

Bedfordshire Education Service

Eversholt Lower School

Headteacher: Mrs C.H. Warren

Church End, Eversholt, Bedfordshire, MK17 9DU
T: 01525 280298 E: eversholt@deal.bedfordshire.gov.uk

27th July 2011

Report on Consultation on Eversholt Lower School conversion to Academy Status

The Governing Body of Eversholt Lower School has undertaken a thorough consultation exercise with all stakeholders concerning the proposed conversion of the school to Academy Status. This consultation is summarized below.

Public Consultation

A comprehensive public consultation was undertaken from January 2011 through to May 2011 as follows:

- Parents received written communications discussing Academy status including a detailed set of Frequently Asked Questions as evidenced by the 2 letters attached.
- The local communities in the catchment area for the school were informed through village newsletters ("About Eversholt" article attached as an example).
- All schools in the Harlington Area Schools Pyramid & other Lower and Middle schools in our area were written to and invited to comment.
- The Eversholt Parish Council was given information on the proposal and responded with their support (see Parish Council letter attached)
- Local councillors for the school's ward were written to.
- Our MP, Nadine Dorries, was consulted and offered her support (see letter attached).
- We held a public meeting on Thursday 19th May to which parents, staff and members of the local communities were invited. The presentation given on the evening discussed in clear terms the benefits and costs associated with Academy conversion, and the issues identified by the Governing Body. Minutes of the meeting, focussing of questions and comments received from attendees, are attached along with a copy of the slides used at this information evening.
- Our School Improvement Partner has also been consulted on the proposed change.

We have continued to keep parents informed of our work and progress towards Academy status. We feel we have broad and informed support of parents in pursuing Academy status.

Staff Consultation

A formal consultation with staff was undertaken as required by the TUPE regulations, including engagement with the relevant unions:

- NAHT
- NUT
- ATL
- UNISON
- ASCL
- NASUWT
- VOICE
- GMB

In addition the Governing Body communicated directly with all staff throughout the consultation period including staff meetings and invitations to staff to attend the public meeting. A staff representative also attended all Governing Body meetings at which Academy status was discussed.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Fraser', is positioned above the typed name and contact information.

Rob Fraser
Chair of Governors
H: 01525 288086
E: rjcfraser@gmail.com



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Headteacher: Mrs C.H. Warren

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31st January, 2011

Dear Parents,

Update on 5 Year Strategy Planning for the School

In the Annual Report to Parents that we sent out at the start of term we described how we working to set a long term strategy for the school. The two central pillars of the strategy are to ensure the school is in a sustainable financial position, and to have a clear vision, aspiration and coherent set of goals for the school. We have been working hard to set our finances on a solid foundation, and as you will also be aware, we are excited by our curriculum approach to achieving both exemplary academic standards and fostering creativity and excitement for learning in our children.

Along with most other schools in Central Bedfordshire and in the country as a whole, we have been taking a close look at the opportunity to become an Academy, where a school becomes an independent trust directly funded by, and answerable to, the Department for Education and separate from the Local Authority. Academy status grants a school independence and flexibility to pursue its vision and goals, but also transfers to it the responsibility for all business & financial management. We have believed for some time that there would be significant benefits for our school and our children in having the increased freedoms of Academy status, but we have also been taking a long, hard look at the costs and administrative overheads involved.

We have also been talking with our colleagues at the other schools in the Harlington pyramid (the 13 Lowers and 2 Middle Schools that feed into Harlington Upper). A consensus has been building within the pyramid schools that a move to Academies is now almost inevitable. Significantly, faced with severe spending constraints, Central Beds Council are cutting non-priority services and support to schools, and last week they informed us that full responsibility for financial management will be transferred to schools at the start of April. I would like to add that the Local Authority has behaved in commendable fashion as it has squared up to the challenges it faces, and they have taken an honest and open approach with schools throughout.

Against this background at the Governors meeting last week we decided to formalise the process of looking at Academy conversion by passing what is known as "a resolution of intent to become an Academy". This is the starting point for an extended application process which includes detailed research into the implications for the school and extensive consultation with staff, parents, the local community and Central Beds Council. The resolution is not in any way a final or binding decision to become an Academy, but the first step towards making such a commitment. We hope that we should be in a position to make a final decision, yes or no, towards the end of the summer term, and if we do say "yes" that we would open our doors in September as an Academy.

