

Press Release

Broomfield Primary School considers move to academy status and joining Ebor Academy Trust

Broomfield Primary School is the latest NYCC primary school to consider opting out of local authority control and becoming an academy.

If it does convert, it will join Ebor Academy Trust, a York-based multi-academy trust currently comprising 15 schools across York, Selby, the Yorkshire Coast and in the East Riding and The Humber.

A consultation period starts today, with meetings organised for parents, carers and the community to find out more.

“Entering a period of consultation does not mean we will become an academy, at this stage it is a commitment to explore the options and fully understand what it will mean to our children, our school community and our staff,” said Peter Wilkinson, Chair of Governors. “We have looked into this closely, but it is not a done deal, we still want to talk to our community and hear people’s views.”

Susan Gill, Broomfield Primary School headteacher, said: “In early, informal talks with Ebor we have discovered they share our values. Should we decide to academise and join them, they would handle core business activities such as payroll, HR and premises, leaving teaching and learning to us.

“This is an exciting opportunity to add resource and increase opportunities but it is ultimately the governors who will decide at the end of the consultation process.”

The consultation process closes on Friday 15 December.

Governors of Broomfield School are considering academy status and joining the Ebor Academy Trust. This information sheet sets out the arrangements we are putting in place to consult with parents and carers, staff and our local community so that everyone can have a voice and a chance to contribute to the consultation process. Overleaf we set out some answers to frequently asked question that will hopefully provide not only a degree of reassurance but also some further explanatory information that should help you reach a more informed understanding. As the process gets underway, we will keep our school website updated with any further information that emerges.

The consultation process starts with the publishing of this letter and ends at 9.30am on Friday 15th December 2017.

Below are meeting dates and times which you are welcome to attend. You can also submit questions or comments via email (admin@broomfield.n-yorks.sch.uk) or a suggestions box in the school office reception and all contributions will be presented to governors, who will consider them before making their decision.

Timeline

1. Friday 10th November: Consultation begins.
2. Tuesday 14th November: Information evening at school for parents, carers and local community, 6pm until 7.30pm. Governors, the school leadership team and Ebor representatives will discuss academisation and what it may mean for Broomfield.
3. Wednesday 22nd November: Drop-in at school from 3pm until 5pm. This will be an opportunity to discuss academisation and talk to governors and the school leadership team on a one-to-one basis.
4. Monday 4th December: Drop-in at school from 8am until 9am and again from 3pm until 4pm. This will be an opportunity to discuss academisation and talk to governors and the school leadership team on a one-to-one basis.
5. Friday 15th December: Consultation period ends at 9.30am, when all responses received will be collated and sent to governors.
6. Thursday 21st December: Governors hold Extraordinary Full Governing Body Meeting to consider responses and vote either to continue to explore academisation or to reject the proposal.

Academisation and joining Ebor Academy Trust - questions and answers for Parents & Carers

What is an academy?

Academy schools are state-funded schools in England which are directly funded by the Department for Education and independent of local authority control. Academies have greater independence and freedom to enhance the curriculum and expand resources for the benefit of their pupils. They are still inspected by Ofsted and have to follow the same rules on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as other state schools.

Which schools can choose to become Academies?

Only schools judged “good” or “outstanding” by Ofsted, like Broomfield, can choose to become an Academy.

Who runs an academy?

An academy is run by an academy trust that is led by a Board of Trustees who are a non-elected body of around 12 individuals chosen for their experience and area of expertise in such issues as education & teaching, general management, finance, legal, marketing, HR etc .

Why a Multi Academy Trust?

In recent years, the Government via the Department for Education (DfE), has changed funding for schools which will result in lower funding in real terms in the future.

This means that Local Authorities are no longer able to provide the support and services for schools that used to be available. As a result, schools across the country are being encouraged to work more closely together, initially through informal “clustering” arrangements but increasingly by becoming academies and joining other like-minded schools to form Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) so that they can share central services and each member school can concentrate on the teaching and welfare of its pupils.

What are the advantages of joining a Multi Academy Trust?

There are a number of benefits of joining a Multi Academy Trust. These include:

- Closer collaboration between schools leading to better outcomes for pupils
- Shared buying power means specialist expertise can be funded and extra curricular activities provided
- Economies of scale in purchasing supports school budgets
- Services such as finance, HR and IT can be centralised freeing member schools up to focus on teaching and learning

Who are Ebor?

If this proposal goes ahead, Broomfield will become an Academy and join the Ebor Academy Trust. Currently, Ebor is a Multi Academy Trust comprising 15 schools across York, Selby, the Yorkshire Coast and East Riding and The Humber. Ebor is setting up “hubs” in each of these geographic areas with each hub containing around 10 schools or around 2,000 pupils. Ebor is a teacher led, charitable, not-for-profit organisation and any financial surplus generated on a year to year basis is reintroduced into the education provision in its schools. A copy of Ebor’s ‘School Report’ brochure is attached which gives examples of the ways schools have benefitted from joining. Ebor’s values where the child is at the centre of everything they do closely mirror those of Broomfield. More information can be found on their website at www.ebor.academy

Is this a good move for my child, for Broomfield and its staff and for the wider community?

