

**REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION
ON THE PROPOSAL FOR EARLHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY
STATUS
AND JOIN THE EKO TRUST**

1. Background

The Governing Body of Earlham Primary School decided in March 2017 to consult upon the proposal to convert to academy status and join the Eko Trust. This decision came after a rigorous investigation of academy status by the Governing Body including investigation of other multi-academy trusts.

The Academies Act 2010 requires the Governing Body to carry out a formal consultation on this proposal. This report describes the consultation activities undertaken by the Governing Body, the feedback from this activity and makes a recommendation about the outcome of consultation.

2. Purpose of Consultation

It is recognised by the Secretary of State and the DfE that the Governing Body and leadership team of a school is best placed to assess the benefits of academy status and to decide whether it is appropriate for their school. Therefore, the purpose of consultation is for the Governing Body to present the proposal to stakeholders, to gather feedback on the proposal and to understand the level of stakeholder interest, support and objection. The Governing Body can then determine whether there is any significant stakeholder objection to academy status that would cause them to reconsider.

The Academies Act 2010 sets out clearly the duty to consult with 'appropriate stakeholders' and the Governing Body took their responsibility to consult extensively very seriously. This consultation is separate from the statutory TUPE consultation to be led by NPW on behalf of Newham Council as the current employer of staff.

3. Consultation proposal

For Earlham Primary School to convert to academy status and join the Eko Trust.

4. Consultation Process

The academy consultation ran from Monday, April 24th until Friday, May 22nd, a period of four (4) academic weeks.

Consultation Objectives

To enable the Governing Body to decide whether to proceed with the proposal to convert to academy status and join the Eko Trust, having consulted with stakeholders

- To present the proposal to stakeholders
- To gather stakeholder feedback on the proposal and understand the level of stakeholder interest, support and objection

A summary of the consultation plan identifying the different stakeholders, how those stakeholders were consulted and what information was to be provided, is on the next page.

The range of consultation documents and information were published on the school website with the URL <http://www.earlham.newham.sch.uk/>

Consultation Audiences, Activities and Timings

#	Audience	Considerations	Key activities	Key timings
1	Governing Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors will vote in principle to convert to academy status and join Eko Trust Consultation needs to establish whether there is any significant objection that would make them re-consider 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Governing Body agreement to consult Governing Body meeting to consider consultation report and vote whether to proceed with conversion 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gateway #1 Mar 22nd Gateway#2 June 7th
2	Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal staff concern will be about protection of T&Cs and pension Need to involve unions in TUPE transfer Staff will have opportunity to check a Statement of Employment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Letter and FAQs to be sent to all staff at start of academy consultation Consultation meeting with staff Survey form distributed after meeting Feedback from meetings published 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> April 24th May 8th 3.30pm Within 3 days after meeting
3	Unions and Professional Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good practice to involve unions in academy consultation Statutory responsibility to consult with unions and professional associations on transfer of staff under TUPE – summer 2017 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Invitation to attend staff meeting to be sent Union consultation meeting pre-staff meeting Follow up to union questions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> April 24th May 8th 2.30pm Within 3 days after meeting
4.	Parents & carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of parental engagement with the school and likely interest/concern with academy conversion unknown. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Letter and consultation information to be sent to all parents at start of academy consultation Consultation meeting with parents Survey form distributed after meeting Feedback from meetings published 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> April 24^t May 11th 2.15pm and 6.00pm; May 12th 9.00am Within 3 days after meeting
5	Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unless changes to name of school or uniform are anticipated no formal need to consult 	Assembly by Headteacher to explain to children	1. TBC
6	Other stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local MPs and Councillors reaction unknown 	Letter to be sent to MP, Local Councillors and Community Leaders	1. April 24 th
7	Headteachers of other local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views of other local Headteachers unknown 	Courtesy letter from Headteacher and Chair	1. April 24 th

5. Consultation meetings

5.1 Parent consultation meetings

Meetings were held at school for parents and carers on Thursday 11th May, 2017 at 2.15pm and 6.00pm. and also on Friday 12th May at 9.00am. A total of 25 parents attended across the 3 meetings.

In attendance were the following: Laura Hewer (Headteacher), Rebekah Iiyambo (CEO of the Eko Trust) and Kai Muxlow (CFO of the Eko Trust). Meetings were well attended by governors: Father Christopher Owens came to both morning parent meetings, Julian Robinson (Chair of Governors) attended the evening parent meeting, as did Philip Cranwell, Project Manager.