While we have a great deal of work to do, we are excited about the opportunity this presents for us to be innovative, move ahead with key school improvement projects, and continue to provide excellence in the education of our children.

You will of course be hearing a great deal more about this over the coming weeks and months as work progresses, and we plan to hold a parents information evening in due course. In the meantime if you have any questions please feel free to contact me, Mrs Warren or any of the Governors.

Best Wishes,

Rob Fraser
Chair of Governors
H: 01525 288086
E: rjcfrazer@gmail.com

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Eversholt Lower School

Headteacher: Mrs C.H. Warren

Church End, Eversholt, Bedfordshire, MK17 9DU
T: 01525 280298 E: eversholt@deal.bedfordshire.gov.uk

4th May 2011

Dear Parents,

Consultation on conversion to Academy Status

At the end of January I wrote to you discussing the work we have been doing on a 5 Year Strategy for the school, and to inform you that we had formalised our interest in looking at conversion to Academy status. Since then we have been doing a great deal of work looking at the opportunities presented by Academy status, and we are now at the stage where we need for formerly consult with parents about a possible move to become an Academy.

Following on from our January Governors meeting, on 2nd March we took the next step in the process by applying to the Secretary of State for Education for an Academy Order. The Order is a formal permission from the Department for Education for a school to start the process of converting to an Academy. This process requires extensive consultation with staff, parents, the local community and Central Beds Council. The Secretary of State's decision is awaited, but we hope to hear the outcome very shortly. To be clear, that granting of the Academy Order is not in any way a final or binding decision to become an Academy, but merely the next step for us towards making such a commitment.

We are not alone in taking this step. We have been working closely with our colleagues at the other schools in the Harlington pyramid (the 13 Lovers and 2 Middle Schools that feed into Harlington Upper). A consensus has been building within the pyramid schools about a move to Academy status, and many local schools have now either applied or are considering applications for Academy Orders.

The consultation we are now undertaking is critical to informing the decision we will take. We are keen to consult with as many stakeholders as possible on the transfer, which will help the Governors in their final decision. The school staff are being consulted and we now need to hear the views of the parent body. We plan to hold a public meeting on **Thursday 19th May at 8pm at Eversholt Village Hall** where we will present our plans to become an independent Academy and take questions and feedback.

Attached with this letter is some summary information on Academy Status. You can find further detailed information on Academies and the conversion process at the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk/academies. You can also see the view from the teaching unions at:

- www.teachers.org.uk/academies
- www.nasuwt.org.uk (Search for Academies)

We encourage you to be part of this consultation process. We are eager to receive your comments and questions in relation to Eversholt Lower School becoming an Academy either at our public meeting, by written communication to the school or directly to any of the school governors. We look forward to discussing this with you on the 19th May, if not before.

Best Wishes,



Rob Fraser
Chair of Governors
H: 01525 288086

E: rjcfrazer@gmail.com

Key Information on Academy Status

What is an Academy and why are they being established?

An Academy is an independent but state funded school separate from the Local Authority. Children's places at the school are funded by Central Government. The Academy is answerable directly to the Department for Education and not to the Local Authority.

The new Government has set a radical agenda for change in the way that education is delivered, which is coinciding with a period of widespread austerity in public services. They wish to see schools gain independence from Local Authority control, and have the freedom from bureaucracy to innovate and provide high quality learning under the control of the local people, parents and other stakeholders in their communities. They characterize it as an attempt to decentralize and encourage diversity in educational provision.

Why become an Academy?

Academy status grants a school independence and flexibility to pursue its vision and goals, and gives it complete control over how the school is run, how the curriculum is delivered, and how it spends its funds.

Which Schools can apply to convert to Academies?

At present only schools rated as "Outstanding" or "Good with Outstanding features" by Ofsted are allowed to apply directly. The reason for this is that as an independent school with greater freedoms, it is vital that the school has effective and sustainable leadership and a capacity to drive its own improvement. Any school can apply within a group application where outstanding schools within the group agree to provide guidance. All new schools and schools placed in special measures now have to become Academies.

What does the conversion process involve?

