

Sudbourne Academy Meeting
Held on Thursday 2nd February 2012

Transcript

Good evening and welcome, My name is Cynthia Winifred. The chair of Governors. You will be aware that the parents had lots of information on the website and information in the book bag about the presentation as to whether Sudbourne becomes an Academy.

Tonight we have four speakers, plus the head teacher who will give their views and then it will be for you to decide whether you are fore or against or neutral. The point is to allow you to get some more information for you to make up your minds. Each speaker will have ten minutes and I ask that we wait until we have heard every single person and afterwards I promise that we will have time to ask questions then we will break into small groups. You will see that we have tables set up in both halls where Governors will be at the tables to mingle with, to ask more questions and give your views. What I will ask is that you don't treat tonight as 'make up your mind time' we still want you to use the consultation boxes, the website and the information line and to send in your views. We want to hear what you think and what you want for Sudbourne so that the Governing Body can make an informed decision.

The four speakers aside from the Headteacher to give their presentation are:

1. Farquhar McKay from Lambeth,
2. Alisdair Smith from the Anti-Academies Alliance,
3. Nick Morrissey, Strictly Education
4. Last but not least someone that runs a primary school academy, John Wentworth, Corpus Christi.

But first we want to say something about the meeting. We are recording the speakers this evening, just in case anyone wanted to know why there is a recorder there.

First Speaker Head teacher:

Welcome everyone it is good to see you, we are pleased to see so many of you have braved the cold as this is quite a momentous decision the Governors need to make. I will stress this is a Government decision. I am an employee of Lambeth and the change of Sudbourne School into an Academy is not my decision, although I will give you a school perspective with regard to this.

[The following talk is with reference to PowerPoint presentation]

I always want to start with this as this is Sudbourne's Mission Statement, this will be on our new website which is coming up soon. This is pretty much on every piece of information we've got, this is on our prospectus this is pretty much what we stand for. This is what Sudbourne School is about.

There is quite a lot of documentation we have broken it up into three (3) key areas the Mission Statement stands for.

1. Children develop skills and creativity we use our resources to help children and staff reach their potential that's what we stand for. That's what we stand for we are going to tell you tonight Academy or no this is what we stand for. If the Government decide to go full steam ahead and everybody here is in agreement that's still what we will stand for. If they don't decide and we stay Sudbourne School within the Lambeth family that is still what we will stand for. So there is the school's vision of what we would like to see in the children's day to day experiences. I was wondering what you would like to hear from me as the Head teacher. So I thought I would give you a very brief introduction to [funding situation] seeing it has been the most comprehensive spending review and the toughest on us recently. There have been a lot of services from Lambeth that have been deleted. As the head teacher I don't have an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) as it doesn't exist any longer. I used to be able to call upon them on a regular basis. "I have 5-6 children who are regularly absent could you please call the parents as this is pretty serious." This option is not there any longer. English as an Additional Language (EAL) has also been deleted. Specialist Advisors for Numeracy and Literacy and they would go to schools and share best practice, have network meetings, deleted. School Improvement Partner services, deleted, I could go on and on, everything has been deleted because of the spending review and cutting costs in Lambeth. We are now buying all the key services to

schools so pretty much everything that we have including Human Resources are a cost to schools. There is virtually nothing is coming to us for free except for admissions.

2. Schools are really now being encouraged to work in clusters, we are a part of a cluster of eight (8) other schools, the head teachers support each other, we send colleagues to other schools to observe and support each other teachers teach. This idea that Lambeth being this umbrella and sending out a lot of assistance is no longer and is not a part of the future if the spending reviews remain as they are. I think for the first year alone 800 people were laid off in Lambeth and the Children and Young People Services (CYPS) and this is what funds education. Last year £11.8 million service reduction, this year £7.13 million reduction so these lists of services are still being cut. You watch the news and you know it's a very difficult economic climate this is putting it in a land of context. £23 million over 2 years.
3. Currently at Sudbourne funding in the last two to three years in real term we have lost about £80,000. There is a national funding agreement coming up where all schools across the country will be equally funded. Some say this is long overdue. Schools in Sheffield, for example, a school exactly the same size as us is £200,000-£300,000 less better off, than we are in Lambeth. Lambeth is incredibly well funded as have various local authorities within London. Potentially within two-three years' time there will be a national agreement. There will be winners and losers, Lambeth will definitely be losers we are looking at approximately £120,000 less within our budget. Potentially up to £340,000 per year. Let me give you an indication as to what that means for me as a head teacher. If I were to remove the Lambeth music service, our Spanish teacher, our cricket teacher, our steel pans and gymnastic teachers these are non-entitlement to the pupils they do not have to have these, this is an enrichment tool. I would only save £25,000. I'm wondering where I'm going to find worst case scenario £340,000. I'm just giving you my perspective as a head teacher, I'm not saying For or Against. Sudbourne is not the only school in this situation it will be all of the London schools, certainly all of the Lambeth schools.
4. Capital funding is money which is primarily to fix the fabric of the school building. Generally in the last few years it's been about £58,000 this year and next year and the year to come it will be about £7,000 per year. Last

year alone we had water tanks that needed replacing, we had asbestos in the loft that had to be removed, we had flooding in the key stage one toilets, all that added up to £41,000. I had a £7000 to spend so it dipped into other areas. Academies receive the local authority's share of funding as well as your own funding so the school will receive its own funding plus a section of the local authority funding to hold back on behalf of all the schools to assist all the schools. In really money terms it is over £100,000 that's a conservative estimate plus they give you £25,000 start-up costs.