Parents and carers asked a number of questions about the reasons for and benefits of the proposal, as well as more specific questions about strategy, teaching and learning, governance, finance, staffing and school management.

A combined Q&A document from these parent meetings is attached as appendix A.

5.2 Staff consultation meetings

The majority of teaching staff and support staff (48 out of a total of 57), attended the meeting on Monday, 8th May. Father Christopher Owens and Mrs Adil came to the staff meeting.

Their questions were broad-ranging and are listed in the Q&A document in appendix B.

6. Consultation surveys

6.1 Breakdown of survey response rates

A total of 32 questionnaires were received by the end of the consultation period, broken down by response to the proposal as below.

STAKEHOLDER	YES	MAYBE	NO	TOTAL
PARENTS & CARERS	7	1	1	9
TEACHERS	13	1	0	14
SUPPORT STAFF	7	1	1	9
TOTAL	27	3	2	32

- The parent/carer response rate is significantly below average for a primary school consultation at **2%**. *Note: Cranwell Consultancy uses total pupil numbers as the universe for parent/carer response rates.* This is based on a total of 9 responses from parents and carers from a total of 417 pupils attending the school.
- The response rate from teaching staff is average for a primary school consultation at around 61% based on 14 responses from a teaching staff of 23.
- The total number of support staff responses is equivalent to around **26%** of total support staff. This is based on 9 responses from a total of 34 support staff. This is a little lower than is usual for a primary school consultation.

6.2 Breakdown of survey responses

A number of points to be noted:

- 7 out of 9 of the parent responses responded YES, with one NO and one MAYBE. This would equate to a 78% YES response from the responses received. As a proportion of the total universe (ie total

pupil numbers of 417), those in support of the proposal represent **1.0%** of the population and those against represent less than **.01%** of the population.

- 13 out of 14 of the staff responses responded YES with one MAYBE and there were not any NO responses. This would equate to 93% of responses being favour with no-one against the proposal. As a proportion of the total universe (ie 23 total teaching staff) those in support of the proposal represent 57% of total teaching staff.
- 7 out of 9 members of support staff that completed a questionnaire responded YES. One member of support staff was against the proposal.

6.3 Written survey responses

A number of parents made positive references to the school and in particular the staff, for example, "Good staff, always available to talk," and, "I believe that my children feel safe in the school and are pastorally well supported". The parent who responded NO to the proposal asked for greater clarity on Earlham's contribution to the Trust central budget and how these funds would be used. This is addressed in Q24 of appendix A and has been published on the school website.

The response from teaching staff is supportive and enthusiastic both about the current work environment at Earlham and also the proposal. This is shown in comments such as: "Leadership is helpful and flexible", "Everyone is nice and supportive, like in a family" "...good support staff" and "fab SLT support". Regarding the proposal, staff were keen on the idea of working closely with other schools and developing their professional learning. This is shown in the following comments: "professional learning opportunities seem very interesting", "and "It will allow good outcomes for children and enable career progression and CPD".

Comments from support staff also praised the "great working atmosphere" and the fact that "everyone is friendly and welcoming". Regarding the proposal, one member of support staff commented: "staff will be able to learn from each other at different schools and develop their skillsets" The member of support staff who was against the proposal commented they did not support the proposal but could understand the reasons behind the proposal and added "I don't really believe in academies". This would indicate a general objection rather than specific to Earlham.

6.5 Consultation responses from Unions

Unions were invited to attend the staff meeting and representatives from NUT and GMB did attend. A formal meeting with unions will be arranged prior to the staff TUPE consultation meeting.

7. Consultation summary and recommendation

The consultation with the key stakeholders of Earlham Primary School has been comprehensive. Although the number of parent questionnaire responses was quite low, attendance at consultation meetings was good and parents were engaged in the process and asked a range of insightful questions.

Based on the 9 parents/carers that responded to the survey there is no significant objection to the proposal.

The majority of teachers attended the consultation meeting and responded to the consultation questionnaire. Staff have been supportive with no responses against the proposal. Among staff, therefore there is no significant objection to the proposal

Based on the 26% of support staff that responded there is no significant objection to the proposal.

Therefore, the Governing Body of Earlham Primary School are advised that the consultation has not demonstrated any significant objection that should cause them to reconsider the proposal for the school to become an academy and join the Eko Trust.