The process takes between 3 and 6 months. It starts formerly by the Secretary of State granting the school an Academy Order, which allows it to then make legal and business preparations for conversion and provides £25,000 to the school to fund the necessary work. The school has to use solicitors to set up the legal entity for the Academy, consult widely on the change with all stakeholders, transfer land leases and other assets to the new legal entity, set up insurance and buy in of key services, define all operational policies, appoint auditors for the schools accounts and register as an Independent School. It can be a complex process, and some schools appoint external project managers to assist in the process.

Who will be responsible for running an Academy?

At present the Local Authority has legal responsibility for the running of the school, but operationally almost all of these responsibilities are devolved to the Head Teacher and Governing Body. The Local Authority then performs a legal oversight role usually in the form of monitoring documentation that the school completes, or by data collected by schools and passed to the Authority.

An Academy takes on the legal responsibility of running of the school from the Local Authority by setting set up an Academy Trust, which would be a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. All land leases and assets of the school transfer to the Trust, and the staff become direct employees of the Academy Trust rather than the Local Authority. The legal documentation for the Trust also establishes a formal instrument of governance, which establishes the Governing Body. The role of the Governing Body is the same as at present.

The Board of the Trust and the School Governing Body would be made up of representatives of all stakeholders including Parents, Staff, Local Authority and the Community. As now, the Head Teacher will remain responsible for day to day running of the school.

Will we still get the support and guidance of the Local Authority?

No. While the Local Authority may take up seats on the Governing Body, it no longer provides any support or guidance to the Academy.

Who provides oversight of an Academy and how it is run?

At present oversight of the school is provided by Ofsted through periodic inspections, the Local Authority, and Governing Body acting in its legal role of ensuring that the school is held to account for its performance. For an Academy, the Local Authority is replaced by the Department for Education.

It is not clear yet what the extent of oversight from Department for Education will be. We hope and expect it to be a “light touch” regime as the principle for Academies is self improvement from a base of existing high standards.

How will academic standards and school improvement be assessed?

Assessment of achievement and progress will be unchanged, including continued inspection by Ofsted. What will change is that the Local Authority will no longer provide School Improvement services to the school. These services have been in the form of a School Improvement Partner (SIP) who is an experienced education professional who works with the school through the year to help focus efforts on areas of improvement. We are going to lose the SIP services next academic year in any case, as it is being withdrawn as a service from all Good and Outstanding schools due to budget cuts. At Eversholt we take the need for continuous school improvement very seriously, and have greatly valued the services of our current School Improvement Partner, John Carter. Dependent on available funds, we will potentially look to buy in SIP-like services for the school from independent providers. This would ensure we have external guidance on our progress and achievement in the years between Ofsted inspections.

How will the daily life of the school change?

The day to day life of the school will not change. Despite the wholesale freedoms granted to Academies, the Governors are clear that if we take the final step of converting to an Academy, we will continue to follow the Local Authority's procedures for Admissions, Exclusions and Special Educational Needs, we will not seek to change the length of the school day or amend term dates and we will not change the school uniform. We will still be called “Eversholt Lower School”, and we will remain a small village school focussed on meeting the needs of our community and each child as an individual.

We will still follow the National Curriculum?

Yes, but we will continue to develop and refine our “creativity” centred approach to the curriculum. We intend that children will leave us with exceptional standards in reading, writing, numeracy & science together with emerging skills in creative & critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, research, analysis & communication. We seek to foster self-motivation, excitement & love of learning. This is key to the aspirations we have for our school, and we have challenged ourselves to become recognized as a centre of excellence in the delivery of a creative curriculum.

What is the impact on our Staff?

Our staff will become direct employees of the Academy Trust rather than the Local Authority as is the case now. We take the prospect of becoming the direct employer for our staff very seriously. We would employ all staff under existing terms & conditions of service, and we will follow national standards on pay and terms and conditions of employment.

How will our relationships with other schools change and will we still be a feeder school to Parkfields?

This will not change. Admissions will still be coordinated by the Local Authority and existing catchment arrangements will be unchanged. Parkfields, along with many of the schools in the Harlington pyramid, are applying for Academy status, so it is likely that we would be part of cooperative group of local Academies.

Will the financial position of the school be better or worse as an Academy?

