



John Taylor High School

A Science & Leadership Academy

Conversion to Academy Status: The John Taylor High School Experience

9th February 2011

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Principal

Session Objectives

This 45 minute session will highlight:

- ▶ Academies: definitions, statistics, underpinning policy
- ▶ John Taylor High School: our context
- ▶ Making the Decision: Governance, hopes and fears
- ▶ The Conversion Process
- ▶ Moving forward

But first...A bit about me

- ▶ Joined John Taylor as Headteacher in January 2010
- ▶ Previously Deputy Headteacher in Cannock, where I steered the development of the first Trust schools in the County

I am not an evangelist for academies!



Academies are...

“...publicly funded independent schools that provide a first-class education.

Academies can benefit from greater freedoms to help you innovate and raise standards. These freedoms include

- ▶ freedom from local authority control**
- ▶ ability to set your own pay and conditions for staff**
- ▶ freedom from following the National Curriculum**
- ▶ ability to change the lengths of terms and school days.”**

(Source: Department for Education)

Quick Quiz!

How much do you know about
academies?

Context: The academies programme

- ▶ There are **currently 407 academies** open in England
- ▶ 371 secondary schools are now academies – **11% of all secondary schools** in England
- ▶ **204 academies have opened since September 2010** under the Coalition Government, with 46 opening last week alone. Of these, 136 were schools converting 'freely', and 68 were weaker schools that had been granted academy status under new sponsors to improve performance.
- ▶ At least one school has converted to become an academy every school day since September
- ▶ An additional **254 schools are in the pipeline**, with more applications being received every week
- ▶ 64 schools applied to become academies in the last week before Christmas alone
- ▶ It took four years to open the first 27 academies.
- ▶ There are currently **four academies open in Staffordshire.**

(Source: Staffordshire County Council)

Context: Policy

- ▶ All major parties re-enforced their commitment, in one way or another, to academies
- ▶ New government has committed to £6bn in public sector cuts for 2010/11, rising to £50bn by 2012/13
- ▶ Of this £6bn, £1.16bn will be sourced directly from Local Authority funding
- ▶ In education £650m to be saved this year: BECTA and GTC abolished, NCSL (£16m funding cut), QCDA abolished, no new primary curriculum, no new diplomas, no new HPSS
- ▶ Protection of 'front line' services will result in approx. 1% cut p.a. to school budgets (approx. £70 000 in the first year for JTHS)
- ▶ White Paper November 2010 and Education Bill January 2011 reflect the above.

Context: The Invitation



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0870 0012345 ministers@education.gsi.gov.uk

26 May 2010

Dear colleague

I am humbled and delighted that the Prime Minister has appointed me Secretary of State for Education in the new coalition Government. Nothing is more important for our country than getting education right. Schools are where we introduce our children to the best that has been thought and written and education is the process by which we enable every child to take control of their destiny, and to become author of their own life story. That's why the first thing I want to do is to thank you for your work. Teaching is the most important profession in the life of our nation.

I am deeply grateful for everything the teaching profession has already achieved. But I want to go further, both in improving schools and closing the gap between the richest and the poorest. A key principle behind this partnership Government is trusting professionals. That is why this Government will give you more power and control and will trust you to get on with the job.

Your views are extremely important to me. I would welcome your thoughts on how you believe we can raise attainment, particularly for the poorest children, and how we might enhance the prestige and status of the teaching profession. If you would like to get in contact please contact me at feedbackto ministers@education.gsi.gov.uk.

The Queen's Speech sets out our intention to allow more schools to benefit from Academy freedoms and our aim to open up the Academies programme to primary, secondary and special schools. We specifically want to provide opportunities for outstanding schools to open as Academies as early as September 2010.

As your school is currently rated outstanding by Ofsted this means it would automatically meet the criteria to apply for Academy status. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you and your Governing Body to consider acquiring academy freedoms, which include:

Department for
Education

Schools that are rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted will be fast tracked through the process. The first tranche of these academies will open in September 2010 and schools that become academies will enjoy:

- freedom from local authority control
- the ability to set their own pay and conditions for staff
- freedom from following the National Curriculum
- greater control of their budget
- greater opportunities for formal collaboration with other public and private organisations
- freedom to change the length of terms and school days
- freedom to spend the money the local authority currently spends on their behalf

A Changing Landscape?





About John Taylor High School

- ▶ Mixed, LA-controlled, comprehensive
- ▶ NOR = 1485
- ▶ Science and Leadership specialisms
- ▶ Ten partner primary schools, semi-rural location
- ▶ 'Outstanding' school (Ofsted January, 2007)

Making the Decision:

- ▶ Viewed in terms of Evaluation Schedule
- ▶ Comparison of projected futures: current status/academy status
- ▶ Educationally-focussed, but change does have a political dimension
- ▶ School, local and national environments, some unpredictable, require consideration

Four Options for Governors

- ▶ Convert: As soon as eligible (1st September)
- ▶ Convert: At a later date
- ▶ Wait and see
- ▶ Reject invitation to convert

Considerations

- ▶ Educational cost/benefit
- ▶ Financial/operational
- ▶ Consultation – community considerations
- ▶ Capacity: For the process
- ▶ Capacity: For the outcome

Philosophical/Political
opinions



Governors Meetings: Some "Do"s and "Don't"s

Do:

- ▶ Provide information in advance
- ▶ Allow governors to ask questions
- ▶ Timeline the decision-making to allow opportunities for reflection and consultation (parent and staff governors in particular)
- ▶ Table the motion precisely at least seven days in advance
- ▶ Vote by secret ballot – no coercion, collusion etc.