This [presentation slide] is in reality every school is paid per pupil, the top three schools in Lambeth because they have deprivation indicators because the children are in greater need than the children in Sudbourne according to the funding formula. The top school receives £6,965 per pupil. The more pupils you have the more money you have those are the top three. Sudbourne receives £4,300 per pupil. If Sudbourne has 100 pupils, and the top school has 100 pupils, who can do mathematics? Our deprivation indicators are much higher or lower depending how you look at it, are in dire need. If a school is in an area where all the parents receive free school meals and are on income support. We are a little more fortunate in our neighbourhood. 54 out of 61 schools are funded this way. We are 54 in the rank. So there is an element of fairness how the resources are distributed according to need.

If we became an Academy I would probably bank on at least 100k for the school; which is probably the equivalent to 3 full time teachers. There is a lot I can do with that. This will ensure a broad and enriching curriculum and daily learning experience for the children that will be focused on a great deal. That extra funding will assist us in delivering that.

5. Academies have to support another school. One of the drivers behind the academy is the school to school support. Academy or not this is what we stand for.

I'm just going to end on that note. Whether or not the governors decide to go down that road it's almost as irrelevant this is what the school will stand for. Extra funds will be wonderful in an ideal world and I will welcome them. If we decide not to go down that road we will still be striving for this.

So that is my take on it, it sounds almost prone, but I am letting you know how my thinking is so that I can strive to do the best I can for the children. If you

offer me a carrot of extra money then that's what I would take. If you don't then we will continue to do the best we can.

Thank you Milan

Second Speaker John Wentworth, Head teacher for Corpus Christi:

Thank you Chair, can I please say how pleased I am to be here at Sudbourne, it is always a great joy to be here. I have a lot of admiration for everything that happens with the Governing body and the parents for what you do for the children so not just a little bit of affection, it's always a great pleasure for me to be here. I am the head teacher at Corpus Christi school which is right next door, we have just become an Academy, just 6 months ago in August 2011. I want to make it clear I am not here to promote academy status to you. I am not saying it's right for Sudbourne School but I will tell you what led us to the decision we made and how we have found it so far. Maybe some of the issues that are highlighted, that your governing body will need to take into consideration. I may be able to answer some of the questions.

I have to say I started off as you are, what could I do with that? The opportunities, going through the process I am convinced that it is the right thing for us, the right thing for Corpus Christi, as will you have to make the decision as to whether it's the right thing for you. Also just a little plea a lot of these discussions turn into "should we have academy status, should that be government policy should we be rehearsing the argument of national policy" it is increasingly becoming that way so let us focus our discussion on Lambeth and Sudbourne school, maybe we should let the other wider political discussions take place elsewhere.

The situation in Lambeth is that quite a few larger schools have already become academies, as you may know Stockwell Park, Dunraven, Lilian Baileys and St Martens in the Fields are already in the process. Some of the primary schools, Corpus Christi, Durant, Johanna, a cross section have already converted. Nationally it is about 1500 schools, I was looking at a website this morning for recent figures. There are about a third roughly 200 schools are in the process of becoming subject to approval becoming academies, that is a bit of background.

For us we are very clear about the educational base, for us it is about the enrichment of having built up such an excellent school reputation for educational enrichment an outstanding division not just in core subjects but also

in music, arts and sports it is about protecting that, every teacher every parent wants the best for their child and their school For us we saw the dangers of cutting the budget it would have been devastating for us by having to take away the Sports, the music. In fact the opposite has happened, the freedoms the educational case is quite compelling because having become an Academy we are actually looking at the curriculum thinking what are we doing now, we can actually look at the curriculum and do exactly as what we think is right for our children and tailor make our curriculum. It has been really exciting we have put the fun back into the curriculum we can actually think for ourselves.

We are very much into a highly personalised curriculum, I must say we could have done that without becoming an academy. I must say it has catapulted us into doing it. We were actually meeting the parents to ask what their priority is. Secondly as an Academy we not under obligation but there is an expectation that you will link with another school of some extent, not saying you will take care of another school more like partner with one. I know that Sudbourne are very good at doing that already. Other school members of staff come here and you go to other schools. But that strong sense of moral purpose certainly moral led our underlined decision. We wanted to continue to do the outreach work we wanted to stay the same. There is a strong sense of moral purpose behind it that every single child is entitled to a place in a good school, that every single child is entitled to decent education. Enabling us to continue with our outreach work is a big motivating factor in our decision.