We would not be financially disadvantaged by the transfer, and we may end up better off. At present the Local Authority retains a proportion of our school budget to spend on educational services and support. An Academy is given these “top sliced” funds to spend as it sees fit, but the Local Authority no longer provides the school with same services that it currently does. Instead Academies choose what services to buy in from the Authority or elsewhere. This requires that school takes care of its own business administration including seeking best value when buying in services like human resources support, broadband, ground maintenance etc. These business administration skills are new to many small schools including ourselves.

What are the specific advantages to Eversholt Lower School in becoming an Academy?

We gain the flexibility to deliver an education that is best suited to our pupils and we will be able to use all our allocated school funds in ways that are best suited to us. But fundamentally as an independent school funded directly by central government we gain control of our own future. For small schools in rural setting there has been long term uncertainty around the future of the “village school”. As an independent school we would have greater control of our own future and be able to adapt to changing circumstances in ways that we choose, and not those imposed on us by a Local Authority.

What are the risks and how are they mitigated?

There are broadly three principle risks to be managed.

First, Academies will only thrive in the long run if they have strong, sustainable leadership and a capacity for self improvement. At Eversholt we have historically had very capable governors, an enthusiastic and supportive parent body and exceptional staff, but an Academy transfer would reinforce the need for staff support and succession planning, and the constant addition of new people and talent onto the Trust Board and Governing Body. For this reason it is important that we have support for the conversion from Staff, Parents and the wider Community.

Second, business management skills will clearly be required, though this would be true even without Academy conversion. It will come as no surprise to you that local authorities such as Central Beds and many government agencies are in desperate financial straits. Faced with severe spending constraints, Central Beds Council is cutting non-priority services and support to schools. This is not the Local Authorities fault – Central Beds has behaved in a commendable fashion as it has squared up to the budgetary challenges it faces, and they have taken an honest and open approach with schools throughout. Nevertheless, we already find ourselves fully managing our finances and the services we buy in, and other forms of administration are being devolved from the Local Authority to the School. So business & financial management capabilities are becoming a fact of life for all schools, irrespective of Academy status. One way in which we are mitigating this risk is by sharing experience, knowledge and skills with the other schools through a Shared Business Services project being run by Harlington Upper School.

The third risk is more subtle. As a newly independent school at a time of quite radical change in the way education is delivered there could be the temptation to turn inwards and become focussed solely on the “here and now” of running the school. As our School Improvement Partner has said, this is not a time to become isolated and internally focussed. It will be vital that we continue to be part of a wider educational establishment with a network of colleagues with which to share expertise and experience and from whom we can draw support.

about EVERSHOLT



The Village Newsletter
produced on behalf of Eversholt Parish Council

April 2011 - Issue No.134

BOOK REVIEW

The White Queen by Phillipa Gregory

This is an historical novel by a popular writer. It is set in 15th century England. Everyone enjoyed the book, even those who are not keen on historical novels. It was well researched and educational, but not overly so. The characters were interesting and it illuminated a period of history that most people were not familiar with. The author took a more objective view of Richard III ie did not portray him as a nasty hunchback, and so this added to the book and to our discussion.

A few said they thought it tailed off towards the end and a bit boring and episodic, but on the whole we thought it a good read.

Jeannie Lewis

BOOK REVIEW

Dreams from my Father by Barack Obama

This is a non fiction book by the American President, but it was written before he entered politics and so before anyone knew who he was.

It recounts his life from a young boy with a black, absent father and a white American mother, to an aspiring young man who had yet to make his mark on the world.

A few readers thought it inspiring and interesting and really showed the life he had led and what he believed in. It described his upbringing with his grandparents and his

relationship with his extended family in Kenya. But, oh dear...the vast majority of the Book Group had not read it or finished it. They thought it boring and it revealed very little about him as a person.

I think it can be recommended but only to those with an interest in politics.

Jeannie Lewis

Eversholt Lower School: Looking to the Future



Consultation on Academy Conversion - Public meeting to be held on Thursday 19th May, 8pm in the Village Hall

Eversholt Lower School is a successful, vibrant village school serving the needs of children from our community. We currently have 75 pupils on our roll with a talented and creative staff led by our Head Teacher Mrs. Warren. We have been rated as "Outstanding" by the Government Inspectors from Ofsted, and by Central Beds Council who say that our children achieve "consistently exceptionally high standards" when they leave us at the end of Year 4. We are rightly proud of our school, and of the

pupils, parents and the staff who make it what it is.