Don't:

- ▶ Assume that no one will scrutinise your minutes. They are a public record – they need to be robust.

The Process

Outstanding schools becoming academies: Conversion process

Registration

1. Register your interest using the online form.
2. A named contact in Department for Education (DfE) will work with you through the conversion process.

Application to convert/ pre-approval checks

1. Your governing body and foundation (if relevant) pass a resolution in favour of academy conversion.
2. Discuss your plans to support another school to raise standards with your named DfE contact.
3. Local authority/ governing body start the TUPE consultation.
4. Secretary of State will be asked to approve the proposal.

Achieve funding agreement

1. Finalise governance documents based on DfE model documents provided.
2. Register the academy trust with Companies House.
3. Agree leasing arrangements for the school land and buildings.
4. Submit the funding agreement to the Secretary of State for approval.
5. Local authority/governing body complete the TUPE consultation.

Pre-opening

1. CRB checks carried out as necessary.
2. Put new financial systems and contracts in place.
3. Complete academy registrations e.g. with exam bodies.

3 months from registration to opening

↑ Academy opens

What really happens!

1	Financial
1.1	Set up new Bank Account
1.2	Appoint Accountants
1.3	Choose new accounting software
1.3.1	produce new financial procedures
1.4	Complete Funding Agreement
1.5	Set up Costs
2	Register with relevant authorities
2.1	Register with YPLA
2.2	Register with Companies House
2.3	Register with the Independent Schools Assoc.
2.4	Register with exam Boards
2.5	Register with Data Protection Agency
3	Legal
3.1	Appoint Solicitors
3.2	Negotiate Lease of land & peppercorn rent
3.3	Register Software
3.4	Complete Memorandum & Articles
3.5	Appoint trustees

...And...

4 Personnel (HR)

- 4.1 Pensions - prepare action plan with SCC actuary
- 4.1.1 Complete Pension Agency Form
- 4.2 Consult with all staff
- 4.2.1 Consult with Unions
- 4.2.2 Prepare action plan with SCC HR Consultants
- 4.3 Identify staff to be TUPEd
- 4.3.1 Transfer of all personnel files to Academy Trust
- 4.4 Review Capacity of Admin Staff
- 4.5 Adopt Bradford Score to monitor absences
- 4.6 Ensure all staff are CRB cleared including those employed before 2002

5 Novate SLAs and Contracts

- 5.1 Set up procurement process ensuring due diligence
- 5.2 Health & Safety
- 5.3 D & T Advisory
- 5.4 Building Energy Management
- 5.5 School Library
- 5.6 Freedom of info service
- 5.7 ICT
- 5.8 Cleaning Services
- 5.9 Catering Services
- 5.1 Admissions & Appeals
- 5.11 HR
- 5.12 Payroll
- 5.12.1 Pensions
- 5.13 Insurances
- 5.13.1 Public & Employers Liability Insce
- 5.13.2 Arrange Staff Absence Insce
- 5.13.3 All Risks Insce

...And...

6 Mini Buses

- 6.1 Inform Insurers of change
- 6.2 Re register with DVLA
- 6.3 Renew Signage - if necessary

7 Premises & Land

- 7.1 Review Cyclical Service Contracts
 - 7.1.1 Grounds Maintenance
 - 7.1.2 Waste Management
 - 7.1.3 Photocopier Contract
 - 7.1.4 PHS Hand Dryers etc...
- 7.2 Negotiate with suppliers
 - 7.2.1 Electric
 - 7.2.2 Gas
 - 7.2.3 Water
 - 7.2.4 Telephone

8 Governance

- 8.1 Set up new Governing Body
 - 8.1.1 Develop Management Structure
- 8.2 Ensure all governors are CRB cleared

9 Steering Group

- 9.1 Role and Remit
 - 9.1.1 Dates for meeting
- 9.2 Communication / PR
 - 9.2.1 Procedure for informing Parents & Students
 - 9.2.2 Procedure for informing Staff
 - 9.2.3 Procedure for informing community
 - 9.2.4 New Signage / Prospectus etc.
- 9.3 Launch of Academy
 - 9.3.1 Media involvement
 - 9.3.2 Celebration?

Moving Forward

- ▶ Trustees/Senior Leadership strategic planning event
 - ▶ New governance structures and Terms of Reference:
 - Academy Development
 - Finance
 - People
 - Quality, Compliance and Audit (RO)
- “Preserve and Improve”

Lessons from the Past

- ▶ The Grant Maintained experience
- ▶ The specialist school status experience



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Any Questions?