The Anatomy Corpus Christi is a confident self-sustained school, we've had a long time of stability with staffing and having that control over the buildings to expanding from one and a half form entry to two form entry. Having direct control at school level is really innovative for us being able to make those decisions with consultation rather than having someone having to make those decisions for us. It has been good. You cannot get away from Finances, you go onto the websites and even the DfE says it not all about money, as head teacher and what we are doing for the children it is for us, when we first started the process we had to endure a lot of extra costs, but when the money came through as (Headteacher) said the school budget is the school budget. The figures he showed are on this sheet here. You have all the schools on Lambeth and they are exactly as he pointed out to you.

The extra money comes from in lieu of the local authorities provide to the school you get the money instead it's about 11-12% depending on the size of the school. For Corpus Christi which is roughly the same size as Sudbourne it amounted to £164,000. We say we are not having Lambeth education overseeing the school but we'll have the money instead. I know I'm simplifying it but there's big implications of that, think about going back to where we started think about the curriculum, think about the enrichment. It would have broken our hearts to undo the music, undo the cricket. We were faced with what your faced with here having paid and spending enough money, its put that on hold and giving us quite a significant buffer for the future.

Milan, you also pointed out the loss of Local Authority services, you will have to replace those services for us it's actually cost us an extra £20,000 in extra cost. You would think for that £164,000 that the local Authority providing us. What do you think that local authority are providing to a school for that amount of money?

Questions and Answers (Q&A):

What do you think Lambeth are providing for your school? What services do you think they are providing for your child as a parent?

Special Educational Needs? No we get the statemented money separate, that's particular to the child, that's not for the school it's for the child so we still get that money.

Human resources support? No we have to pay for that so it's not in the £164,000. We actually have to buy that in, although we don't have to get that from Lambeth.

What else do you think?

Training to staff and governors? Probably some of that, although you have to pay for some of your clerking and advice.

Payroll? You have to pay for that!

What else do you think the Local Authority will provide? Admissions, yes admissions are included.

Any disputes with the Governing Body, the Management, and the School? Top Level advice is included, as it almost comes under legal advice. That's what we have replaced with the £20,000.

Support for the school? If things go wrong top level management advice is covered. The day to day running of the school is not included we have to do everything from catering to payroll.

Let me give you one example we contract directly with Harrisons school who are part subsidised, Lambeth have to give us our share of that subsidiary we charge £1.50, do you pay £1.75? We have a tailor made menu just for Corpus Christi School and we pay the staff London Minimum Wage because that's what we wanted to do, so we are paying the staff more and the parents are paying less. We have absorbed all those overheads into the school within that £20,000. It is School Improvement Services isn't what that money pays for? No School Improvement Services you pay for, some that you do some that you don't. Certainly for us we buy in all those services that we used before. We buy in Human Resources and some legal advice, obviously insurance. In our experience we still pay for the courses that teachers go on but it is not going to cost £164,000.

Milan's got an example of what your faced with, things are not going to stay the same. Making the decision is difficult, it was difficult for us and it's going to be difficult for the Governors of Sudbourne School. It's not a parent's decision but obviously what you think is going to be imperative to that. Making the decision is going to be difficult and not making a decision is going to be difficult so if you decide to become an Academy there are no promises, there are a lot of risks involved with that. You have to make sure the Governing Body is fully competent and know what they are going into. If you decide not to go ahead with that then you need to face the consequences of leaving that money with the local Authority. There are lots of myths, do your research as well. People think: What if the roof falls in? What if this or that happens? All the what ifs are going to be there whether you become an Academy or not they are all relevant. What if the school burns down? Well that is what we have insurance for, which is why we have a proper emergency plan, a school recovery plan. What it has done for us is that Corpus Christi School now has complete confidence for the future. We know that school budget is going to be under pressure. We know that the budget is going to be squeezed but we know what we are facing and we know what it will bring. We know what the next three years are going to bring and

that we have 100% control of our budget, 100% control over our school and 100% control over our direction is just giving us the confidence to face the future. I'm going to stop there.

Speaker three: Farquhar McKay from the local Authority

[The following talk is with reference to PowerPoint presentation]

I'm the 14-19 Co-ordinator I work entirely with the post 16 sector with the college. The same issues and the same debates are taking place with the secondary schools when they look at the Academy conversion. I'll just go through these slides quickly. What is emerging already is money is a real issue it's a slippery stuff money is and we could spend hours discussing money and all the rest of it. There are a couple of things about money so let's look at the first slide. With regard to Academy conversion all the documentation talks about five freedoms for school.

