

***Report on the Consultation
for
Wetherby High School
to remove the Education Trust for Wetherby***

Full Governing Body Meeting

Thursday 14th March 2019

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INTRODUCTION

This document summarises the feedback from public consultation exercise for Wetherby High School to remove the Education Trust for Wetherby. This consultation report was produced on behalf of the Governing Body by Julie Bowdidge.

Copies of the consultation documents were published on the school website and distributed widely to consultees including parents/carers, learners, staff, trade unions, the Local Authority and other stakeholders in the catchment area of the school.

In addition, separate consultation meetings were held for staff and parents and carers at the schools. Additionally, a general public meeting for anyone with an interest was held. These meetings were well publicised locally.

Students were also consulted via the School Council.

This document summarises the responses received for the consultation as a whole. Included within this report are a summary of the views and comments received from individuals. All responses will be made available to the Governing Body for examination when they consider this consultation. Individual responses are also available for examination by contacting the school.

1. Executive Summary

The decision to bring the consultation to remove the Education Trust for Wetherby (ETW) was taken at the Governing Body meeting on 6 December 2018 and was further ratified at a second full governing body meeting on 20 December 2018. A detailed plan was then put together following the statutory proposals detailed in the DfE guidance: Making Significant Changes ('prescribed alterations') to Maintained Schools published in October 2018.

A great deal of consultation has taken place with regard to these proposals.

- i) The consultation leaflet and the questionnaire (Appendix B attached) were issued to all the required consultees. Additional information was made available on the school's website. It was made clear in the consultation document how to obtain copies.
- ii) The consultation was promoted widely and over 765 sets of the consultation documents were distributed when consultation officially opened at noon on Friday 1 March 2019.
- iii) Staff and parent meetings were held at school. (Notes of questions and answers raised at the Staff, Union and Parent meetings were taken - see Appendix C).
- iv) There were 41 response forms returned giving a response rate of 5.4%. Of these 41 respondents 97.5% supported the proposals with just one person (2.5%) requiring further information.

2. Background Information

The Governing Body has done a great deal of research and consideration before deciding to propose the removal of Education Trust for Wetherby. It was agreed that the existing arrangement no longer addressed the needs of the school. The current education climate is very much about school to school support with organisations also forming partnerships that will support developments. With one partner already removed from the ETW and no other schools being part of the Trust, governors determined that the time had come to look at alternative arrangements.

By removing the Trust it enables Wetherby to be able to consider other collaborations which will equally support and challenge the school in its ambitions.

Existing arrangements with the current partner, The British Library, will continue.

3. Overview of the Consultation Feedback

In most consultation exercises responses tend to be made by those who have strong views and not by those who accept the proposals being put forward. In this case the level of response was low but the feedback to the consultation was in favour of the proposals.

There was a response rate of 5.4% of the total number of questionnaires distributed. In the number of response forms returned it does demonstrate that the majority (over three quarters) of respondents supported the proposals.

The school is very conscious of the local and national situations that impact on the stability of the staff, students and their performance. The proposals to remove the Trust reflects the strong commitment to continuing its focus on a school improvement by being able to work with other schools and organisations.

Below are a number of the type of questions and comments received.

Responses

There was concern expressed that this maybe a first step towards academisation.

‘As a parent, I would personally like some assurances that this is not a ‘first step’ stage in moving towards Academy status’.

Although this had been part of the research and consideration by the Governing Body it is important to note that this option was rejected in favour of removing the Trust and seeking other partnerships to support the school.

In removing the Trust the school will become a foundation school without a foundation. The school will retain its own Governing Body which will continue to run the school and its delegated budget in the same way as currently. The school’s land and assets will transfer from the Trust to the Governing Body to be held there ‘in trust’ on behalf of the school and its stakeholders until any new arrangements are decided. Parents/carers, staff and students will see little change to the way in which the school is run on a day to day basis.