The new Government has set an agenda for change in the way that education is delivered. They wish to see schools gain independence from Local Authority control, and have the freedom to innovate and provide high quality learning under the control of the local people, parents and other stakeholders in their communities. They characterise it as an attempt to decentralize and encourage diversity in educational provision. The way this change is being made is by giving schools the opportunity to apply for what is known as "Academy Status".

An Academy is an independent but state funded school separate from the Local Authority. Children's places at the school are funded by Central Government and the Academy is answerable directly to the Department for Education. Academy status grants a school independence and flexibility to pursue its vision and goals.

Along with most other schools in Central Bedfordshire, we have been taking a close look at the opportunity to become an Academy. We have believed for some time that there would be significant benefits for our school and our children in having the increased freedoms of Academy status, but we have also been taking a long, hard look at the costs and administrative overheads involved. A school that becomes an Academy takes on the full responsibility for its business & financial management, and to date we have rightly been cautious about that step. However, the level of support that has been historically provided to schools like ours is changing fast. It will come as no surprise to you that local authorities such as Central Beds and many public bodies and government agencies are in desperate financial straits. Faced with severe spending constraints, Central Beds Council is cutting non-priority services and support to schools.

This is not the Local Authority's fault – Central Beds has behaved in a commendable fashion as it has squared up to the budgetary challenges it faces, and they have taken an honest and open approach with schools throughout. Nevertheless, we now find ourselves fully managing our finances, and other administration is being devolved from the Local Authority to the School.

Against this background, at a meeting earlier this term the Eversholt Governors resolved to apply to the Secretary of State for Education for an Academy Order, which is permission from the Department for Education for a school to start the process of converting to an Academy. This process includes detailed research into the implications for the school of converting, and requires extensive consultation with staff, parents, the local community and Central Beds Council. The Secretary of State's decision is awaited, but we hope to hear the outcome very shortly. To be clear, the granting of an Academy Order is not in any way a final or binding decision to become an Academy, but merely a step towards making such a commitment.

We are not alone in taking this step. We have been working closely with our colleagues at the other schools in the Harlington pyramid (the 13 Lower and 2 Middle Schools that feed into Harlington Upper). A consensus has been building within the pyramid schools that a move to Academies is now almost inevitable, and many local schools have now either applied or are considering applications for Academy Orders.

So what would becoming an Academy mean for Eversholt Lower School? Well, the day to day life of the school will not change. Despite the wholesale freedoms granted to Academies, the Governors are clear that if we take the final step of converting to an Academy, we will be obliged to follow the Local Authority's procedures for Admissions, Exclusions and Special Educational Needs, we

will not seek to change the length of the school day or amend term dates, we will not change the school uniform, and we will still be called Eversholt Lower School.

The staff will become direct employees of the Academy Trust rather than the Local Authority as is the case now. We take this change of employer for our staff very seriously, and we would employ all staff under existing terms & conditions of service. All land leases and school assets would transfer to the Trust. The Head Teacher will remain responsible for day to day running of the school, with our staff having the freedom to apply the National Curriculum in ways best suited for our children. We should also be freed from some of the decentralized educational bureaucracy that takes up so much of the staff's time.

But what does change is that as an independent school funded directly by central government we gain control of our own future. We would set up an Academy Trust, which would be a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, and it would become legally responsible for running the school. The Board of the Trust and the School Governing Body would be made up of representatives of all stakeholders including parents, staff, Local Authority and the Community.

We would not be financially disadvantaged by the transfer. At present the Local Authority retains a proportion of our school budget to spend on educational services and support. An Academy is given these "top sliced" funds to spend as it sees fit, but the Local Authority no longer provides the school with the same services that it does currently. Academies choose which services to buy in from the Authority or elsewhere. This requires that the school takes care of its own business administration including seeking best value when buying in services such as human resources support, broadband, ground

maintenance etc. These business administration skills are new to many small schools, and so Academy conversion is certainly not a decision to be taken lightly.

The consultation we are now undertaking is critical to informing the decision we will take. We are keen to consult with as many stakeholders as possible on the transfer, which will help the Governors in their final decision. The school staff are being consulted and we now wish to hear the views of the parent body and the community. We plan to hold a public meeting on Thursday 19th May at 8pm at Eversholt Village Hall where we will present our plans to become an independent Academy and take questions and feedback.