At a time of great changes in education, with, as detailed above, reduced local authority budgets and consequently less support, we believe teaming up with a like-minded organisation such as Ebor that is already well established, will give Broomfield greater financial stability and provide more opportunities for our children particularly in the areas of curriculum and speciality teaching

both of which should lead to enhanced pupil outcomes. In addition, Ebor already have an established School Improvement Programme that is offered under LA licence, to schools outside Ebor's operating area as well as specialised teaching programmes. These are used to create both enhanced career opportunities for staff without them having to leave to get them, as well as additional sources of revenue which are used for the benefit of all member schools of the Trust.

Will our funding change?

As an academy, the school would have more control over its funding and decision making. An academy receives its money direct from the DfE not via the Local Authority giving it greater freedom to spend its money in a way which better meets the needs of its pupils.

How much does it cost to convert to an Academy?

The DfE gives a grant of £25,000 to cover legal and administrative costs, most of which is usually used in the process of academy conversion.

Will any jobs be lost if we do decide to proceed and will staff terms & conditions remain the same?

No jobs will be lost in this process. Staff will be transferred across under TUPE arrangements with exactly the same terms and conditions of employment.

Will teaching standards change?

Joining a Multi Academy Trust, and Ebor in particular, would enhance the continued training and development of our staff, enabling us to achieve even higher standards and widen curricular opportunities.

Will the schools continue to work with the local council and other schools?

We have a very good relationship with NYCC and other schools in Northallerton and we intend to continue and develop these partnerships for the benefit of our children and their families. Ebor also works well with clusters and other organisations, as do other schools in their trust.

Will we actually see any differences on a day-to-day basis and will our name change?

Signage and stationery will change slightly, saying that Broomfield is part of the Ebor Academy Trust and we will become Broomfield Primary Academy. Children will be in the same classes and taught by the same teachers. However, longer term benefits will be access to more teaching and learning resources, more support from specialist teachers in subjects such as modern foreign languages, music and the creative arts and career development opportunities with Ebor's School Improvement and specialist teacher programmes outlined above.

Will there be any changes to admissions?

No. There would be no changes to current admissions arrangements.

How do I find out more about academies?

A useful starting point is www.gov.uk/types-of-school/academies

How can I get involved in the consultation process?

You can attend and contribute to a meeting (see overleaf for details), or email us, or you can write to us, care of the school office. There will also be a comments or suggestions box at the school reception.

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Broomfield School
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DL7 8RG

Registered Charity No. 1045827

Thursday 9th November 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

As you will know from the news, education in this country is changing. The government is promoting an academisation agenda that allows greater freedoms for schools. The government believes such a policy gives governors and headteachers greater opportunities to provide an excellent education for children.

Over 60 per cent of all secondary schools in England are now academies and more than 20 per cent of primary schools have also converted to academy status and this number is growing steadily.

Some schools are converting and then joining forces with like-minded schools to set up their own Multi Academy Trust, or MAT; others are joining established MATs on conversion.

You may be aware that in North Yorkshire, a number of schools have already become academies and some have already formed MATs with other schools. At Broomfield the governors and senior leadership team have been considering the options available for our school, observing what is happening and trying to work out what is the best way forward.

Following a governors' meeting on October 17th 2017, we are today launching a consultation period to explore the possibility of converting to academy status. This does not mean to say we will become an academy, it is simply to commit to exploring the options and seeing if this move is right for us – our staff, our children and our community.

Should we decide to academise, we are looking at joining forces with Ebor Academy Trust, a York-based MAT currently comprising 15 schools across York, Selby, the Yorkshire Coast and the East Riding and The Humber. In early, informal talks with Ebor, we have discovered they share our values and ethos and we believe their policy of putting the child at the centre of everything that they do makes them, potentially, an ideal partner. Should we join them, they would handle core business activities such as payroll, HR and site management, leaving teaching and learning – our real passions – to us.

You can find out more about Ebor on their website <http://www.eboracademytrust.co.uk/> The information will help you understand more about the organisation that we may eventually join and why we think they appear such a good “fit” for Broomfield.

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To do nothing would be an option, but in these changing times, with less support from the local authority because of cost savings imposed from central government, it is not perhaps a realistic option if we want to continue to look at ways to improve our school.

During this consultation period, governors and senior staff have arranged a formal meeting and drop-in events to discuss the principle of becoming an academy with parents, carers and staff. There will be every opportunity for everyone's views to be heard and questions answered, before governors make the final decision. There is a lot of work to do and we will keep you informed at every stage.

We know that the prospect of change can be worrying for many people but we want to reassure you that no decision will be taken before governors are completely satisfied they are in possession of all the information they need, including considering feedback from this comprehensive consultation with all our stakeholders. We welcome your views, comments and contributions about supporting the best way forward for our school.

An information sheet is attached with more details and a timeline of consultation activities, together with some frequently asked questions and answers. Our website also has this information and any further questions and answers, as they come up, will be posted online.

We do hope you are able to attend at least one of our consultation events.

Yours sincerely

Peter Wilkinson

Chair of Governors

Susan Gill

Headteacher

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