



Reach4 Academy Trust  
INSPIRING BEYOND MEASURE

## ACADEMY CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

### BYRON WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL



A meeting has been arranged to discuss the contents of this document. We have attempted to arrange a suitable time for this meeting to give parents/carers the opportunity to be involved with the consultation. We hope you are able to attend the session we have organised.

**Tuesday 14 June 2016**

**Meeting in the School Hall with IEB Members**

#### **How to contact us...**

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*Please note:* LA means “Local Authority”, which for us is **Sheffield Local Authority**



## Academy Consultation

The IEB of Byron Wood Primary School is considering the conversion of the school to an academy. The Principal and staff are committed to delivering outstanding opportunities for learning and have already taken strides to ensure that the school continues to improve and enable its pupils every chance of success. The IEB members, along with the Department for Education, consider that sponsored academy status could ensure that those improvements are built on and sustained most effectively. As part of the Members' discussions with the Department for Education, the **Reach4 Academy Trust** has been identified as a possible sponsor and a good match for our school. Further information about the Reach4 Academy Trust and its principles can be found towards the end of this document.

In brief here are some facts about Reach4, the academy sponsor:

1. Reach4 is an Academy Trust founded by **Reach2 Academy Trust**, the largest Primary Academy Trust in England; it is a non-profit making organisation, is not religious and does not have business sponsors or shareholders.
2. It was founded by Sir Steve Lancashire, who is still is the Executive Headteacher of Hillyfield Primary Academy, an 'outstanding' primary in Waltham Forest.
3. They are passionate about school improvement focused on Learning and Teaching.
4. Schools in their Academy trust are very varied, retain their own identities and keep to local admission rules. They are very focused on schools being part of their local communities; this is very much what we are as a school. You may wish to look at their website [www.reach4.org.uk](http://www.reach4.org.uk)

In April 2016 in a meeting of the IEB, Members took the decision to apply to the Department for Education for an academy order for the Department for Education's formal decision in principle as to whether they would permit the school to become an academy and join Reach4 Academy Trust.

An academy order is not a final decision to proceed with conversion but is the Department for Education's confirmation that this option is available to us. Members of the IEB therefore wish to start consulting on the question "Should Byron Wood Primary School become an academy within the Reach4 group?" to hear the views of all stakeholders. The Members want to ensure that they consider all such views before making a final decision as to whether or not to proceed.

Academies are state funded schools independent of Local Authority control – in other words the funding comes from Central Government straight to the School and the pupils, without first going via the Local Authority. Academies are also all-ability, non-selective (assuming there is no selection presently, as is the case with our school), non-fee paying schools in the same way that Byron Wood Primary School currently is.

So that you can find out more about the academies programme, the reasons why the (IEB) are planning on changing the status of the school and some of the common concerns about academies, we have developed this Consultation Document. We hope it will help you to understand the change of status and the role that our sponsor, Reach4, will play at this important time in the school's development. It has been organised under the topics that we think will be the most important factors in helping you to form your opinion.

These are:



1. **The Consultation Process - how you can have your say**
2. **The main reasons for the LGB's proposal**
3. **Considerations about becoming an academy**
4. **Information about the academies programme, including:**
  - Finance
  - Special Educational Needs (SEN), EHC plans and Equality Impact assessment
  - Admissions and Term Dates
  - Governance
  - Building and Emergency Contingency Plans.

**If you need any help in translating or understanding this document, then please contact the office where we will make arrangements to help you**

## **The Consultation Process—how to have your say**

The consultation process, agreed by the Local Governing Body (IEB), has been designed to gather as wide a range of views as possible. It is important you have your say, as your views will influence how the academy is managed and organised.