You can find further information in Academies and the conversion process at the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk/academies.

We encourage you to be part of this consultation process and welcome any of your comments in relation to Eversholt Lower School becoming an Academy either at our public meeting, by written communication to the school or directly to any of the school governors.

We look forward to discussing this with you on the 19th May.

Best Wishes,

Rob Fraser

Chair of Governors: rjcfraser@gmail.com

School email:

eversholt@deal.bedfordshire.gov.uk

EVERSHOLT PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs K Barker
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18th May 2011

Mr R Fraser
Chair of Governors
Eversholt Lower School

Dear Mr Fraser

Conversion of Eversholt Lower School to Academy Status

Thank you for your letter of 31st March 2011 regarding Eversholt Lower School's proposed conversion to Academy Status.

The Parish Council discussed the proposal at their meeting on 17th May and are pleased to confirm that they would like to offer you their support. We look forward to hearing more about the process of academy conversion as it proceeds.

Yours sincerely

Mrs K Barker
Clerk

NADINE DORRIES MP

Mid Bedfordshire



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dr Rob Fraser
Chair of Governors
Eversholt Lower School
Eversholt
Bedfordshire
MK17 9DU

Our ref: LDN9269

7 April 2011

Dear Rob,

Thank you for your letter keeping me updated with Eversholt Lower School's decision to apply for academy status.

I believe that you have made the right decision for the school and its pupils and I wish you all the best of luck.

If you encounter any problems or would like my help then feel free to ask and I will do what I can. In the meantime, I please update me with your progress.

Yours,


Nadine Dorries MP



Information Evening
19th May 2011

EVERSHOLT LOWER SCHOOL

What is the aim of tonight?

- Eversholt Lower School is looking at the opportunity to become an Academy
- Discuss what this means & invite comments and questions
- Take about 60 minutes

Agenda

- Why?
- What changes will it bring?
- What are the concerns?
- What happens next?
- Discussion

What is an Academy?

- An Academy is an **independent** but state funded school separate from the Local Authority.
- Children's places at the school are funded by Central Government
- The Academy is answerable directly to the Department for Education (DfE) and not to the Local Authority.

WHY BECOME AN ACADEMY? WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS? WHY NOW?

Context: Education is changing

- Public sector austerity
- Policy change
- Changing relationship between Local Authorities and Schools



Education Policy is changing



- New Government with an agenda for change
 - Academies Bill
 - Education White Paper 2010
 - Education Bill

Education Policy is changing

- “Clear move towards schools increased autonomy, working closely in partnership together such as Trusts and Federations”
- Schools have freedom to innovate and provide high quality learning under the control of the local people, parents and other stakeholders in their communities
- Attempt to decentralize & encourage diversity

Education Bill 2011

- Reduce bureaucratic burdens on schools by removing unnecessary legal requirements on governing bodies, teachers and local authorities
- Frees ‘outstanding’ schools and colleges from routine inspection
- Expands the Academies programme
- Changes the focus of inspection

New Ofsted Framework

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1



Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

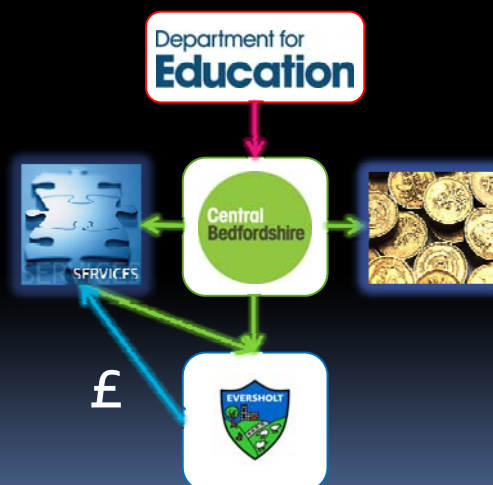
New Ofsted Framework

- The Bill will focus school inspections on four core areas:
 - achievement
 - teaching
 - leadership & management
 - behaviour & safety
- Outstanding Schools will no longer be routinely inspected