1. Freedom from Local Authority control
2. Ability to set pay conditions for Staff
3. Freedom from following the National curriculum (which you were talking about)
4. The ability to change the times of the school days
5. The amount of money the Local Authority yields on a proportional basis (you were talking about the £164,000)

Everyone who knows what they are talking about will mention the word "LACSEG" every second sentence. It is worth looking at "LACSEG" Can we look at the next slide? With reference to the previous questions

1. Giving up Local authority Control. Local Authorities are being a bit paper tigerish, when you think about it. The local authority haven't really had strategic management responsibility for years, they have been critical friends. That has been their role they have absolutely no authority over how to run the schools or make appointments or any of the kind of assumptions you would make when you see the word control. Actually I think the word control its not helpful having it in the debate because it is assuming there is some in the Local Authority. Local Authorities are networks for education providers with responsibilities to service those providers and to advise, rather, all of them un-management words. I would love to have had control over these secondary schools over the past

three or four years in Lambeth's point of view. There is a point of that I want to come to. The schools in Lambeth are achieving extremely well but not better than others. I would love to have management responsibility but I haven't so there we are. So I don't think it counts very much

2. Is it appropriate to change staff terms and conditions? I mean you change staff terms and conditions but it's like creating a whole lot of stuff that you would need to do. You would have to have very good reasons for wanting to do that and I can't think of what they would be and I don't think it would be an appropriate way to start.
3. In terms of the curriculum, you are right all of the issues you raised aren't as a result of Academisation all schools have that kind of freedom to manage their curriculum as they want. I just think it is worth remembering that particular schools that are 'outstanding' as I think this one is, have enormous freedom over their curriculum
4. School day changes, would you want to do that?
5. Then I want to talk about the money, I have mentioned LACSEG before, you are right some of these resources are purchased from Local Authorities, the documentation for DfE I have a list of them here these categories fall into Academy responsibility. You need to make sure that if you do convert that you have good structures for addressing these things I do know HR is purchased from Local Authority and a good majority of these points. Some of these points it is not. It is just really important to go through these lists on the next slide it is important that to make sure that your £164,000 does actually cover all these things so that you are able to purchase provisions for all of these things that the LACSEG fund are there to provide. I think this is a checklist exercise an important one. I think we are saying that the Local Authority is a critical friend and those have services to provide one of which the networks of schools does that hardships and are supported by the critical friend then prove to be very successful I think especially around the teacher training.
6. Lets have a look at the next slide that at the local authority we think that the service has the capacity and skills to offer. I think it is striking that they really aren't about strategy, control and direction. You can see there are various areas of support, management and advice that the LA provide over and above these LACSEG things.

I just think it's worth pointing out that these are some of the other issues that came out you talked about:

1. The £100,000 that's three teachers for one year, it's just start up money it's not annually renewable money so I think it's important to point that out. The start-up money isn't continual money. If you are a big organisation the financial gains will be greater but the impact of that will be greater as well. If you are a smaller school the evidence shows that the impact is less.
2. In terms of partnerships with other schools this is a very painful process for LA's and for schools within it. As schools fall out the economy is scaled and remaining services reduces so it becomes a kind of process of attrition. The Local Authority has so far managed to respond positively to ensure there are appropriate structures in place. There is this thing about the independent what's good for the school, the parents and the greater area. There are some hidden costs I will refer you to a website. There are issues around pension's responsibilities going into schools that are tricky. Apparently your insurance costs are increased (you don't have that experience but that's what my piece of paper says.)

My final three points are:

- a) Additional costs, you have to make sure all costs are covered by the process
- b) Secondary schools are an issue they are spectacularly good in terms of improvement in Lambeth up to the age of 16. They are not very good if you see the results post 16. It's a Lambeth issue the reputation is Lambeth's reputation . The Authority has to contend with being reported on and monitored on as a borough. It will have very little ways of influencing academised schools. Particularly in Secondary schools where they tend to have management groups outside the borough, like the Ark network, the Harris network, it's like they become an authority outside the locality. There is that issue, valuing about your current experience and what is exciting about your potential.

Speaker four: Alasdair Smith, Anti Academies Alliance

Hi I'm Alasdair I'm a parent, a teacher, a lecturer in Education, a secretary in the Anti-Academies Alliance. I will tell you about all the Anti-Academies Alliance, it is supported by all the Education Unions, the TUC, our patrons are

Fiona Miller, Roy Hathersly, by members of all political parties and we are a very broad church. The reason I'm here, actually my jaw was on the floor when I heard this discussion, my notes are redundant because I thought I was going to come here and argue, arguments from pro-academies people, that academy status is about social justice and raising attainment. Because it's what the Politian's say yet I have not heard a single word about raising attainment or social justice. All I've heard is 'if there's a carrot I will take it' and 'if there's a £164,000 I will take it.' I am astonished because Michel Goade, to his credit, said in his opening speech when he induced the academies act, this is not about money no school should do this if they think it's about money. So I don't know what's going on here I'm really surprised the points I want to make to you are threefold.

