

**PROPOSAL FOR NORTHBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL  
TO JOIN THE SOKE EDUCATION TRUST AND CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS  
Summary of further questions submitted by parents and carers with answers**

**Introduction**

The Governing Body of Northborough Primary School invited parents and carers to complete a consultation survey, which gave the opportunity to ask further questions.

This document is a summary of the further questions asked in the surveys, with answers. This is in addition to the Q&A published after the consultation meetings on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, which included thirty-one (31) questions.

**Q32. Is there supporting data available which quantifies the expect gain over the next 5 years of moving to an academy versus remaining under LEA control?**

**A32.** In response to a previous question about evidence for the impact of academy status the following answer was given.

"Soke Education trust was only established in January 2018 and its member schools went through the first set of national tests in May 2018. The trust will be reviewing the result of the 2019 tests in Autumn term 2019.

There is national data from 2018 that shows convertor primary schools do slightly better than LA maintained schools in Key Stage 2 tests." See table N4 in the data table inserted below.

The table is titled 'Table N4' and contains data for 'Key Stage 2 tests' in '2018'. It compares 'Convertor primary schools' and 'LA maintained schools'. The table has columns for 'Schools', 'Pupils', 'Reading', 'Writing', and 'Mathematics'. The data shows that convertor primary schools generally performed slightly better than LA maintained schools in all three subjects.

Schools	Pupils	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Convertor primary schools	1,234,567	58.2	56.8	59.1
LA maintained schools	1,234,567	57.8	56.4	58.7

**Q33. Within the academy how if the funding split for each school i.e. if there are 1500 pupils within the academy does each school receive exactly the same allocation per pupil?**

**A33.** Each member school receives its full funding allocation, which is based on the Local Authority funding formula for primary schools and its pupil numbers. As an academy Northborough won't receive any additional funding but will receive a proportion of funding that is currently held back by the Local Authority. Each member school contributes a % of its budget towards the trust's central costs, which are agreed each year by the trustees and headteachers

**Q34. Do sponsored schools receive more of the academy [Trust] 's money and resource?**

**A34.** No. Each sponsored school receives the funding allocated to it using the funding formula (see A33). Sponsored academies can benefit from additional funding to support school improvement, which must be spent on the sponsored school. This can be used to fund the support provide by the Trust, for example the input of the CEO or another Headteacher, to ensure Trust resources are deployed fairly.

**Q35. Will any more sponsored schools be taken on?**

**A35.** Possibly yes. The DfE may ask the Trust, especially if is performing well, to sponsor another school. The Trustees, CEO and Headteachers would need to consider whether this was desirable or feasible.;

We recognise that the larger the trust the greater the combined resources and opportunities to develop programmes to support member schools. But grow too large, too fast and the trust could become difficult to run effectively. The aim is for sustainable growth, always ensuring the trust has the capacity to integrate new schools properly. It is widely recognised that supporting under-performing schools can benefit those staff deployed, strengthening their leadership and coaching skills and deepening their experience

**Q36. Do new teachers applying for a job at Northborough apply to the school or to the academy? As such would their contracts be different to existing staff and state within the that they could be asked to work anywhere within the academy should it be required?**

**A36.** The job would be to work in Northborough but the contract would be a Trust contract. That contract does not require them to work in other schools and any movement between schools would only be with the

agreement of that member of staff and the respective Headteachers.

**Q37. What is Northborough's voice within the academy [Trust]? Do any decisions regarding the joining of additional schools need to be a unanimous decision or can they be out voted if other schools opinions form a majority - surely the bigger the academy gets the less of a voice they will have?**

**A37.** Northborough will have its own Local Governing Body, which will continue to include parent and staff governors. It will have the same delegated authority as the other school LGBs. Its' Headteacher will be part of the Trust Leadership Group and will have equal voice as other Headteachers.

It is important to recognise that Trustees have a responsibility for all schools, pupils and staff and are not there to represent individual schools. There is a vacancy for Trustee and Northborough's Governing Body have been invited to nominate a Trustee. It is the Trustees that decide whether further schools join based on the recommendation of the CEO and leadership group

**Q38. What is the academy's 3-5 Year Plan pertaining to: Strategy – Including the plan with respect to acquiring additional schools. Will the academy take on any more sponsored schools? What are the current measured and future predicted tangible benefits of the academy? What are the current perceived and future predicted intangible benefits of the academy? What Key Performance Indicators does the academy use to measure its effectiveness? Are these published?**

**A38.** The Trust does have a growth business plan but this does not include with targets for schools or pupil numbers. Explanation of the growth plan was provided in A13 in the meeting Q&A.

The Trustees monitor the performance of the schools and the effectiveness of the Trust and school improvement plans through a combination of data reports and other quantitative and qualitative assessment. This information is not published but a summary of Trust performance is included in the Trust Annual report.

It is worth noting that the nationally reported attainment and progress of each cohort of Year 6 and Year 2 pupils does vary each year depending on the pupils. Children develop at different rates and at different times during primary school years so forecasting outcomes at a school level, let alone a Trust level, is challenging.