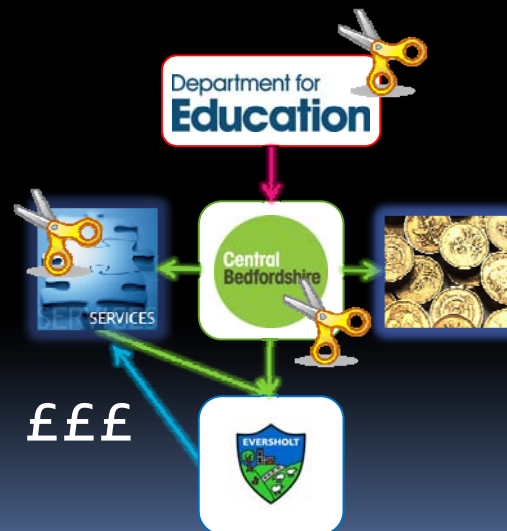
Role of Governing Bodies Enhanced

- The role of governing bodies in holding their schools to account for their performance based substantially on data and results will increase
 - Governors will be given easier access to data in order to determine how their schools compare to others.
 - The government sees this as an increasingly important function of governing bodies, particularly as other accountability mechanisms are removed from many schools, e.g. Ofsted and the SIP.
- **Self Evaluation & Self Driven Improvement**

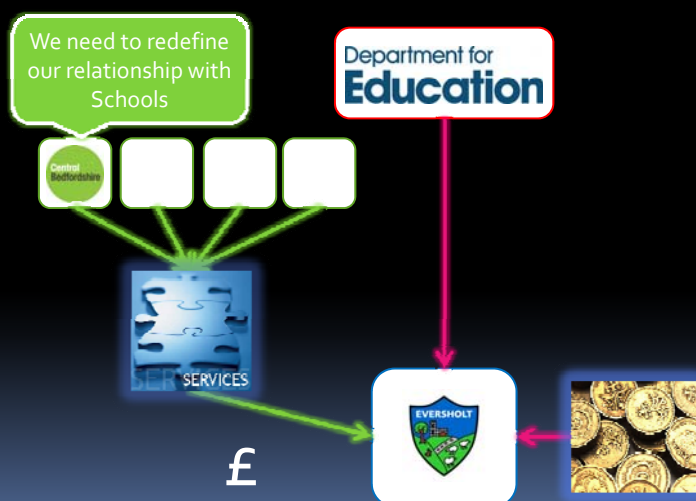
Local Authorities Changing Role



Local Authorities Changing Role



Local Authorities Changing Role



Central Beds Council “no longer wishes to run schools”

Why are we looking to become an Academy?

- Acceptance that we will be existing in a changing system
- As an Ofsted Outstanding School, the Education Bill gives us opportunity to take control of our future
- Optimistic embrace of change, rather than being swept along by it
- “Academy” is a means to an end
- Seize an opportunity & think creatively

What changes will Academy Status bring?

- Legal Structure
- Governance
- Funding & Business Management
- Educational Freedoms

Academy Legal Structure

- Eversholt Academy Trust
 - Registered company limited by guarantee
 - Charitable status
 - Employer of Staff
 - Owner of assets, contracts etc
- Eversholt Lower School
 - The school operated by the Trust

Governance

Eversholt Academy Trust



Company Secretary/Clerk 3 x Founding Members + Chair of Governors = Academy Trust

3 x Governors appointed by Founding Members

3 x Co-opted Governors

2 x parents

1 x Principal

1 x LA-appointed

2 x staff

Eversholt Lower School Governing Body

Funding & Business Management

- Top Sliced Funds
- Services Buy In
- Business Management
- Financial Management
- Administration capacity

- Maximum available funds for teaching and learning

Educations Freedoms

- Only requirements is to deliver a “broad and balanced curriculum”

What won't change

- School Name
- School Uniform
- Terms Dates, School Hours
- Staff Employment Conditions & Pensions
- Admissions
- Special Educational Needs
- Ethos, Standards or Objectives of the School

What are the concerns?

- Element of going into the unknown, cut-off from any LA support
 - Access to key services during wider transition
 - Isolation from support and expertise networks
- Reduced External Oversight
 - Schools will need external guidance and benchmarking
 - Demands for greater transparency
- Financial management of an Academy is more challenging because of its company status
 - Workload
- Long term commitment & leadership
- Long term viability of a small village school
 - Pension liabilities, capital projects, funding versus cost growth etc

What happens next?