1. And you said you don't want the big political picture is because it tells you what this is really about, it is about privatisation
2. What does this have to do with parents? Because no one has mentioned how this changes your rights as parents.
3. How it changes the nature of Governance. It fundamentally changes the nature of governing body. I will start with this point when a school becomes an academy it becomes a business, a company limited by guarantee. The academy appoints a minimum of three directors, who then create a trust which then appoints a governing body, who elect some of them if they wish. That trust then signs a funding agreement directly with the secretary of state so all 50 years of educational law that has been built up suddenly gone and your legal status is a funding agreement with the Secretary of State. Professor Richard Pree describes Academies as Government schooled. Peter Wilden wrote in the New Statesman this week about the really serious threat that Academies pose because a future Secretary of State will have Academies exactly where they want them. It is direct state controlled. At the moment we have a Local Authority who acts as a buffer so academies are more centrally controlled. So any guff about anatomy, I am absolutely astonished that the head can say that 'oh I'm going to make the curriculum more fun, while we are an Academy' Hello we are supposed to be making the curriculum more fun right now. That's what teaching and learning is all about. The idea that Academy status is going to give you autonomy, that idea is erroneous. It will give you a narrower form of democracy, it will give you more control by a single government then you are already under.

4. The other point that I want to make in this I'm assuming most of you are parents, what you should understand, believe me if you want to, check this out if you want to check this out, David Wolfe is a senior barrister at Cherie Blair's Matrix Chambers, has a website called the a can of worms, the country's leading lawyer on Academies, go and check out his website www.davidwolfe.org.uk/wordpress is very clear. A funding agreement is signed by the Academy's Trust and the Secretary of State, it's a contract. So if a parent isn't happy about what has gone on in their school, what do they do? Currently you go to your Council and you complain. An Academy where do you go? The only place you can go if you are not satisfied with the school's conduct is to the Secretary of State. Well David Wolfe has taken several of these cases to Court. What do the Court's say? Well the parents have no remedy under the law as they are not part of that Contract. So we are in a legal mine field. The likes of which we won't see the real consequences for a few years.

I want to speed up because I would like to get to the nub of this matter. It doesn't surprise me that head teachers don't want to discuss the big political picture, as this is the same big political picture that is being rolled out in our hospitals, the privatisation of state education. I will quote you from one of the Managing Directors from one of the companies just before he got elected. His name is Marcus Wilson he works for a company called VT Education, has since been taken over by Babcock Education, it is bigger than Strictly education. He ran an interview for Financial Times, "we would like to run a thousand schools" I will give you another example because it's contemporary and it has been in the news this week Wey Education run by a woman named Zena Atkins, former Chair of Ofsted she set up Company, check it out on the website. She made a statement on the Stock Exchange stating she can make a profit out of running schools on the current level of funding. So this is all about the privatisation of state education. This is all about, don't believe I will quote you Michael Goade "We are creating a supply side revolution" what does he mean by that? It means that we are going to bring lots of different providers into the education system market and they can compete. Goade states that competition raises standards the trouble is there isn't a shred of evidence anywhere that Academies raise standards.

The truth is this what I thought we would be debating the data is mixed and they are based on secondary education as there are very few primary academies that can be compared. The data is this, some have done very well, some like Marlow academy the third worst in the country according to the local paper. Some have done well, some have done very badly. Some have maintained community schools and some have done very badly because and this is crucial, again you don't have to believe me the McKinsey Family Corporation have done a fantastic report in 2007 it said this "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers." As a parent you want your school to be good and better than outstanding. Not that you can get better than outstanding. I think that every local school wants that for their child and if you as parents want that then you have to put your effort into improving the quality of teaching and learning in all those schools.

There is not a single shred of evidence anywhere in the world that says changing the school's status to a school will improve it. Actually the OECD report if you create a system where there are lots of different types of schools, academies free schools what you begin to see is social segregation. This is the white elephant in the room because when your head teachers say there's a carrot dangling in front of me there's a £100,000 here what is he really saying? That is money that belongs to the people of Lambeth and what we are going to do we are going to take it. That's what's happening here the already 'outstanding' schools are going to grab the cash, but how will that affect the rest of you. That is my only fear.

The OECD report going way back to 2003 showing that if there are different types of schools you get social segregation. What will happen in five years' time, if you have any excellent head teacher now, you have a governing body that know what they are doing, I don't know what will happen in five years as succession planning can go wrong. What will happen in an education system that is market driven. What happened in the financial sector when they deregulated everything? What happened in the transport sector when they deregulated and privatised everything? You know the answers to these things, so I don't need to say anything. This is a seriously dangerous policy the likes of which that we don't know where we will end up. I strongly urge you to seriously look at the facts and do not be bright by the cash because the cash is only one year guarantee, there is no guarantee that it will not be cut every year. I would much rather us stand together share

resources and work together and weather the storm. Don't be like Jack and run off with pots of cash. Please vote against the Academy Status if you can, it will protect all of our interest and our children's interest in the long term.