### **Who we will consult with?**

We will seek the views of:

- ★ Pupils
- ★ Parents/carers
- ★ Staff and their trade union representatives
- ★ Local schools
- ★ The Local Authority
- ★ Local councillors
- ★ Any other interested parties

### **How can I share my views?**

Emails should be addressed to: [enquiries@byronwood.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@byronwood.co.uk) Letters should be marked “Private and Confidential - Academy Proposal” and handed in to the School Office. All correspondence will be acknowledged (unless, of course, it is anonymous).

**A Meeting specifically to discuss the conversion** will be held during a coffee event on Tuesday 14 June at 14.30, when you will be able to raise any questions direct with IEB Members and the Principal.

This will be an opportunity to:

- ★ hear why our IEB took this decision
- ★ ask questions and/or raise concerns
- ★ Share your views on the proposal.

During this time, the IEB plan to hold meetings with staff and their union representatives.

**Consultation documentation will be posted on the school website at [www.byronwood.co.uk](http://www.byronwood.co.uk)**

### **How long will the consultation period last?**



The consultation period began on 20 May 2016 and will last until 28 June 2016 at 5pm. The target conversion date is **1st August 2016**.

## **Main reasons for the Interim Executive Board's Proposal**

The IEB's primary function is to ensure that Byron Wood Primary School delivers the best possible education for its pupils and their families. The academies programme may offer a number of significant benefits that could support the school's drive for continuous improvement and the LGB members feel duty bound to explore this opportunity.

These benefits include:

### **Freedoms**

Becoming an academy would allow our school leaders greater freedom to innovate. For example, free from the requirement to follow the National Curriculum, the school would be empowered to develop a dynamic curriculum designed to meet the need of its own pupils.

### **Greater flexibility to purchase services**

As an academy, the school would receive resources previously retained by the LA to run its services – about 10% of its overall budget. Although the school would still need to purchase a number of services, IEB members would welcome the freedom to “shop around” to achieve best value.

### **A different relationship with the Local Authority**

The IEB members view the academies programme as an opportunity to enter into a new and potentially exciting relationship with Sheffield Local Authority. Although independent, the school would seek to work in partnership with Sheffield Local Authority.

## **Considerations about becoming an Academy**

Some people still have concerns around academy status. These include:

### **Potential changes to staff conditions**

Generally, unions remain against the programme because they fear the freedoms given to academies could impact on school staff in the longer term. They also worry that if hundreds of schools become academies, there will be less opportunity for collective negotiations to secure the best working conditions and pay scales for school workers. Although academies do have the freedom to adopt their own conditions of work for staff, the IEB members have no intention of moving away from the national pay and conditions.

### **Two-tier school system**

Another concern that some people have is that academies will create a potentially divisive two-tier schools service. It is thought that if hundreds of schools become academies, they will be seen as more attractive schools than non-academy schools and, therefore, become more popular with parents and possibly receive better funding from Government. An argument in favour of all schools remaining within their local authorities is that the LA can ensure schools are equally well supported and fairly funded.

### **Increased risks**

The IEB does acknowledge that there are risks associated with becoming an academy: Change of this nature will occupy the IEB members and leadership team of Byron Wood Primary School for some time. However, the school has a good track record of managing change and IEB members are



confident that the conversion process could be effectively managed by school leaders. IEB members also propose to carry out a full impact assessment if the decision to convert is taken so that they can quickly respond to any potential difficulties resulting from academy conversion. By converting with Reach4, we would have the support of their experienced team who would be on hand to ensure that the process runs as smoothly as possible.

Some staff may feel unsettled by this process of change. However, we believe this risk would be offset by the increased professional development opportunities for staff.

## **Admissions and Term Dates**

Admissions criteria and catchment areas are set by Sheffield Local Authority. The Local Authority (LA) criteria for allocating school places where there are more applicants than places available in a school are:

1. Looked After or Previously Looked After Children
2. Catchment area with sibling
3. Catchment area
4. Siblings who do not live in catchment area

Term dates are set centrally by the LA. Schools have little or no discretion in changing those dates.