**Q39. Were staff consulted prior to the meetings on 22nd May?**

**A39.** Staff were briefed verbally on the first day of consultation on May 13<sup>th</sup> ahead of the meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Q40. Have the staff been asked to fill in feedback forms like the parents? If so, will the results be shared with parents?**

**A41.** Yes. The outcome of the staff survey will be published as part of the overall survey outcomes included in final consultation report. That report will be published in late June.

**Q41. What are personal opinions of teachers within the school. Do they feel it will benefit them or is it viewed a burden? Are they happy with the proposal?**

**A41.** Staff are being consulted at the same time as parents so their views are unknown and therefore, we cannot comment.

**Q42. Have parents of Children due to start school in September 2019 and who do not already have siblings within the school been made aware of the proposed changes and given a feedback form? They may have based their school choice on Northborough not being an academy.**

**A42.** No. Parents of September 2019 reception children have not been surveyed but they will be briefed once a decision has been made. Governors believe that those parents will have chosen Northborough because they believe it is right for their child and those reasons will not be adversely affected by academy status. If however, there are new parents concerned by academy status, if agreed, the Headteacher and Governors will seek to reassure them. It is worth noting that parents of children in Year 6 have been consulted even though their child will have left in September.

**Q43. It was also mentioned within the meeting that one of the Werrington schools is a single school academy, has this option been investigated?**

**A43.** The DfE no longer approves primary schools converting as stand-alone academies so this option was not open to the Governing Body.

**Q44.** If the Trust takes on additional sponsored schools which puts a drain and burden on costs and resources, what measures are in place to ensure this doesn't have a negative impact on Northborough's needs. I understand short term there would be money for taking on that school but when this runs out what happens.

**A44.** The Trustees, CEO and Headteachers recognise this risk and would only take on a sponsored when it was confident that the Trust had the expertise, resource and capacity to enable a sponsored school to improve, without detriment to other member schools.

**Q45.** I see benefits of being still small and local - is there a limit on the number of schools that can join Stoke Education Trust.

**A45.** The Trustees, Headteachers and Governors of the schools that formed the trust have discussed this a lot. There is no business plan with targets for schools or pupil numbers.

We recognise that the larger the trust the greater the combined resources and opportunities to develop programmes to support member schools. But grow too large, too fast and the trust could become difficult to run effectively. The aim is for sustainable growth, always ensuring the trust has the capacity to integrate new schools properly.

It is worth noting that the DfE suggests that 3,000 pupils is a threshold for sustainable trusts, which translates into adding several single form and/or two form entry primary schools, which feels too many.

Please also see A35.

**Q46.** Would Stoke Trust ever consider becoming a multiple academy trust? Sponsoring under-performing schools brings more money into the Trust so would this be appealing?

**A46.** Stoke Education Trust is already a multi academy trust since it has four member schools. Please also see A34 and A35 above regarding sponsoring schools.

**Q47.** What level of staff engagement was there before the proposal went ahead, what input did they have on that decision and do they fully support that decision, what if they don't want to TUPE over? Staff changes have been significant in the last couple of years so staff motivation for this proposal is important. Are there any teachers that would rather remain as the school is now?

**A47.** Governors recognise that a motivated, happy, supported staff are essential to good school. We have made every effort to reassure staff about the impact on them including organising a 'private' meeting with staff from other Stoke Education Trust where they could ask any questions. Please see also A39-41 regarding consultation with staff.

It is worth noting that staff and parent are represented on the Governing Body that made the decision to consult upon the proposal.

**Q48.** What impact will this have on class size, school hours, terms times and subjects - will anything change?

**A48.** It will have no impact and any future changes will continue to be within the delegated authority of the Local Governing Body unless the steps are contrary to law or regulation or the school is under-performing.

**Q49.** Will staff travel to other schools and our classes be taught by alternative teachers?

**A49.** No. Teachers will be contracted to work in individual schools.

At the consultation meeting the question was asked. *If the schools are working together could specialist teachers come in to teach in our school?* The following response was given. "Primary teaching is very much based on a single teacher teaching their class pupils the range of subjects and topics. This helps with continuity for pupils and helps inter-connect the different parts of the curriculum. However, it is an interesting idea and if teachers felt it would be helpful it is something the Headteachers and CEO could look at."

**Q50.** If one school needed additional support or had long term sick, would we loan a teacher?

**A19.** The most effective approach for school improvement is based on support and challenge to its leaders and teachers rather than 'parachuting' good teachers. So, a teacher that was recognised as an excellent practitioner might support a colleague but they are highly unlikely to be teaching in that school.

Each school is responsible for managing sickness absence but in the case of long-term sick any movement between schools would be with the agreement of the staff member and the respective Headteachers.

**Q51. Do Ofsted checks still apply?**

**A20.** Ofsted will inspect each school individually as now. The judgement of one school will not affect the judgement of another school. Ofsted is testing trust-wide inspections where a number of member schools are inspected at the same time but that has tended to be used for much bigger multi academy trusts **Q21.**

**Q52. As academies have the right to set their own term times, can you confirm if there are plans to change term times if the academy conversion goes ahead?**

**A52.** There are no plans to change term times. Please see also A48.