Speaker five: Nick Morrissey from Strictly Education

I am not going to be entertaining or passionate I'm not going to show you a power point presentation nor am I going to give you any views as it's not my job to do so. My job is to give support and advise the Governing body on the process and coming to a decision that's right for the school. We support about 100 schools across the country some have decided to convert others haven't as it is not right for them. Our job is done when they make a decision that they are confident in by listening to the likes of the stakeholders such as yourself.

So what I'm hoping to do now and also when we break up is by adding flavour of what other parent groups are saying up and down the country and the sort of decisions the governing body are making, what are they basing those decisions on? I just want to pick up on some points that are being made just so that we are clear about the factual ailments of them. We spoke quite a bit about control, about whether the Local Authority does or does not control the school, it's been said there's very little control, and in some cases that has been the case. There has been an argument in some way becoming an Academy that it centralises the control. I don't know whether that is a good or bad thing. But what I will say though to temper on that point, think about also you are pushing more control on the local governing body of the school and the council middle man isn't there anymore. The decisions will be made by the governing body so in a way it is more democratic in your ability as parents through the parent's governorship to influence more control over the school budget, so yes it gets a larger budget. I'm not disagreeing that the central government doesn't have a wider role it probably does. Just to temper that there is more going on at the local level.

Just to pick up on what was said about privatisation and the points that were made there. If you chose to become an Academy the body that is controlling the school it is pretty much the way it is being run now, it is the governing body it is the people that you elect as parent governors, there is no other sponsorship or corporate bodies. Let us not get confused with failing schools and still is in some places where there are organisations and I have

say Strictly Education I am not one of those that have no aspirations for whoever runs schools I don't think we could do as good as those that are running the schools are at the moment. If you think about it at those terms very often did have that type of involvement by third parties that were not educationalist. That is absolutely not what is happening at a majority of schools that are making their decisions to become converted academy.

I want to pick up on the point that was made around funding. £164,000 it being a one off, it is an annual amount. Just to temper off what the future holds I do not think anyone knows. It might be £100,000, or £150,000 this year it might be less it might be more next year I don't think anybody does know but what we can say is it's the principal that was agreed. Actually it is not that no school should be better or worse off. How do we figure that one? Yet we have people saying that there is more money coming to the school then in other schools how does that work. The truth is each school will get the same amount of money it's just who spends it on their behalf. The funding is allocated per pupil, it's just that at the moment not all of that amount is coming to the school for the school to spend it is actually being spent on the school's behalf by the local authority. If you become an Academy that funding doesn't go through the local authority it goes directly to the school and the Governing body for them to decide how it is spent. So when you see the list of services put up by the Local Authority. You are absolutely work out what you are paying for at the moment, in that case its irrelevant, and if you are not paying for them and the money is being held back so that's the extra money.

In John's case they converted and they stated it was about £20,000 that seems a bit on the low side actually, most of the schools that we worked with its more than that. There does seem to be a net benefit you have got to do that and it's got to be right for your school and that's just one element. What that decision is I don't know. The funding methodology will be the same in other words there isn't an approximated taken by the Local Authority it is up to the school to spend. Whether that is right or not that is a matter for the community. So you will have to either think for the children as the parents. The governing body will have to makes its decision for this particular school.

There was some speak about insurance. This is irrelevant, insurance should not get in the way of the budget that you have to pay, it is separate and will

not affect the children of the school. Will it go up? Probably! This is taken centrally as it is a part of a grant.

Attainment

Lets put the record straight here, anybody who said that the type of academy we are talking about a converted academy has a better or worse LA maintained school doesn't know what they are talking about. Because there is no history we are just into the first year. OFSTED will say that old style academies have improved. You can have a look at that. Those schools started off as failing schools. Whilst they have improved I don't think that is relevant. I think that the governing bodies make a decision with the resources that are available. To use them to the betterment of your children and you having the confidence that that that is what they are doing. So that really is the decision I think, I don't think the politics of things we can influence here or are they right for our children.

Something that often comes up, and I think its an important thing for you to consider actually and the governing body have a duty to consider seriously is the impact of any changes on the vulnerable or minority groups in staff and children. Think about whether the impact of becoming an Academy on children or staff will be beneficial or detriment to the vulnerable or minorities this is important for you to consider whether this is an advantage or disadvantage to you at your consultation. Each school has to come to this decision themselves.

SEN

SEN is something quite separate, this is a statutory function of the local authority it will continue to be a statutory function.

Local Authority

It has been painted by people of opposing corners here this evening that there is some sort of stay close to the local authority or we get divorced. It is absolutely not necessary the case. Depending on the positive of the Local Authority I have worked with the Local Authority where they have managed the conversion of 12 or 14 schools in one lock stock barrel because they can manage it. There is nothing to say in any of those services cannot be bought, cannot continue to be supported by the local authority why wouldn't they if they are good value. Schools are not breaking away from the local authority

they are not breaking away from each other, they don't need to. The local authority still retains its SEN and admissions duty. It has to coordinate the admissions it also has a statutory duty to ensure that all your children are educated and that there is a place in the authority for all your children.