‘To move forward into a new trust, growing relationships which will only help to improve on the great work over the past few years’ (parent)

‘The school needs to work with others (schools) in a trust that enables collaboration, moderation and pooling of resources. Being in a trust of one is not beneficial to the children or teachers’ (parent)

‘I think it will benefit the school more than the trust we are already in’ (student)

This is the main reason that the proposal has been put together to consult on the removal the Trust to allow the Governing Body the freedom to explore other partnerships which will support the school and enable them to gain the benefits that come from collaboration.

Although the response rate was not high the overall response to the consultation was positive and supportive of the proposals. The school responded positively to concerns expressed by those being consulted, including staff and provided additional information upon request.

4. Land and Assets

The school cannot publish the statutory notice until the Trust’s and LA’s solicitors have confirmed in writing that they agree with the school what will happen to the land on Wetherby’s reversion to foundation school without a foundation status. Legal representation has been employed on behalf of the school and they will provide the legal confirmation on behalf of the trustees. We are currently awaiting confirmation from the LA.

5. Recommended Action

It is clear that the views of those consulted are generally in support of the proposal for removal of the Trust.

It is recommended that the Governing Body of Wetherby High School:

Proceed in determining the issues related to the land and assets with the trustees of the Education Trust for Wetherby and seek legal confirmation from the LA.

No changes are made to the proposal and that the Governing Body agree to the publication of the Statutory Notice and Proposals once the outstanding land and assets issues are determined. The Statutory period will last 6 weeks.

It is also recommended that:

- Authority is delegated to the Head and Chair to finalise and issue the statutory papers.
- That this report including its summary of responses to the consultation are put on the school website, as part of the full Statutory Proposals

Appendix A – Summary of response forms: Wetherby High School

A total of 41 questionnaires were received following over 765 consultation documents being sent to all parents/carers, staff and governors of the school as well as to a number of interested parties. These broke down as follows – 11 from parents and 30 from students. This represents a return of 5.4%. Copies of these responses are available for governors' perusal. The majority of the responses 40 (97.5%) are supportive of the proposals and 1 requiring further information (2.5%). There were no responses against the proposals.

The number of responses is given below together with the comments received. The background of the respondent, where known, is also given.

- **How do you feel about the school changing category and withdrawing from The Education Trust for Wetherby?**

	Parents/ Carers	Staff	Students	Other
I support the proposal	10	0	30	0
I do not think the school should withdraw from the Trust	0	0	0	0
I am not sure and would like more information	1	0	0	0

I would like more information on:

- What type of partnerships the school would like to forge and the concern of moving to Academy status (Parent)

Comments received:

- To allow the school to improve the learning environment for pupils. (Parent)
- There has to be benefits to the school being linked with other schools. (Parent)
- It seems that leaving the trust will allow the school more scope for better opportunities. (Parent)
- To move forward into a new trust, growing relationships, which will only help to improve on the great work over the past few years. (Parent)
- I think it's important in the current funding/education climate for the school to have the options they need to further develop. (Parent)
- I think it will allow the school to explore other wider partnership opportunities, which involve educational and learning establishments. (Parent)
- To give the school more options for the future. (Parent)
- As a parent, I would personally like some assurances that this is not a 'first step' stage in moving towards Academy status. (Parent)
- It makes sense so other partnerships can be established that benefit the school. (Parent)

- The school needs to work with others (schools) in a trust that enables collaboration, moderation and pooling of resources. Being in a trust of 1 is not beneficial to the children or teachers (Parent)
- Seems to be the best way forward for the school. It could now join a trust with more schools in it. (Parent)
- It will benefit GCSE students and give more opportunities. (Student)
- I think it will benefit the school more than the trust we are already in. (Student)
- From what I have been told, it will benefit us, that's why I chose it. (Student)
- Because it will benefit the school and children in the long-run. (Student)
- I feel that it would be beneficial for older students. (Student)
- We will get more out of it. (Student)
- Because it will give us more chances as a school. (Student)
- Good opportunities. (Student)
- It will be good. (Student)

Please use the space below to give us any comments, concerns or suggestions that you feel we should think about before we make a formal decision whether or not to proceed with the proposal:

Comments received:

- I'm concerned that this is a step towards possible academisation or closure. I'm also wary of the timing following the recent Ofsted inspection. I'm interested to see the outcome of the HMI visit to see if the judgement has prompted this decision.

