



Dawpool C.E. (Aided) Primary School

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION REPORT

18th February 2022

Summary

This report has been prepared for the Governors of Dawpool CofE (Aided) Primary School and describes the consultation process that has taken place to inform a decision on the proposed conversion of the school into an academy as part of Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT).

The Headteacher and Governors of Dawpool CofE (Aided) Primary School have led the process, with support from CDAT. Representatives from the school have made clear the implications of conversion through the production of a consultation Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document with attached questionnaire, and at consultation meetings that took place on 24th January 2022.

Analysis of the information collected to date shows that stakeholders are broadly comfortable with the proposal for Dawpool CofE (Aided) Primary School to convert to academy status as part of CDAT. A number of questions and comments were collected at consultation events which show that the school's main stakeholders, i.e. staff, parents and carers have engaged in the process, researched information in addition to that provided by the school and articulated their views clearly to the Trust and school.

Governors have had a significant time to consider academy status and through their role have an understanding of the school, its systems and support that is not available to all members of the community.

The consultation period concluded on 11th February 2022 and Governors will now confirm whether they wish to move ahead with the academy conversion process.

1. Introduction

Representatives of Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT) met with the Governing Body of Dawpool CofE (Aided) Primary School to discuss CDAT, a multi-academy trust formed by the Diocese of Chester, which is an option for schools within the Diocese who are considering the Academy model.

As a consequence of this, and the continued debate and growth of academies in England, the Governing Body decided to look more closely into adopting the academy model and whether at this time it would be in the best interests of the children, teachers and staff at Dawpool CofE (Aided) Primary School.

The stakeholder engagement and consultation activities were designed to inform and seek comment and opinion on the proposed academy conversion from a range of interested parties most closely associated with the school. The key activities have included preparing and disseminating consultation materials, as well as holding virtual meetings. Underpinning the process has been a commitment to communicate with key stakeholders clearly and frequently as to timelines, process and outcomes.

The remainder of this report details the full range of engagement activities that have taken place and an analysis of the responses received and conclusions drawn from this analysis.

2. Aims of the Consultation

The consultation exercise had a number of strategic aims:

- To inform stakeholders of the scope of the proposal and provide information on both short and long-term implications and opportunities
- To ensure that a wide range of stakeholders were able to contribute their views and ideas and ask questions
- To collate and analyse the views put forward to inform consideration by the Governing Body

1. Consultation materials

a) PowerPoint presentations:

A series of PowerPoint presentations were developed for each audience to give all stakeholders consistent and relevant information as a starting point to inform the discussions.

Staff had an additional focus on staffing/HR issues and implications for them whereas the parents' consultation focused more on what it could mean for pupils as well as providing more information on Academy status.

Key areas covered in the presentations were:

- The rationale for conversion and the local proposal
- What are the key requirements to convert and the benefits and opportunities of converting to an Academy.
- Curriculum opportunities

- Staffing implications
- Financial considerations
- Legal implications for land, buildings and staff
- What happens next
- Questions & Answers

A copy of all the presentations can be found between Appendix 6 and 7.

b) Parents/ Carers Letter:

To support the parental consultation, a letter for all parents/carers was developed and sent out. The aim of the letter was to allow parents the opportunity of giving their thoughts about the school converting to Academy status and to raise any concerns they had.

Parents/ carers were given the opportunity of sending in feedback either by, email, online or in writing. Parents/ carers have contributed to the consultation via attending virtual meetings, email and online.

c) Stakeholder FAQ's:

A frequently asked questions document (see Appendix 3) was prepared for the parents/ carers consultation events. The aim was to give as much information as possible about all the practical things parents could want to know, ranging from whether there would be new uniforms to what it could mean for the pupils' learning experience. This document complemented with the presentation and question and answer session gave parents a thorough understanding of what an academy is and what it could mean for the school.

d) Online Survey

'Survey Monkey' was used as an online vehicle to gauge reaction to the proposal for the school to become an academy and to join CDAT. Stakeholders had the opportunity to respond anonymously. There was a space provided for any questions and comments.