If I have disappointed because I have come out and have not said one thing or the other hopefully I have tried to correct some of the things that are not true in my view. To finish off I would like to say that not all the schools we have supported have not ended up converting. They all have various reasons why they haven't. But those that have changed very, very little in terms of the school day, curriculum, holidays, staff terms pay and conditions. In fact I have seen very little in the 100 that have changed in any way that is to the detriment to staff pay and conditions. But what they have done is have the available resources to do with. Some have probably done a better job than others.

Head teacher:

I think the idea was that we would like to get quite literally everybody's views in this format has been incredibly difficult. There are some burning questions and we want to put at least two governors per table to write down every single viewpoint, and then the governors will look at every single viewpoint make before they make up their mind. So one will scribe the dialogue and one will answer questions. What we have found is we are slightly short on time, we have tables all over the place. What we can do, although I personally find it quite intimidating to ask questions in such a large group, but there are some elements that people may want to get the ball rolling.

Chair:

I think it would be a good idea to get at least some questions before they break up and do 10 minutes in the groups. So if you have a question please stand up say who you are then who you would like to direct your question to. We do not want statements or views.

1. Cathy Campbell, teacher: Huge concern of school becoming an Academy is of the change to teachers pay and conditions, my understanding is that Teachers apart of the school prior to it becoming an Academy are protected, what about the new teachers coming in? What

are their conditions? What about Michael Goade and his talk about Saturday schools? What about the changes to school holidays? How does this affect the teachers' pay and conditions? Are we going to end up with a two-tier work force. How will this affect staff here at Sudbourne School?

Chair: Could this be answered by someone who has an already run Academy?

A: It is up to your governing body to decide what they want to do. If they want to consult and make changes to the terms and conditions then they can. If they want run a national terms and conditions. Most converted academies stick with national terms and conditions. It will be up to Sudbourne's Governing body.

A: There is still a legal difference though, if you are an Academy you have a contractual national pay, even if your national pay mirrors the current national pay, it is only a contractual entitlement. Whereas if you on this system you have a statutory entitlement. It leaves governing bodies to change it. There are two-tier systems, there are employers who have already changed them. The good news is there not many changes partly because we have campaigned so hard.

2. Emelda, Parent: My concern is that these changes to academies about admissions, can you please clarify that there is so much pressure at this school because it's such a small school, I concerned that it remains a mixed school. What is the situation does the school take control of its admissions.

A: yes and no, the school does take control of its admissions body, which means it could take control of its admissions criteria. It cannot select. It does have to abide by the National Code it cannot break the national code. In some respects the Local Authority has to abide by the National Code. In reality you will not see much departure and you probably will not see many changes whatsoever. If the governing body did decide it wanted to depart and its quite regimented in what it can and can't do with things like statements and SEN those are all priority cases as they are at the moment. If it did want to change it would have to go to full consultation process with all the other admission codes in the area including the Local Authority. Having said that that they are very much joined at the hip, between LA and the

Academy in the fact that it still works with the Local Authority as a pan London coordinated admissions scheme. It cannot breakaway and do its own thing.

The other point of this is coming back to SEN where there are statemented children it is a Local Authority Statutory duty to name the relevant school for that particular pupil whether its an academy or not. Its not a straightforward answer in reality we see no change.

3. Tilly Burns-Gray, parent: When parents have concerns who do they go to? Only one person mentioned it, I think it is really important that if we became an Academy what do we do?

A: At the moment you would do the same as before. First go to the head teacher, second the Governors, you follow the complaints procedure, at present there is no role for the Local Authority to get involved, so I cannot see that changing.

A: That is factually wrong, you do go to the Local Authority if you are not happy.

A: I was at a school in Wembley, Brent, where a statemented child wanted to get into a school, an Academy. The Academy is refusing him entry it is going through the Courts, this is happening all over. It is happening on selection as well and I want to correct this. Michael goade is hovering over the pedal and is making it clear over the selection process. He has changed the admissions code already and free schools are allowed to create their own catchment area even if it is not near the school. These are real changes.

A: Democratic terms an issue for us is that there is no Local Authority responsibility for an Academy this is what I was going to say, so you could expect your Local Government representative to support you and that's not saying that if you enrol they will carry on the same way.

4. Mary Cooper, Parent: I would like to ask questions to the extent as this is the thin edge of the beginning of effecting Local Authority to function with community capability as to whether any studies have been done as to the critical mass of how many Academies would affect the ability of the LA to meet the wider educational remit for schools that are not able to or retract to become an Academy perhaps they do not have skilful parent governors or the energy to change themselves into Academies? How

many academies for example within Lambeth or other Local Authorities could there be and yet they are still functioning Local Authority capacity in that particular area, before it starts affecting other budgets or local authorities having to cut into other budgets to meet the educational parameters?

