

March 2017

Dear Parents, Carers and Members of the High Storrs Community

I recently wrote to you to outline the Governing Board's recent work around academisation and to update you on the choices available to High Storrs School moving forward.

There are now very few Local Authority (LA) maintained community secondary schools in Sheffield. In addition to High Storrs only two other secondary schools remain LA maintained. The only options now available are to work with a family of schools as part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT); either to join an existing MAT or to form a new one.

Academies are independent of the LA but are still state-funded; receiving funding directly from central government. The day-to-day running of the school is by the head teacher, but they are overseen by individual charitable bodies called Academy Trusts. Schools within a MAT share good practice, support improvements across the family of schools and there are likely to be economies of scale when buying in services etc.

It is still the government's stated aim that all schools will become academies. Although the time scale on which this will happen is unclear, the number of options and potential partners will only decrease with time. The Governing Board feel it is advantageous for the school to academise now while some choice remains. This will allow us to protect the unique characteristics and ethos of our school which could be threatened if we were compelled to join a large MAT at a later date.

The Governing Board are currently discussing possible MAT structures with local primary and secondary schools and also schools from across Sheffield. Once the optimum grouping has been identified we will share details with you. The driving aim of these considerations is to ensure that the special character of our school is maintained and that we retain as much local autonomy as possible.

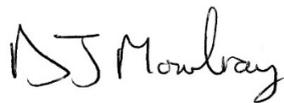
I know that my previous letter sparked some discussion in school and, I am sure, in the wider community. With that in mind the Governing Board and school leadership are keen to hear all views and answer questions. This forms part of the formal consultation process that we are required to hold before any decision is made. To be clear, we have not yet determined the next steps but are mindful that there will be concerns and even fears about any action the school may take. Equally, there will be those in our community that are keen to hear more about the opportunities afforded to the school by converting to academy status via joining or creating a MAT.

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There is now a section on the school website that includes responses to frequently asked questions (www.highstorrs.co.uk/content/Academisation-Consultation/43). If you have other questions you would like to raise or any comments you would like to share then please email them to enquiries@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk with 'Academisation Consultation' in the subject box. You can also post questions to the school; please address envelopes to the Head Teacher and mark 'Academisation'. We will post comments and questions received along with answers on the website as quickly as possible.

Please indicate with your questions / comments your name and category of stakeholder (parent/carer, student, staff, community). We cannot take anonymous responses into account.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DM Mowbray". The initials "DM" are written in a stylized, cursive font, followed by the name "Mowbray" in a similar cursive script.

David Mowbray
Chair of Governors