certified website. It is unnecessary and futile.

I have always been happy with the school - I do not feel it needs to be 're-branded'. This demonstrates to me that senior management are out of touch with the parents. Ask some parents if they are happy with the school - do they feel it needs a cosmetic change? The answer will be no.

Answer: The funding agreement is the legally binding contract between the Department for Education and the multi-academy trust, which is specific then to each school in the Trust.

Neither academies nor Trusts can make a profit and Members or Trustees (with the exception of the CEO) will take a salary and/or dividends from the

company. The DfE have tight controls over financial expenditure and the transparency of this as will the MAT.

### **Any other Comments?**

Question: I understand that things are changing but do we as a school really need to lose every part of our identity many hundreds of children have come through our school and it is loved why change everything??

Answer: There is an opportunity to rename as we move into the Dales Academies Trust. This will enable us to rebrand and relaunch thereby losing the stigma of being the school in 'Special measures'. A shorter name will avoid unflattering abbreviations and aid practicality/efficiency in many areas of school life. Whilst we are a distinct, unique school, we are moving into a new period of formal partnership with an established Executive Headteacher (not acting). This is an opportunity for all three schools to share an identity while still retaining the reference to the village/town where the school is situated.

Question: Most of this is academic as it is already a 'done deal'. My only reason for completing this questionnaire is to strongly oppose any change of name as is indicated likely in the FAQ s. Why, for heaven's sake?

Answer: See above.

Comment: Changing the name of a school and its uniform will do nothing to improve it - only divert energy and attention from the real task at hand IMPROVING THE SCHOOL! Nobody is ever fooled into thinking it's a different school.

Comment: Please make sure that the Church of England, parish diocese and province are involved in the consultations

Comment: Quite sad that the school has been fobbed off to be an academy. Don't see how the school and pupils or teachers will benefit at all

Comment: The re-branding of the school is completely unnecessary. It is situated in one of the most beautiful towns in England and to disassociate the school from the Richmond connection would be a backwards step. The new name has no identity.

Response: The proposed name includes 'Richmond'.

Comment: This school is really good so don't let the fact we are becoming an academy change anything

Comment: I feel like we need to be informed more and to not find out through the grapevine what's happening. Parents with children start full time school in September want children to be in full school uniform. And to be told not to buy these things with the logo on but to hold out until the change of uniform is not good enough. We can't afford to buy 2 separate uniforms in such a short space of time.

Comment: I'm not sure changing the name of the school and the uniform is best going to benefit our children's learning needs we need to focus on their needs not materialistic ideas

Comment: This seems to be getting rushed through before the summer break. Suggested new name 'Trinity' is awful, and the logo is naff too. I wanted to send my Children to Richmond CofE. Name is fine, why change it. Get the feeling that parent views will make no difference though. Feels like a done deal already...

Comment: I do not think changing the name and logo will have any effect at all on the supposed 'negative' views of the school. The vast majority of parents do not have negative views. In my opinion the school is held in high regard in the community.

Comment: Hate the new proposed name; don't see anything wrong with keeping it as it is. It's bad enough the school is forced into becoming an academy without changing the name of the school and uniforms!!

Comment: I don't like the name change using Trinity it should be kept the same with academy attached.

Comment: I like the suggested new name trinity academy



- Comment: I think the CofE school stands to do well out of becoming an academy in terms of access to other areas of expertise, facilities and ideas etc, however I am aware that little is known about how successful academies actually are and the CofE seems to be doing very well on its own so far. I am continually impressed by its early years teaching and the way the school is run in all areas.
- Comment: I am not opposed to change and I think it may benefit the school although a uniform change worries me at the extra cost to parents. A name change may seem like a good idea?? It would be nice to know what are the proposed ideas? There has been so much change, which has been taken out of our hands and it just seems change is never ending. Staff, Head teachers, Governors, Business Managers I am fed up with change can't something's NOT change is our school really that terrible? I wonder to move my children?
- Answer: We understand that change can be difficult but we also must look at this as an opportunity. We strongly believe this is the best solution for the school and its pupils. Joining the MAT will bring the stability you highlight is much needed.
- Comment: School ping is making lots of parents miss out on these changes. I was told today.
- Answer: School Ping is just one way that we keep in touch with parents. All the letters and information about the MAT is available on the website in our 'Virtual Office' and 'General letters' and updates are included in the newsletter.
- Comment: Please keep Richmond Primary the way it is .Why change something that works fine.
- Comment: The issue about 'Church of England' possibly being removed from the name has become divisive and the management of this issue has so far been unable to find an agreed view. More detail is required to compare the current costs to the LA and the new costs to the Diocese. Other schools have declined the offer on the grounds of cost.
- Comment: I'd have liked to see the proposed new school name in this survey so that there could be an opportunity for feedback on it.

- Comment: You absolutely mustn't change the name or uniform. This would be a most unwise move, which would cause great offence to the church community and also cause financial angst for parents
- Comment: It's a scary change for parents because academisation of the school hasn't really been sold to us in the best light, as it's happened because of the last ofsted visit. I'm confident the school is doing a great job with my child but the steps to totally change the school look and name is wrong. We should celebrate the teachers and school and not hide behind a make-over. If the uniform has to change then make it an affordable one and maybe after the next ofsted to enhance the great results the school is going to get.
- Comment: If the uniform does change can this be phased in gradually i.e. by Easter 2018 or a grant to give all parents one basic set of uniform special that it can be done swiftly. Be mindful that the remaining parents are staunch supporters after a bad few years.
- Comment: CofE is a good school let down by past management. It has all changed in last 12 months and OFSTED still refuse to return to overturn the special measures status, which the school will now be stuck with as once an academy can't be ofsteded for 3 years. Shocking.
- Response: You are correct in that no new Academy will be receive a visit form Ofsted until year 3 however, the school will lose its Ofsted Special Measures status at the point of conversion. The school will continue to build on the good work already happening and will ensure there are good communications of the impact and outcomes in the community.
- Comment: Please make sure that whatever happens will have the best outcome for present and future pupils.
- Comment: I do not want the school to become an academy.

Comment: My understanding is that a decision has already been made and that this survey is therefore pointless. I expect a new name for the school has also been decided upon as well.

Comment: Don't believe that a change of name or uniform will make the slightest bit of difference to the success of the school going forward, however keeping them both the same would provide continuity and a sense of familiarity which will hopefully help to reduce many parents/children's anxiety in these uncertain times.

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**East Cowton CE Primary School**

0 responses

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**All Saints Academy**

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