APPENDIX A: Q&A from the parent consultation meetings

APPENDIX B: Q&A from staff consultation meeting

APPENDIX A
ACADEMY CONSULTATION
FOR EARLHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS AND JOIN THE
EKO TRUST
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FROM PARENT & CARER MEETINGS

Introduction

Earlham Primary School ran parent and carer consultation meetings on Thursday May 11th, 2017 at 2.15pm and 6.00pm and Friday May 12th at 9.00am. A total of 25 parents attended over the three meetings.

This document is a summary of the questions asked at those meetings, the answers given and where helpful further answers have been added. The questions have been collated into themed sections.

A. STRATEGY, PLANNING & PROCESS

1. Are we definitely going to join the Eko Trust?

The Governing Body is considering the outcome of consultation on June 7th. If governors agree to proceed, it is expected that the decision will be announced and the consultation report published by the end of June.

2. Is it the government who wants us to join the Trust?

No. it is the school's decision.

3. Does the name of the school stay the same?

Earlham will still be known as Earlham Primary School but for official purposes it is now classed as an academy.

4. Who do we complain to when we have an issue?

You would follow the school's complaint procedure in the first instance. After that, if necessary, it would be escalated to the Trustees and the CEO for resolution. If still unhappy then the complainant can go to the Department for Education, Ofsted or the Education Funding Agency.

5. Did you look at other multi-academy trusts (MATs)?

Yes, the Governing Body explored different options and found the Eko Trust to best reflect the values of Earlham.

6. When is it going to take effect?

Ideally on September 1st, 2017, subject to approval by the Governing Body and completion of a set of legal tasks. Timings will also depend upon the new government's decisions following the June election.

7. Do you think schools are going to be forced to join MAT's in the future?

Current government policy encourages schools to convert to academy status and join or form a multi-academy trust. Any school that under-performs is vulnerable to being taken over by a sponsor whether Local Authority maintained or an academy. The purpose of the MAT is to enable schools to continue to improve and therefore reduce vulnerability.

8. Are we being forced to become an academy, thereby risking that people will not give 100% to something they don't necessarily believe in?

We are not being forced, but it is likely that over time we would need to consider becoming an academy. We would prefer to choose for ourselves and by choosing Eko we have an exciting opportunity to work with some great local schools.

9. How will it affect the way the school does things?

If the school converts to academy status and joins the Eko Trust things will outwardly look the same - the children will still be in their same uniform, being taught in in the same classrooms by the same teaching staff. We will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all our children.

We will however benefit from greater collaboration with other like-minded schools and our staff will benefit from increased training opportunities.

10. What are the benefits for Earlham?

Earlham is a successful school and this is largely due to the school's attitude to continuous improvement – always looking at ways of improving and developing further. This is an attitude shared by the other schools in the Eko Trust, and as a group of four like-minded schools, there will be greater opportunities to develop and improve outcomes for all children across the Trust.

11. What are the risks facing our school, particularly with cuts in funding?

The issue of funding cuts is the same for Local Authority maintained schools and academies. The Trust is working to minimise the impacts of funding cuts and are focussed on ensuring that frontline services are maintained.

B. Eko Trust

12. What does 'Eko' mean?

It is Uruba for 'learning'.

13. Do you have a minimum requirement for schools joining?

The criteria at present is that joining schools are good or outstanding. In future we will look to sponsor other schools, but only if we know this will not affect the schools already within the Trust. Any school that under-performs is vulnerable to being taken over by a sponsor whether Local Authority maintained or an academy. The purpose of the MAT is to enable the schools to improve and therefore reduce vulnerability.

14. What is the maximum number of schools you would have in a MAT?

There is no limit but for us it is not quantity that is important it is quality. We are interested in quality outcomes for all children across the trust.

15. When was the Eko Trust formed?

It was formed in November 2016 by three local schools, Kaizen Primary School, Gainsborough Primary School and Eleanor Smith School.

TEACHING, LEARNING & PERFORMANCE

16. Will you look at what other schools are doing and share what they are doing?

Yes, as a school we are always looking at how we can improve and look forward to sharing best practice with other schools. Importantly, we will also be able to learn from the work at the Teaching School (Kaizen Primary School).

17. Would SEN provision potentially be better?

Absolutely. In particular, we will benefit from the expertise at Eleanor Smith School, one of the founding schools of the Eko Trust. Eleanor Smith Special School is for pupils with Social, Emotional, Behavioural and Mental Health issues.