A: There is more evidence around the second level and has been going on for a long period of time. Southwark is finding that there are more secondary schools that aren't academies but the relationship has changed. Something I have touched a bit on is local anti-representations at approach secondary school networks which are not geographically based, so you get national or regional networks and have their management structures there and they create quite a lot of difficulties there, from what you were saying. We are not there yet. Lambeth have always been at secondary level and academies that have been established have retained that relationship with each other, unless there are a very strong regional management networks.

A: The question was has there been any research yes there has been, I am not sure whether I will count that research as being accurate but that department did carry out research as to whether that department local authority is reduced, amazingly the result is that it wouldn't because they need to have these Statutory duties and funding has to be there anyway. The resources that they would be providing to the school are scalable I doubt that that's the case and you know. My experiences is that local Authorities are under pressure already at the moment in costs and anything further makes it more difficult but the nub of the issue is should a school that has a certain amount of funding ascribed to it have that funding? Or should it be displaced to other schools in the community. That is already happening the reason why there is £164,000 isn't because it is not being seen as £164,000 worth of value to the school it's because it's going somewhere else. There is a question should the funding formula be transparent? And therefore assigned in the formula for the schools that have the most need? This is already happening some schools have greater needs thereby getting more funding. We are not talking about that it's the top slicing that's kept by the Local authorities. Should that be for the schools to decide what they should do with it for your children or should it be given to other schools? That actually is the nub of it.

Michele: I can tell how terribly advised you are, I was keep quite calm. until I saw the mass of shaking heads, until I had to pitch to the Secretary of State, it was just in time, it was the same issue that would have been dealt with by an independent panel of experts, and I stress that. My question is about Sponsors I became a Governor at this school because it was going through a difficult time, although it is an excellent school it has an excellent leadership team but it went through a period of crisis, it was a terrible time and those of you that have been here long enough will remember it. We have no idea how it would clear up for the school. A period of crisis in the future is when you will get told if the school does not cope with it within its own budget its support networks whatever they might be, you will potentially imposition able responses be subject to all the things that come with it, that's if you are a failing school. If you are not a failing school, and I need clarification if my understanding is right that we will be obliged again without consultation to take on potentially a failing school. We have expertise in a well-placed school we do that really well here now. I am not sure if we have the expertise to help a much more disadvantaged school without the support of local authority involvement.

Chair: that's one for the head teacher

A: This whole idea that if you become and an Academy that you are going to help out a difficult school alone is not happening you are a part of a family of schools you are supposed to have head teachers working together now. So switching it from a family of schools to just one school seems a bit bizarre to me. its not really social justice. The nub of this matter is once you're an Academy your always an Academy if things go wrong in this school the only people that can come in and do anything about it is the chains. These are big chains, these are big businesses EAAT, Ark, Harris they are not local, they are national businesses. They top slice money in exactly the same way. EAAT top slices money from 5%, there 10 directors and over £200,000 a year, its boss Bruce Brillington earns £300,000 taking the place of local authorities. This is the market of education.

A: we are supporting a school down the road which is struggling, one of five hundred schools that the DfE has said is in dire need we are doing it at a very good co-leadered approach and there standards have raised. They have had their highest ever SATs results last year. I am finding that we do have the capacity, but what I cannot do as the head teacher of this school is jeopardize Sudbourne School to the benefit of somebody else. We do have the capacity to support another school. It is a very similar model that we are used to. I do not know if Corpus Christi is supporting another school or if you are forced to.

A: No you are not forced but if you are approached or we offer to help another school. Sometimes you do not have that capacity for whatever reason you say no.

Chair: two more questions.

5. David, teacher: I work in one of those top schools that get most of the money, we do need most of the money, I would love to work here. It is up to the local authority where the money goes. We do have about 50% SEN children (School action or school action plus children) I don't think Sudbourne has that many children. Let's not say that the Local Authority gives its money to who it wants, it gives it to those that need it. Because we have to provide for those children. Do you realise there is only one way with this? That you go from a Local Authority school to an Academy and if something goes wrong there is no turning back and that if something goes wrong someone else will take control? Even though someone else said it is very democratic it isn't really democratic if your Governing body has already chosen three people.

6. Fadel: Who chooses the three people?

A: It's the existing Governors.

7. Fadel: Will it be their full time job? How do we as parents have any say? Who elects the directors?

A: What we normally do is it's up to the Governing body, and what they will do is exactly mirror the existing arrangements they have with one exception they do not have the Local Authority and what they will do is that the members, what are the members, there are no shares nothing, they are just governors. All the governors, trustees, directors they all have the same power, who do not necessarily have the same power, we have to

be careful about that they have different roles, the chair, the vice chair etc, if you are elected and become a member it actually means that if you speak to governors it means you sit round the governors you remain the same as you are now. You will not notice the difference.

8. What is the cut-off date?

A: There is none.

Who wants to stay here and talk? Everyone! Lets take a 5 minute break and return.