3. Overview of the Engagement Process

The following table outlines the full range of engagement activities that have taken place.

| Date | Activity undertaken | Stakeholders engaged | Response / Number in Attendance |
|----------|--|--|---------------------------------|
| 14.10.21 | Draft consultation materials shared with Headteacher and feedback invited. | Headteacher | - |
| 05.11.21 | Draft consultation materials shared with Governors and feedback invited. | Governors | - |
| 10.11.21 | Draft consultation materials shared with Staff and questions invited. | Staff | |
| 13.01.22 | Online survey opens inviting stakeholders to anonymously leave questions or comments about the academy proposal. | All Stakeholders | 15 online responses received |
| 13.01.22 | Feedback forms inviting stakeholders to anonymously leave questions or comments about the academy proposal. | All Stakeholders | 2 email responses received |
| 11.01.22 | 1 copy of consultation letter & FAQ sent to parents/carers of all pupils via email | All parents and carers of current pupils in the school | - |
| 11.01.22 | 1 copy of consultation letter & FAQ delivered to all staff | All staff in the school (teaching and support) | - |
| 24.01.22 | Virtual Meeting with Staff | Staff | 18 Members of Staff |
| | Informal 'drop in' for Staff Q&A sessions with the Headteacher as follows: Monday 31st January 2022, 3:45-5:00pm Tuesday 1st February 2022, 3:45-5:00pm Thursday 3rd February 2022, 3:45-5:00pm | Staff | |

| | | | |
|----------|--|------------------|--------------------|
| 02.02.22 | Formal meeting with the Headteacher for all staff on Wednesday 2 nd February 2022 at 3:45pm | Staff | |
| 08.02.22 | Informal 'drop in' Q&A session with the Chair of Governors on Tuesday 8th February 2022 at 3:45pm. | Staff | |
| 24.01.22 | Virtual Open Meeting with Parents / Carers | Parents / Carers | 22 Parents/ Carers |

4. Feedback

An analysis of the feedback received from survey forms and responses provided at the virtual consultation meetings is provided as follows:

NB: Full Questions and responses of meetings are available in Appendix 5.

- 22 parents attended the virtual open meeting and the questions raised indicated that parents/carers were generally well-informed and engaged in the process of academy conversion. They were very interested in learning more about CDAT and how the decision was made to select CDAT. It can be deduced from this that this part of the engagement process was robust and that all those who wished to were able to express their opinions and raise questions openly and freely throughout the meeting.
- There has been a low response rate of respondents completing the online survey; a total of 15 respondents completed the online survey. 2 respondents completed the feedback form and sent this via email.
- The responses/ questions received via the feedback forms have been responded to in Appendix 5.
- During the consultation meeting with staff, a number of questions were asked relating to reasons for converting to an academy and the protection of staff terms and conditions on conversion.
- During the consultation meeting with parents/carers, questions were raised regarding the curriculum, financial implications and the impact on children and the school.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The consultation with key stakeholders has been comprehensive. There was a good attendance at both staff and parent/carer meetings. Although there has been a low response rate to the online survey, there has been a genuine interest for more information about what plans to convert to academy status would mean for the school and its pupils.

All engagement meetings held on 24th January 2022 facilitated open discussion about a wide range of implications of academy status. Questions received by the school and Academy Trust showed a high level of engagement and understanding by stakeholders. No significant concerns were recorded either at meetings or through the feedback forms made available. Any concerns raised were addressed fully by the school and Trust.

A higher response rate from all stakeholders would have been advantageous for the Governing Body in terms of decision-making. However, it could be deduced from the low response rate that stakeholders are comfortable with the proposal and do not have significant concerns that they wish to raise.

In conclusion, it is recommended that the school and CDAT build upon the support of parents/carers, staff and pupils shown throughout the consultation period by involving these groups of stakeholders in the development of the school as an academy.

CDAT and school governors will continue to engage with staff and trade union representatives throughout the academy conversion process.

6. Next Steps

There is a full Governor meeting scheduled on the 3rd March 2022 where Chris Penn, Director of Education for the Chester Diocesan Board of Education will also be in attendance. This meeting will provide an opportunity for Governors to discuss the views put forward during the consultation to aid them in the decision-making process and decide what their next steps should be in this process.

Appendices (see separate files):

1. Parents/Carers Letter
2. Staff Letter
3. Stakeholder/ Staff academy Frequently Asked Questions
4. Feedback Form
5. Engagement Questions & Answers
6. Staff Presentation
7. Parents/Carers Presentation