- Academy Order
- Consultation
- Conversion project work
 - Focus on our Staff
 - A lot of detailed legal and financial work
 - Project Managers: Discimus Associates
- Go/No-go Decision
 - Sign Funding Agreement – July 11th
- Conversion 1st August (maybe 1st September)

Goal: To be a Centre of Excellence

- Children leave us with exceptional standards in reading, writing, numeracy & science...
- ...together with emerging skills in creative & critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, research, analysis & communication
- Foster self-motivation, excitement & love of learning



We have a moment in time to
educate and inspire but we all
have a lifetime to learn

EVERSHOLT LOWER SCHOOL
ACADEMY CONSULTATION EVENING
THURSDAY 19TH MAY 2011

Present: Representatives from Governors, Staff, Parents and Stakeholders
David Fraser, Education Consultant.

Rob Fraser, Chair of Governors presented a detailed account of the implications for the school if we decided to convert to Academy status. There followed an open question and answer session, the details of which are listed below:

Why not wait, why opt for Academy status now?

Momentum is really building up now and the time is right to embrace change. Going early helps with our relationship with other schools in our pyramid – we don't want to be left behind – we want to help shape the future. Going early also gives us the opportunity to help change or tweak the system as we can identify specific problems related to small schools. David Fraser added that at the moment we are driving the problems concerning small schools and finance and that the Department of Education is listening to us as we are at the forefront.

Will the school be part of a 2 or 3 tier system?

It is felt that all of Beds will ultimately go to a 2 tier system, but that is in the long term. To change would cost the county a lot of money that it doesn't have.

Are other schools in the pyramid going to convert to Academy schools?

So far, Harlington, Parkfields, Arnold, Greenfield and Pulloxhill have, plus some other small schools are looking into it. Another local school going, although not in our pyramid, is Fullbrook. Pyramids could work as small local authorities. David Fraser added that by the end of the year most upper and middle schools will have converted and that this is a good decision for Eversholt.

If we become an Academy school would we still follow the National Curriculum?

Yes, but perhaps with one or two tweaks. The Governors will be responsible for overseeing the curriculum.

Will the school still do end of Key Stage assessments and who would the school report the results to?

Key Stage assessments will still be carried out and the results reported to the Department of Education, the Local Authority and to parents. Under the new system there should be more data and information available to parents.

What will happen if the school gets into financial difficulty?

The school can only run a deficit budget for a limited period of time, currently 3 years. We are also not able to have an overdraft. We will need to look at working together with other schools to help spread the load of costs. If all else fails the Department of Education will come in and remove the governing body. There is a financial risk for small schools converting to Academy status.

Is sponsorship a possibility?

Yes. Schools can also set up a trading arm for earned income.

What would happen if in a few years time we have a drop in pupils?

That would reduce money coming in to the school. We have to ensure that we continue to be an outstanding school so parents will want to send their children to Eversholt. Governors are not liable for a drop in pupils.

Whether Academy status or not, small schools with falling numbers will be closed. Schools in the local area will start to cluster and federate.

Will there be a change to the admissions policy?

No, it will remain the same and set by Mid Beds, however the school will be in charge of appeals.

Will employment policies stay the same?

Yes. When a business is transferred from one owner to another, employees automatically become employees of the new employer on the same terms and conditions (TUPE).

How would a trading arm work?

There are many ways. As an outstanding school, if Mrs Warren goes out to advise other schools or becomes a consultant, she could charge for this service and money would come into the school. Our creative curriculum could be sold to other schools. One school in St Albans sells IT services, for example. The school would have to set up a separate body to manage this.

What is the appointment process for governors in future and how can we maintain standards?

Parents are elected by parents, as happens now, the head teacher is automatically on the governing body, staff will elect their representatives and co-opted members will be chosen by the governing body for the skills that they will bring.

As far as the four founder members are concerned, if one decides to resign or is asked to leave, then the other trustees will elect their replacement. It would be ideal for a founder member to stay for 7 years.

Is there any risk to Academy schools if there is a change in government, particularly as far as finance is concerned?

Only if a new government decides to scrap Academies like they did with Grant Maintained schools.

There is a new funding formula being set by the Department of Education for Academy schools and if they were scrapped then government would have to set up local authorities again.