APPENDIX B: CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

Leaflet

FAQ document

Letter to Parents/Carers/Staff

Questionnaire

(All available from the school website)

Appendix C – Notes from: Wetherby High School: Consultation Meetings

Staff Meeting 3.30 pm Tuesday 12 February 2019

In attendance

Lucy Lakin, Headteacher

As no staff attended the meeting, it was closed at 3.45 pm

Please note that while no staff attended there have been several updates given at staff meetings. Informal feedback is that staff are unanimous in their support and trust the Governing Body and the Leadership Team on this matter.

Parents/Carers, 5.30 pm Tuesday 12 February 2019

In attendance

Lucy Lakin, Headteacher

2 parents

Parents were given an introduction into the proposals for the removal of the Education Trust for Wetherby and an overview of what research and discussion had taken place by the Governing Body. Questions were then invited.

Is this a step towards academisation?

No. The Governing Body have discussed a number of options and have decided that the first course of action is to remove the existing Trust so they can look at other partnerships and determine the best way forward for Wetherby. This will not include becoming an academy.

What consideration has been given to the Leeds Learning Alliance? I have read about it on the Carr Manor website and Wetherby has a close relationship with Carr Manor.

This will be an option that we look at. The values and the aims of the LLE are very much aligned with Wetherby

Would the Land still belong to Wetherby? Can anyone else 'get their hands on it'?

Yes the land will transfer to the Governing Body from the Trust.

General Comments

This is a good idea and I would encourage you to look at other partnerships should the decision be taken to withdraw the current Trust.

I support the proposals. I think it is good thing for the school to do.

The parents were thanked for their attendance and asked to complete the questionnaire and to encourage other parents/carers to do so. The Governing Body were keen to hear parents/carers viewpoints.

Open Meeting, 7.00 pm Tuesday 12 February 2019

In attendance

Lucy Lakin, Headteacher

Given that no-one attended the Open Meeting it was closed at 7.15 pm

School Council, Friday 15 February 2019

The School Council met with Mr King, Assistant Headteacher.

Mr King outlined the proposals. The Governing Body following discussion and a lot of research had decided to consult on removing the existing Trust that Wetherby School was part of. This was called the Education Trust for Wetherby and was a partnership with the British Library. Another partner had already withdrawn. It was proposed that this Trust would be removed and it would enable the Governing Body to look at other options for Wetherby that would offer greater support and provide more opportunities for students and the local community.

Mr King invited comments from the students and asked them to complete the questionnaire. See Appendix A: Summary of Comments

The students were encouraged to talk to their class mates about the proposals.

Below is an extract from the minutes of a meeting held with the unions and professional associations on Tuesday 8 January 2019, 1.30 pm.

Meeting Location:	Carr Manor Community School (CMCS)
Meeting called by:	Simon Flowers/ Dave Wood
Note taker:	Paulette Bywater

Present:	Simon Flowers	Principal CMCS
	Dave Wood	Resources & Partnership Dev Lead
	Paulette Bywater	HR Business Partner
	Amir Mohammed	NASUWT
	Patrick Murphy	NEU
	Sally Ryan	GMB
	Maggie Pearson	GMB
	Sarah Ruddy	Head Teacher, Bankside Primary
	Mark Sutton	ASCL
Apologies:		

Although the main purpose of the meeting was the official consultation regarding the Leeds Learning Alliance, Wetherby's current position was discussed as an additional item.

Unions were informed that Wetherby would be consulting on removing the existing ETW and would potentially further consult on joining the LLA. However, should the decision be made that the Trust would not be removed, Wetherby would still be able to be a partner in the LLA. They were therefore included in the documentation as a potential partner, whether it be as a full partner (withdrawal of the Trust) or as an associate partner (retaining the Trust).

Full consultation would be undertaken with the unions.