18. What happens if the Trust is underperforming?

It is the job of the Headteachers, through collaborating and working together to ensure that the Trust performs well. Individual Academies are inspected by Ofsted in the same way as maintained schools. The Secretary of State has announced that schools and academies judged to be '*Outstanding*' will no longer be subject to routine school inspection. The performance of all schools will continue to be monitored and if there are signs of deterioration, or other factors are a cause for concern, these could trigger an inspection. There are plans for MATs to be inspected but it is not clear whether this means all schools are inspected at the same time.

Current policy is that academies are not inspected for the first two years after conversion unless there are causes for concern.

C. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

19. How do you keep parent governors involved and the schools represented in the trust?

Each Local Governing Body will continue to have elected Parent Governors who in turn could be appointed as Trust Directors. Each school will have the right to a representative Director.

20. How will the CEO role be decided going forward?

Rebekah Iiyambo, Headteacher at Kaizen Primary School, is the current CEO and will hold this position for 18 months. After this, Trustees and Headteachers will together decide who amongst the Headteachers would take on the role subsequently.

21. Will our Headteacher still be in charge of our school?

Governors and Ms Hewer would continue to decide how Earlham is run with the vast majority of decisions still made locally.

Ms Hewer would be part of a leadership group with the other Headteachers, to be responsible for developing and implementing Trust plans for school-to-school support and collaboration.

D. FINANCE & PROPERTY

22. Where will the school's money come from as an academy?

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. They also receive extra funding to cover the additional costs of converting to academy status. The whole of the school budget would come direct to the school from central Government allowing the school to control the whole of their spending.

23. Will we have to start paying fees?

No. The only difference is that funding comes direct from the government to the school rather than via the London Borough of Newham.

24. What is the top slice, what does the school contribute to the MAT?

Each school manages its own school budget and contributes an agreed percentage towards the Trust Central budget. This central budget is used partly to fund MAT costs and also for shared services and contracts, for example the shared finance system and HR support.

25. If our school receives additional funding, would this have to be shared across the Trust?

No, any grants are specific to the school and will be retained by the school for the specific purpose for which it has been allocated.

E. STAFF & EMPLOYMENT

26. Will staff be guaranteed a job?

Yes, we will do everything we can to protect frontline staff. We recognise that having the best teachers and support staff is what makes the school successful.

27. Will there be a two tier workforce?

No, all staff across the Trust will be treated the same. They will all be employees of Eko Trust, rather than employees of the London Borough of Newham. Contracts will be uniform across the Trust. We also have a strong relationship with unions.

28. Would teachers be moved around a lot?

No, teachers will have opportunities for joint training and exchanging ideas with their peers in other schools in the Trust, but teachers will still be based in their own school.

29. Will we lose staff as a result of this change?

No. We have had separate consultations with staff and have found staff to be supportive and receptive to the proposal. We would not have got this far with the proposal if we felt it would have any detrimental impact on staff.

APPENDIX B
ACADEMY CONSULTATION
FOR EARLHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS AND JOIN THE
EKO TRUST
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FROM STAFF CONSULTATION MEETING

Introduction

Earlham Primary School held a staff consultation meeting on Monday, May 8th, 2017 at 3.30pm. A total of approximately 48 staff attended.

This document is a summary of the questions asked at those meetings, the answers given and where helpful further answers have been added.

1. Will there be universal policies across schools? Eg marking and curriculum policies?

Schools will have their own specific marking policy but there will be a review of best practice and if applicable a uniform policy may be rolled out across the Trust.

We have established a curriculum working party but recognise that each curriculum must be tailored to their community. We have found that around 30% of pupils need more support so the Trust may develop a common framework for that group.

2. Which policies are Trust-wide?

Statutory policies – for example, finance, employment, personnel, health & safety.

3. How is the CEO appointed and paid?

The CEO is appointed by Trustees on an 18 month interim basis and at a salary aligned to Headteacher salaries.

4. How long has the Eko Trust been in place?

The Eko Trust was formed in November 2016 by Kaizen Primary School, Eleanor Smith School and Gainsborough School. It is still very much in its infancy which allows Earlham to influence its growth.

5. Will term dates be the same?

Yes. We will continue to follow the LBN framework but with coordinated INSET days to allow for joint training opportunities.