

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. 01/16

Date: January 2016

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: To provide Members with an update on the status of schools converting to academy.

UPDATE ON ACADEMY CONVERSIONS

The Academies Act 2010 allows for the Secretary of State for Education (SoS) to make an academy order for a school to convert from a Local Authority maintained school to an academy, which is publicly funded but operates outside of Local Authority control. This essentially gives the school more freedom in a number of areas including their finances, curriculum, teacher's pay and conditions, the school day, and term and holiday dates.

This can be applied in two ways:

- 1) Independent Conversion; whereby a school rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by OfSTED can make an application to the SoS to become an academy on its own, although some do join up with other academies to form partnerships or clusters. To date 27 schools have chosen to take on academy status in this way.
- 2) Sponsored Conversions; sponsored academies were created to raise aspirations and academic results by using the expertise of the sponsors along with experienced and successful school leaders. Where a school has a record of poor performance the SoS can direct that an approved sponsor be identified to operate the school under its Academy Trust umbrella in an effort to drive up standards. To 1 January 2016, 17 Medway schools have become 'sponsored' academies,

In all cases where LA maintained schools convert, a 125-year lease on the land and buildings is granted by the Council to the academy trust. Where the school is Voluntary Aided, the lease only applies to the playing fields, as the buildings will already be in the ownership of the diocese. As a foundation school all of the land and buildings will already be out of LA control and therefore no lease is required.

Academies receive their funding directly from central government, and a proportion of the LA's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is taken from the LA and provided to the academy. As more schools convert to academy status, the DSG received by the LA to fund the provision of school services will reduce.

It remains the LA's statutory duty to provide sufficient school places, and where a need for additional places is identified and an academy is the most appropriate school to expand, the project funding remains the responsibility of the LA from the basic need grant from central government. This includes the establishment of any new provision required.

When a school converts to become an academy, the opportunity arises for it to 'buy back' services from the LA in the form of Service Level Agreements (SLA's). There is however the chance that academies will choose to purchase services away from the LA, and as more schools convert the risk increases that the LA will receive progressively less revenue income from this source.

The following gives a breakdown of schools that have converted so far, with the table summarising the current position. The rate of applications from Medway schools has slowed with Twydall converting on 1st February 2016 and Cedar governing body having recently decided to become an academy. However it is possible that the SoS will direct further schools to become sponsored academies as the government tries to accelerate the programme.

- Currently 29 of our 79 primary phase schools have converted to academy status (36.7%), eight of which have joined, or are sponsored by, Trusts based outside of Medway
- 17 out of 18 (94.4%) of our secondary schools are academies; four are new build academies (including the UTC), ten have converted independently and two have been sponsored.
- Only one of Medway's secondary schools has joined an academy trust based outside of the LA's area, with Rainham School for Girls joining the Kemnal Trust.
- Of Medway's five special schools only Abbey Court is not an academy.

Independent Converters

Schools (Secondary)	Status
Chatham Grammar School For Boys	1/04/11 independent – subsequently joined the Thinking Schools Academy Trust (TSAT)
Chatham Grammar School For Girls	1/09/11 independent
Fort Pitt Grammar School	1/11/10 independent - subsequently merged with Thomas Aveling to establish the Fort Pitt Thomas Aveling Trust
Greenacre	1/04/12 independent – established the Greenacre Trust
The Howard School	1/10/14 independent – established the Howard Trust
Medway UTC	Established 1/09/14 – independent (Greenwich University)
Rainham Mark Grammar School	1/07/11 independent – established the Rainham Mark Trust
Rainham School for Girls	1/02/11 independently with the Kemnal Trust
The Rochester Grammar School	1/11/10 independent – established The Thinking Schools Academy Trust (TSAT)
Sir J Williamson Math School	1/04/11 independent – established the Williamson Trust
Thomas Aveling School	1/09/11 independent – subsequently merged with Fort Pitt to establish the Fort Pitt Thomas Aveling Trust
Walderslade Girls	1/11/11 independent

Schools (Primary)	Status
All Faiths Primary School	1/06/12 independently joined the Rochester Grammar/ All Faiths Thinking Schools Trust now TSAT
All Saints CE Primary School	1/09/15 Independently joined the Medway Anglican Schools Trust (MAST)
Brompton Westbrook	1/10/14 independent – established The Westbrook Trust
Chattenden Primary	2/07/12 independent – simultaneously established The Peninsula Gateway Trust
Cliffe Woods Primary	1/07/11 independent
Cuxton Infant School	1/09/14 independently joined the Primary First Trust
Delce Junior School	1/04/14 independent – established the CASTLE Academy Trust
High Halstow Primary School	1/04/12 independently joined the Williamson Trust
New Horizons Children’s Academy	1/09/14 New school provision established – operated by TSAT
St John’s CE Infant School	1/09/15 Independently joined the Medway Anglican Schools Trust (MAST)
St Margaret’s Junior CE School	1/09/15 Independently joined the Medway Anglican Schools Trust (MAST)
Stoke Primary School	1/11/14 independently joined The Williamson Trust
Wayfield Primary	1/11/13 independently joined The Griffin Trust
Woodlands Primary	2/04/13 independent

Sponsored Converters

Schools (Secondary)	Status
Hundred of Hoo School	1/09/11 sponsored by The Williamson Trust
The Robert Napier School	1/09/12 sponsored by the Fort Pitt Thomas Aveling Trust
Schools (Primary)	Status
Allhallows Primary School	1/09/13 sponsored by The Williamson Trust
Byron Primary	1/01/16 sponsored by The Westbrook Trust
Cuxton Junior School	1/09/14 sponsored by the Primary First Trust
Elaine Primary School	1/09/12 sponsored by the Williamson Trust
Gordon Infant School	1/03/14 sponsored by TSAT
Gordon Junior School	1/03/14 sponsored by TSAT
Kingfisher Primary	1/09/13 sponsored by The Griffin Trust
Lordswood Primary	1/11/13 sponsored by The Griffin Trust
Napier Primary School	1/09/14 sponsored by The Kemnal Academy Trust
Oasis Primary School (previously Skinner Street Primary)	1/09/13 sponsored by The Oasis Academy Trust
Pheonix Junior School (previously Glencoe Junior School)	1/09/12 as 'The Phoenix Junior Academy' - sponsored by the Fort Pitt Thomas Aveling Trust
St James CEVA Primary School	1/12/12 co-sponsored by the Rochester Diocese and The Williamson Trust.
Saxon Way Primary	1/09/13 sponsored by The Griffin Trust
Temple Mill Primary	1/12/15 sponsored by The Howard Trust
Warren Wood Primary	1/07/14 sponsored by The Greenacre Trust

Special Schools

Bradfields	1/04/14 independent
Danecourt	1/09/15 independent
Inspire Free School	1/09/14 new Free School established – replaced The Oaks
Rivermead	1/01/16 independent

Old Style Academies (New Builds)

Strood Academy	Opened September 2009
Brompton Academy	Opened September 2010
Victory Academy (previously Bishop of Rochester Academy)	Opened September 2010 – Joined TSAT 1/9/15

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