

Academies Consultation

June 23

Response to questions and views.

Views are organised in the order they were received.

Parent responses	View point/ Question School reply in colour
Parent 11	<p>My concerns are with the timing of this proposed change, we are less than 12 months from a General Election and if the recent Council & European election results are repeated at a national level, it is entirely possible that we could end up with a different make up of government, may be another coalition but with different parties in control. If that were to happen it is also a reasonable proposition that a "new broom" in the Education department may wish to scrap the academies altogether and replace them with something else. How much chaos would this cause to the school and more importantly our children's education? Please describe your plan should this occur? And in particular outline how you would manage this change with the minimum of impact to our children.</p> <p>Last week's Question Time (BBC 1) did not portray a favourable picture of Academies, there was considerable opposition from knowledgeable opinion on the panel as to the wisdom of removing schools from the auspices of the Local Education Authority and the resulting consequences for those that have.</p> <p>Academies started up under the last labour government and are a system that is here to stay. Different political parties have different stances on academies, but all support the programme. The DfE will not have a change of heart and scrap academies. Becoming an academy would put us firmly in control of our own destiny, thus avoiding any chaos so we avoid any impact on the children.</p> <p>Whilst the reference to last week's Question Time was not favourable towards academies a key aspect to consider is that local authorities are advising schools to consider academisation. In Surrey over the last month the LA is actively telling schools to consider all options. With any type of change there are different viewpoints, for and against. Key for RJS is our strategic document and the question of what is the best way to achieve our aims. We believe academisation is the best process to build on and continue our success.</p> <p>I also found the initial consultation document quite one sided i.e. there was 3.5 pages of comment supporting Academy status and half a dozen lines which point out possible downsides, in my opinion the document lacked reasonable consideration and balance.</p> <p>As a school we needed to give an opinion/ view point on academies which is why the document we produced is as it is. We do not believe we have lacked consideration and balance whilst considering academisation over the past 4 years. This is also why we have been holding consultation sessions and asking for views/ questions to enable our discussion when we come to decide whether or not to proceed with the process.</p>

	<p>I would also like to know how many members of Ravenscote staff currently belong to one of the Unions that oppose Academies.</p> <p>Staff members belong to different unions, NAHT, NUT, Unison, NASUWT and ATL. Staff have been consulted in this process but we do not believe it is appropriate to give parents specific numbers on union membership. Throughout the staff consultation there have been numerous opportunities for staff to raise concerns and we have been actively asking them to consult with their unions. Staff have been very supportive with the process.</p> <p>From what I have read and heard recently from a number of independent sources, I would not support a change at this time, surely it would be far safer at least to wait until after May 2015.</p> <p>Thank you for your comment and view point, we will consider it as a governing body. One interesting aspect about the election is that whichever government comes to power they may dictate in their manifesto that all outstanding schools are forced to become academies. At RJS we wish to be in control of our destiny so we avoid any disruption to our children's education.</p>
Parent 12	<p>Firstly, I have read that academies are allowed to employ main class teachers without a formal teaching qualification. Can you confirm that RJS is not intending our children to be taught by unqualified teachers in the future?</p> <p>Whilst academies are allowed to employ unqualified teachers RJS will not be doing this. We value the professionalism and experience qualified teachers bring.</p> <p>Secondly, can you confirm that you will not increase class sizes as a result of the increased autonomy granted via academy status?</p> <p>Class sizes are determined by a Published Admission Number(PAN), any changes to this PAN can only be achieved through a consultation. Whilst we have no plans to change our class sizes, other factors can influence this, for example admission appeals.</p> <p>As an academy we would have greater control over our admissions and over appeals, which is a positive.</p>