

Information for Governors re academy discussion.

The agenda item is to start the discussion about converting Hawthorn from a Foundation Trust school to an academy, alongside the other schools in the trust to become a Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

Each school would have to make this decision independently.

Previously academies have tended to replace schools in need of improvement. (This is what happened when Westgate College closed and Excelsior Academy opened, and would still happen if a school failed an Ofsted inspection and went into “Special measures”)

Under the Academies Act 2010, all schools are able to become academies. Schools that are ‘performing well’ i.e. Good or Outstanding are able to apply to convert to academy status with either

- A) group of schools like our Foundation Trust – , or
- B) under a sponsorship arrangement where a private company would take over the services of the local Authority .

An academy is a state-funded independent school.

As we are already a Foundation trust school the main differences would be

- An academy is independent of the local Authority – although it can buy back LA services
- An academy is funded directly from the Department of education (not via the LA although the amount of money would remain largely the same with freedoms to buy in different providers if desired)
- An academy is required to teach broad and balanced curriculum including English, maths, science and RE – not the national curriculum – however it still is tested in the same way – SATS, phonics etc
- An academy has the freedom to change lengths of terms.
- An academy has Ofsted inspections just the same on a 3 year cycle – however the rule at present is once a school converts to an academy it starts its 3 year cycle again (we are due in May 2016 – if we converted between now and then they wouldn’t inspect until 2019).

We could simply convert to academy status and remain as an independent group of schools - a Multi Academy Trust buying in the services we need A) but I have also been asked to discuss the option B) of becoming a sponsored trust under Northern Education Trust. You might want to look at them in more detail.

<http://www.northerneducationtrust.org/>

We will begin to discuss all this on Wednesday but then go away with reading material to come to the extraordinary meeting.

