



**DARTMOUTH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DARTMOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND
NURSERY**

**Consultation on transforming
educational provision in Dartmouth**

An information and consultation event was held on Monday, 8 March 2010 at the Dart Centre, Dartmouth Learning Campus between 3 -5 p.m. and 5.30-7 p.m.

The event gave the opportunity to understand the statutory processes required to transform and reorganise education in Dartmouth and to discuss with officers the proposal for an All-through Academy, although a separate consultation would take place on the Academy proposal.

The event was well attended (72) comprising parents, staff, governors, union representatives and neighbouring schools.

The Director for Learning and Schools together with other County Council Officers representing Building Schools for the Future, School Organisation, Admissions including Transport and Choice Adviser, Finance, HR, Learning and Development Partnership, were present. Representatives from EACT and South Devon College also attended.

A summary of the matters raised and the advice given is as follows but the key messages from the Local Authority are:

- The expansion of the academies programme is key to the Government's mission of transformational change in educational opportunities across the country.

- The involvement of Sponsors challenges traditional thinking, they bring their particular ethos and vision and their objective is to drive up performance and improve outcomes for all students.
- Devon County Council is committed to providing a sustainable, successful and community facing school in Dartmouth and is fully supportive of an All-through Academy proposal.
- The Local Authority's responsibilities in terms of improving standards and monitoring effectiveness will remain unchanged.
- An Academy for Dartmouth will build on the successful federation of the schools and it is considered that sustainability will be secured through the involvement of the range of partnerships and the inclusion within the Building Schools for the Future programme.
- The change in legislation for post-16 requires that all young people will have access to learning that suits their needs and interest. The Local Authority will have new responsibilities from 1 April 2010 for maintaining an effective and coherent system of 14-19 provision and in line with local 14-19 strategic plans to deliver a wide range of options. The collaborative arrangements and partnerships being established will provide a wide range of options for the young people of Dartmouth.

Young People

The young people had been consulted through assemblies held at the College concerning the all-through academy proposal and the processes

that would be followed including further consultation on uniform, logo and the Academy name. Students were excited by the proposals but were concerned that the reputation of their school should improve. The pupils from the Community College had also submitted a story for the BBC School Report News Day. Assemblies were also held at the Primary School and the School Council representatives will be feeding back their views.

Parents

As stated above, it should be noted that a separate consultation will take place on the Academy but some of the questions raised are as follows:

The uncertainty on the All-through model and the impact on the schools and what will be different for parents. The All-through model will bring continuity of education, shared ethos, governance and resources. Further details can be found at: <http://www.innovation-unit.co.uk>

There was concern about pupil progress whilst changes take place and it was agreed that the parents would discuss their concerns with the Headteacher/lead Sponsor and get reassurance that progress will be maintained during the process of change.

The timescale was raised and it was explained that the statutory processes involved consultation on the closure of the two schools but was closely linked to the Academy proposal.

Some parents felt that the morale of staff appeared low. Uncertainty, anxiety and concern are understandable but some staff considered the move to Academy status together with the Building Schools for the Future programme would be an excellent opportunity to make radical changes and raise

aspirations for pupils, staff and the community.

With regard to SEN provision, Academies must have regard to the SEN Code of Practice and statutory guidance on inclusion. Pupils at the existing schools will automatically transfer to the Academy together with any additional support that is provided for them.

Parents were concerned that there may be a change in school hours and a change of uniform. Further details on the running of the Academy will be subject to consultation by the sponsors. Any costs for new uniform for existing parents will be met by the Sponsor.

It was confirmed that the same Admissions criteria and policy would apply. The Academy has the same incentive to keep class sizes from getting too large in order to improve standards. If application had been made for a year 7 place from September 2010 as a community school, a new preference could be expressed if parents felt the Academy was not their preferred option but may be subject to waiting list/appeal procedures. It should be emphasised that the County's Admissions Team remain completely impartial and will continue to assist parents and pupils on their options.

With regard to transport, the Local Authority will remain responsible for transport provision according to policy. Transport would not be provided by the LA from the river to school unless previously provided but parents could raise this with the School.

Governors

There was concern that current Governors would not be involved in selection of new Governing Body and expertise would be lost.

The existing Governing Body would be dissolved and a new Governing Body would take over. The Lead Sponsor would lead on the appointments and the regulations permitted a suggested structure of 1 Parent, 1 Local Authority member, 1 Teacher and Academy partner representatives.

Staff

Staff who transfer to the Academy will continue to have access to the Teachers Pension Scheme/Local Government Pension Scheme as appropriate, although an Academy can offer an alternative. For those staff who transfer, continuous service will be unaffected and pension contributions are aggregated. EACT have indicated that they will employ transferring and future staff under national terms and conditions. With regard to actuarial reduction of pension, teachers are advised to look at the Teachers' Pensions website at http://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/members/members_addv.htm

Staff were advised to attend a staff meeting which will be held before the end of term.

TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) legislation applies but if staff do not wish to transfer to an Academy they would in effect be resigning. There is not an entitlement to be redeployed elsewhere within Devon County Council.

With regard to working across year groups in an all-through school, the School would need to consider skills and expertise of staff but this could bring professional development opportunities.

Consultation Process

How consultation is carried out is not prescribed in regulations and it is therefore not mandatory to hold

consultation meetings. Devon County Council has, however, determined that it is good practice to keep stakeholders informed by holding information events, where appropriate, at appropriate local venues to give the opportunity for personalised and individual discussion with various officers from the County Council. The events are widely publicised and the consultation period is approximately six weeks to allow for responses to be received and to be considered by Devon County Council's Cabinet, which take into account these responses when making a decision. This has worked well at a number of consultation events. For this reason it is not appropriate to hold a ballot. Our information booklets give as much information as possible on a proposal and our website is regularly updated on the current position.

All trade unions are of course provided with the information on all proposals to allow them to respond. The NUT and NASUWT held a separate consultation event on the 16 March 2010.

Academy Proposal

For clarification the schools land is held on trust. Where a Trust is removed but the school continues, all publicly funded land is transferred to the Governing Body of the school. When a Trust is closed and being discontinued those persons holding land for the purposes of the school are required to apply to the Secretary of State to decide what should happen to any land used by the school that has been provided, acquired or enhanced at public expense. The Secretary of State's powers enable him to:

- Require the land to be transferred to the LA

- Allow the Governing Body/Trustees/Foundation Body to retain the land
- Require the land to be transferred to another maintained school.

He also has the power to require the payment of compensation where he considers it is appropriate.

The Academy Sponsor (EACT) will be holding separate consultation between March and June 2010 on their proposal, the format as yet to be agreed. The following matters were raised by parents/staff who did not have the opportunity to speak to the lead Sponsor (EACT) and may wish to raise at the further consultation events:

- What will look different for parents when the Academy is up and running?
- What will feel different from the teachers and staff's perspective?
- What have Academies produced in results?
- How will the Academy raise standards?
- Will the Academy continue liaison with small feeder schools and be a key player in the Local Learning Community?
- What do sponsors gain from sponsoring an academy?

If you wish to respond to the present consultation you can do so :

- On-line at www.consultationfinder.com/devon
- In writing to:
Karen Crockwell,
School Organisation Administrator
CYPS Directorate
Room 120, County Hall
Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QG.
- Email: schoolconsultations@devon.gov.uk

Deadline: 5 p.m. 6 April 2010.