### **What would happen if Byron Wood Primary School becomes an academy?**

If Byron Wood Primary School becomes an academy, it would continue to be bound by the national admissions code, would continue to be part of Byron Wood co-ordinated admissions and envisages no changes to criteria.

The academy would have the power to set its own term dates if it chose to do so. However, it is highly unlikely that the IEB at the school would choose to set term dates which did not match local schools.

Should the IEB wish to deviate from Sheffield Local Authority term dates in the future, it would undertake a full consultation process prior to any change.

## **Building and Emergency Contingency Plans**

### **What effects would becoming an academy have on the building?**

Reach4 Academy Trust would seek a 125 year lease from Byron Wood Primary School as per the DfE model for all community schools.

### **What happens if something happens to the building when we become an Academy?**

There would be a General Annual Grant that would be paid by the Government to the Academy Trust. This would cover the normal running costs of the academy including: repairs; servicing and maintenance of buildings (including redecoration, heating, plumbing, lighting, etc); maintenance of grounds (including boundary fences and walls); cleaning materials and contract cleaning; water and sewage; fuel and light (including fuel oil, solid and other fuel, electricity and gas); rents and rates; purchase, maintenance, repairs and replacement of furniture and fittings; and insurance.

If the academy building suffers damage, which means that it cannot be used as a school, Sheffield Local Authority would be required to provide facilities for the children to continue their education.



This is the same requirement that the Council currently has because its duty is to provide for the children and not the Academy Trust.

### **Would there be a specific insurance grant to cover for emergencies?**

Academies are required to cover insurance at specified minimum levels of cover. They are also eligible to seek an Earmarked Annual Grant from the EFA (Education Funding Agency) for emergencies, in the same way that an LA can pay a maintained school a contingency payment.

### **By becoming an Academy, would the School's building be more or less likely to be upgraded?**

In the same way that Local Authorities have a capital building programme, there will be an academies building programme. If Byron Wood Primary School's need for capital investment was prioritised and met agreed criteria, it could be earmarked for investment. However, becoming an academy would not guarantee capital investment.

## **Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Equality Impact Assessment**

### **What happens now?**

Byron Wood Primary School has responsibility for assessing pupils and maintaining their Statements of SEN or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) of the school has a responsibility to identify pupils that might need additional help and then work with a range of school staff and outside agencies to develop an individual education programme that will help.

The LA has responsibility for pupils with Statements and EHC plans. They have to:

- ★ ensure that pupils are appropriately assessed and statemented/issued with an EHC plan where necessary
- ★ fund any individually assigned SEN resources
- ★ monitor arrangements for SEN pupils in academies
- ★ conduct reviews of the Statements or EHC plans of children in academies at least annually.

The school has to comply with the Admissions Code and any SEN obligations set by the LA. It also has an obligation to consider the impact of potential discrimination on groups by the decisions it makes.

### **What will happen if Byron Wood Primary School becomes an academy?**

The school would still have to comply with the Admissions Code, the special educational needs and disability code of practice and any SEN obligations. The LA would retain responsibility for pupils with Statements / EHC plans in an academy on the same basis as for such pupils in maintained schools.

They would still have to:

- ★ ensure that academy pupils are appropriately assessed and statemented/issued with an EHC plan where necessary
- ★ consider parents' representations for an academy to be named on a Statement or in an EHC plan and act reasonably in considering those representations
- ★ fund any individually assigned SEN resources
- ★ monitor arrangements for SEN pupils in academies
- ★ conduct reviews of the Statements and EHC plans of children in academies at least annually
- ★ monitor SEN provision and educational psychology services in the school



- ★ fund pupil referral units
- ★ fund education for permanently excluded pupils.

There are obligations on schools that convert to academies equivalent to those placed on maintained schools. In practical terms, this would require new academies to:

- ★ inform parents that their child has SEN and the special educational provision being made
- ★ an unqualified obligation to admit a child to the school if the school is named in the Statement or EHC plan
- ★ appoint a qualified teacher as SEN Coordinator (SENCO) and ensure that any new SENCO would undertake prescribed training.

