



Consultation Report Ethos Academy Trust

(comprising Ethos College, Westfields PRU and the Primary Pupil Referral Service)

July 2017



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1. Executive Summary

Three Pupil Referral Units within Kirklees are proposing to form a new Multi Academy Trust and to call this Trust Ethos Academy Trust (EAT). The management committee on behalf of all three schools have resolved to take this proposed action.

Between the dates 14th June to the 12th July 2017 a robust consultation process was undertaken with the aim of ensuring that all stakeholders who wished to were able to make their views known about this proposal. The consultation was designed to ensure that stakeholders were able to raise informed questions and make informed comments. All comments and questions were recorded and are included in this report. A variety of media have been used and care has been taken to ensure accessibility at all times.

On compilation of all feedback and data received, the conclusion that can be drawn is that there are no apparent legitimate reasons why the PRU's should not convert and EAT be established according to the timescales outlined. Feedback was limited however, extremely constructive. Whilst there are some queries about the process and the detail of how EAT will operate (much of which is still to be agreed and decided), there are no concerns or contra-indications that have been raised through this process.

2. Introduction

The Management Committee of Ethos College, Westfields PRU and the Primary Pupil Referral Service agreed in early 2017 to progress forward with an academy application for each of the settings within its responsibility. Seeking academy status and forming a multi academy trust would also help to support the proposed free school application that the schools are proposing for Kirklees.

As part of the process for conversion the schools have a duty to consult with stakeholders helping to inform and support groups and individuals to understand the opportunities and alleviate any concerns they may have. This report provides an overview of the process and feedback received.

2.1 Geographic distribution of the proposed EAT Schools

All three PRUs are located within Kirklees. Their close proximity significantly aids joint working already and also helps to support schools across the towns within area.

3. Consultation Methodology

The overall aim of the consultation process was to ensure that everyone who has a stake in the formation of EAT from the 3 joining schools had the opportunity to hear about the proposals and to make their views known about the plans.

The objectives of the process were to:

- Provide relevant background information for stakeholders
- Explain the reasons for the proposal
- Outline the pros and cons for the proposal
- Set out the stages in the process for EAT formation and the associated timelines

The principles laid down by the project team for the consultation were that it should be:

- An open and transparent process
- Accessible to all stakeholders in terms of:
 - The times of the events
 - The language used (jargon-free wherever possible and acronyms fully explained)
 - Well-publicised and advertised

A variety of media were used to consult including:

- Direct letters
- On-line survey
- Publicised meetings involving presentations and questions and answer sessions (see appendix 5)
- Frequently asked questions and comments slips
- Post-box placed in school receptions for questions and comments
- Pupil/school council consultation workshops

3.1 Direct letters

Letters introducing the consultation were sent electronically to the following groups and are included at Appendix 1:

- Parents/community members
- School staff and Trades Unions
- Local Councillors
- Local schools
- Agency partners

3.2 Online survey

‘Survey Monkey’ was used to receive anonymous information from each school’s stakeholders. Appendix 2 shows an example of the survey monkey questions including the key question:

‘Do you support the Kirklees PRUs becoming academies and forming EAT which, would involve the EAT entering into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education?’

3.3 Publicised meetings

The following timetable of events was communicated to stakeholders and carried out during the consultation period:

Date	Time	Event	Venue
27.6.17	2.30pm	Trade Unions	Westfields PRU
27.6.17	3.30pm	Staff Consultation, Westfields and Primary PRS (1)	Westfields PRU
28.6.17	3.30pm	Staff Consultation, Ethos College (2)	Ethos College
5.7.17	3pm	Parent & Community Consultation	Ethos College

3.4 Frequently asked questions (FAQs) and comments slips

At Appendix 3 is the FAQ sheet that was distributed to parents/carers and staff in each of the schools.

3.5 School reception post boxes

In each school’s reception was placed a sealed box with a posting slot to enable anyone who wished to post a question or comment. At the end of the consultation period these questions and comments were collected to be responded to as appropriate.

4. Overview of the Feedback received

Appendix 4 contains all the questions, comments and feedback received from the various media used throughout the consultation period. Numbers of participants in meetings and surveys are below.

4.1 Attendance at Consultation Meetings

Date	Event	Venue	Number in attendance
27.6.17	Trade Unions	Westfields PRU	9
27.6.17	Westfields and Primary PRS staff	Westfields PRU	28
28.6.17	Ethos College Staff	Ethos College	22
5.7.17	Parents	Ethos College	0

4.2 Survey Monkey

We received 3 responses to our online survey, 2 were staff members and one was from the local authority.

Although a small response no one was negative towards the proposal, 2 responders were supportive and one was unsure. A copy of responses to all questions can be found in appendix 4.

A summary of all the responses, themes and the messages contained therein, is provided below:

4.3 Themes and Key Messages

Stakeholders are most interested in:

4.3.1 The formation of EAT and continuity of close links with the Local Authority and schools

An overwhelming theme throughout the staff and trade union meetings was to reassure colleagues that the strong relationships would continue as they are now if the PRUs became academies. Discussions took place about the support from the LA and schools within Kirklees to the proposed changes and the reasons for this change.

What agreements would be in place between the academy trust and commissioners of services?

4.3.2 Governance arrangements

Questions were raised regarding key areas which included;

- The composition of the respective levels of governance
- The skill set required to fulfil these key roles
- The difference between Members and Trustees
- The long term vision for the MAT

4.3.3 Development of the free school application

One of the driving factors of the PRUs considering academy status was the need to secure a new Free School for Kirklees and that this could only be delivered through an established Academy Trust. Stakeholders were interested in the following key areas of the proposal:

- Proposed size of the school and educational offer
- How schools will access the new provision and what will be the impact for existing PRUs?
- Is there an impact with purdah?
- Where the school may be located

4.3.4 Staff contracts and terms and conditions

It was clarified at staff briefings that EAT would be the future employer if the conversions went ahead. Staff were keen to understand what the impact to them would be by a change of employer for example; would there still be childcare vouchers and a cycle to work scheme. Other key questions and discussions were held around:

- The TUPE process and timeframe
- Pensions
- The role of trade unions
- Continuity of Kirklees services

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

On collation of all feedback and data received, the conclusion that can be drawn is that there are no apparent legitimate reasons why EAT cannot be established according to the timescales outlined. The overwhelming view is that this will be a positive move for all the schools. Whilst there are some queries about the process and the detail of how EAT will operate (much of which

is still to be agreed and decided), there are no concerns or contra-indications that have been raised through this process.

Response rates from parents and community members at all schools were low. From this can be deduced that:

- Stakeholders are ambivalent about their school joining EAT
- Stakeholders are content to leave these decisions to the managers and leaders of their schools
- Stakeholders of schools that have already recently converted have been through the process before and do not have further questions and queries.

Following the completion of the consultation period for all schools wishing to join EAT it is recommended that:

- All schools proceed with the next phases of the joining process
- A range of media are used to further inform stakeholders of all the interim milestones and timescales and plans for EAT as they progress

6. List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Direct Letters
Appendix 2	Online Survey Questions
Appendix 3	Frequently Asked Questions Sheet
Appendix 4	Feedback Received
Appendix 5	Sample Staff Presentation