As academies are classed as state-funded independent schools, the LA should consider representations to attend the school from parents/carers of SEN children, just as it would for any other maintained school. The academy would continue to have an obligation to consider the impact of potential discrimination on groups by the decisions it makes.

Academies are required by their funding agreements to consent to being named in a child's Statement unless they can demonstrate that admitting the child would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children and that there are no reasonable steps they could take, together with the LA, to prevent the incompatibility.

If Byron Wood Primary School becomes an academy, the IEB members would retain the ethos of inclusion throughout which there is a commitment to providing the best possible education for the young people of all abilities and backgrounds from our community. Whilst the IEB members are not aware that becoming an academy would discriminate against or disadvantage any group of children or staff, it will nevertheless be carrying out an equality impact assessment and would like to hear your views.

#### **Things to think about:**

- ★ Do I believe that if Byron Wood Primary School converts to an academy, it would continue to provide SEN services for the community?
- ★ Do I think that becoming an academy would discriminate against or disadvantage any group of children or staff?

If Byron Wood Primary School was an academy, it would receive the appropriate statement funding for individual children and a share of funding for other provision in relation to SEN including: behaviour support services; licences and subscriptions (for instance for software); therapies and other health related, education and welfare services.



## Finance

### What happens now?

Central Government, through the DfE provides Local Authorities (LA) with a sum of money each year known as the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The LA uses this grant to:

- ★ fund nursery provision in their area
- ★ fund individual school budgets
- ★ provide a range of services for schools such as free school meals entitlement, education welfare services and special educational needs services.

The LA is responsible for setting its own formula for determining each school's fair share of the total money delegated to schools – it does this with the involvement of Schools Forum (a body that includes school stakeholders).

After the LA has taken some of the money (or top-sliced), the remainder is given to the school to be spent on things such as staff salaries, computer equipment, books, heating, building maintenance and cleaning.

The DfE also provides a range of grants to LAs, some of which are for the LA to spend on services that support education and some of which are to be passed on to schools for them to decide how best to spend it. The two most important grants for schools are known as the **Schools Standards Grant** and the **Schools Development Grant**. The LA funds the additional support required for children with Statements of Special Educational Need or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. Byron Wood Primary School has full use of its premises, and Reach4 Academy Trust will become the new owner all of the school's buildings and land.

The money paid to the school is accounted for in a set of accounts prepared by office staff. A special committee of the IEB members, called the Finance Personnel and Premises committee, is accountable for how the money is spent and for making sure that the accounts are accurate. The school's accounts can be inspected by the LA at any time.

### What happens if Byron Wood Primary School becomes an academy?

Academies are funded by the DfE through the Education Funding Agency (EFA). If Byron Wood Primary School becomes an Academy, the EFA would provide it with a General Allocation Grant (GAG) made up of two components:

- ★ **Core funding** which is exactly the same as the school would have received from the LA using its funding formula
- ★ **Educational Services Grant (ESG)** which would be Byron Wood Primary School's share of the money, based on pupil numbers, which the LA currently top-slices and spends centrally on those services that the academy would now be responsible for.

The ESG is the additional money that Byron Wood Primary School would receive in comparison to an LA maintained school. On receipt of this money and working with the sponsor, the school will need to decide how and where to buy the services that it needs and which are currently supplied by the LA, it may also choose to purchase from the LA. The academy may be able to get those services less expensively than the LA currently charges (by being part of a larger group), or it may have to pay more for them. Because the school would be buying services directly, the quality of the services it receives could improve. In addition, the academy would receive School Standards Grants and School



Development Grant in the same way as a maintained school. The LA also continues to fund support for children with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

The LA would no longer have the right to inspect the academy's accounts at any time. Instead, the academy's accounts would form part of Reach4's group account which would be audited by a firm of accountants at least yearly.

If Byron Wood Primary School becomes an academy, the IEB members would undertake to ensure that the terms and conditions for all existing staff remain at least as good as those for staff in equivalent posts in schools that are still bound by national and local agreements. Also, the school buildings and equipment would be owned by a special type of charity called a trust or would be part of a leasing arrangement from the LA. This is described in the Governance section of this document.

## **Governance**

### **Who are the Local Governing Body?**

Governance is about how the school operates and ensures a good quality of education for all its pupils, including those with special needs.

### **What happens now?**

Byron Wood Primary School IEB members bring a range of experience and interests from many walks of life. They work closely with others to make good decisions about school aims and policies. Members work as a team of volunteers who are responsible for making sure the school provides a good quality of education. They do this together with the Headteacher, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. The number of Members may vary depending on the school's type or size.

### **What would happen if Byron Wood Primary School becomes an academy?**

Reach4 Academy Trust (a charitable company limited by guarantee) and its board of Trustees would be responsible for the running of the academy. The Academy Trust would enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for the funding of the academy. The Academy Trust and its board of trustees would have a strategic role in running the academy.

The Academy Trust would become the direct employers of staff, have direct health and safety responsibilities, be the academy's admission authority and be responsible for ensuring that the Academy's finances undergo an external financial audit.

The Academy would also have a new Local Governing Body which would be made up individuals drawn from the school community.

The role of a Local Governing Body includes the following:

- ★ to provide advice to the trustees of the Academy Trust on the functioning of the academy;
- ★ to continually review the overall effectiveness of the academy and to make suggestions for improvement;
- ★ to offer challenge and support to the Principal and
- ★ to provide a key link between the academy, our parents and the wider community.



### **Things to think about:**

Would academy governance arrangements be more or less effective than the current arrangements?

## **Reach4 Principles**

Reach4 is an independent multi-academy trust (MAT) that benefits as a member of the established family of REACH multi-academy trusts.

Reach4 Academy Trust ([www.reach4.org.uk](http://www.reach4.org.uk)) was launched in January 2016. Led by CEO Libby Nicholas, Reach4 has been established as part of the 'Northern Power House' initiative to contribute to raising educational standards in primary and secondary schools in the Midlands and North of England. While the heart of Reach4 is in the Midlands and North of England, it will operate secondary academies where there are REACH2 primaries and will have a national footprint. An aspiration of the REACH family is to deliver an all through 2- 18 education for children and young people. The Reach4 mission, 'Inspiring Beyond Measure', reflects REACH's approach that an exceptional education is rich and empowering beyond the narrow confines of formal examination success.

### **Reach4 makes a commitment to each pupil that they will be successful in:**

- ★ Effective numeracy and literacy;
- ★ The ICT skills required by a technologically advancing world;
- ★ Appreciation of, and ability to express themselves through music, visual and performing arts;
- ★ Social skills - the development of friendships, trust and a sense of community.

### **And will:**

- ★ Believe in their own value, and have a desire to fulfil their individual potential;
- ★ Have respect for others, a sense of community and understanding of everyone's role within the school and outside;
- ★ Have a love of learning and a belief in the value of lifelong learning.

### **Reach4 will foster these skills and attitudes through:**

- ★ High expectations of all children and staff;
- ★ High standards of teaching and resources, both in the core curriculum and in music, technology, art and design;
- ★ Discipline based on self-respect and awareness of others;
- ★ The recognition and celebration of achievement;
- ★ A friendly, supportive, purposeful school community which values and looks after its members;
- ★ Strong links with the world beyond school and a sense of how individuals and communities can contribute to a better society.

Our Local Governing Body (IEB) has selected Reach4 to sponsor Byron Wood Primary School conversion to an Academy. This means that Reach4 could and would have to provide additional



intensive support over the next year to the school, to help it develop it into an outstanding centre of learning.