

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -16 APRIL 2015
BRIEFING ON OVERVIEW OF SYSTEM DIVERSITY & DRAFT PROTOCOL ON
RELATIONSHIP WITH ACADEMIES

Report by Interim Deputy Director Education & Learning

Introduction

1. Academies are publicly-funded independent schools. Between 2001 and 2010, there was only one kind of academy. This was usually a secondary school that had been closed by the local authority and re-opened as a new legal entity, often in response to low attainment figures and judgements made by Ofsted. In Oxfordshire, three academies of this kind were established: North Oxfordshire Academy, Banbury; Oxford Academy; and Oxford Spires Academy.
2. Under the post 2010 legislation academies are subject to different conversion processes and requirements.
3. **Sponsored** academies **can be obliged** to become academies by the Department for Education (DfE) as a result of low standards of attainment.
4. **Converter** academies **choose** to become an academy themselves but have to be approved for conversion by DfE if they satisfy tests regarding standards and sustainability. The decision to apply for conversion rests with the governors of the school. Converting schools can still seek a sponsor if they feel this will add value to the education of pupils.
5. **New academies** can be set up through different routes which involve **bidding processes** and include secondary schools, primary schools, special schools, university technical colleges (UTCs), studio schools and free schools.

National and Local Statistics

6. By October 2014 4,243 English schools had become academies of which 3,001 were converters and 1,242 sponsored. The table below sets out trends in academy conversion nationally and locally during 2014.¹

National

Date	Secondary ²	Primary ²	Special
November 2012	55%	<5%	>5%
November 2013	55%	9%	No national % available. 112 Special /PRUs
October 2014	64%	17%	No national % available.

Oxfordshire

Date	Secondary ²	Primary	Special
1 February 2013	59% (20)	3% (7)	33% (4)
1 December 2013	62% (21)	14% (32)	33% (4)
December 2014	74% (25) ³	20% (46) ³	33% (4) ³

Protocol for Relationships with Academies

7. All parties have not only a legal duty to comply with their obligations but a moral imperative to work together to secure the best futures we can for those young people. Therefore the council is committed to continuing to work positively with **all** academies (the term ‘academies’ includes converter schools, free schools, university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools), sponsors and new providers, most particularly to ensure that the

¹ Source: DfE statistics published 20 March 2014 and updated 15 October 2014 entitled “Open academies and academy projects in development”:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-academies-and-academy-projects-in-development>

² Secondary includes ‘all through’ schools and ‘middle schools deemed secondary’.

² Primary includes ‘middle schools deemed primary’.

³ These are conversions only, and the number does not include new schools.

vulnerable students can access their local school and receive the support they need to make good progress.

8. The council retains its statutory responsibilities and a requirement to promote excellence and address underperformance across all settings and providers. Academies have various duties set out as part of their funding agreement with the Secretary of State for education. Both academies and the Council have made a commitment to the aspirations set out in the Education Transformation Strategy 2012-2015.
9. The protocol sets out the responsibilities of academies and the council so that both parties share the same understanding of their respective roles in enabling the children and young people in Oxfordshire schools to achieve their potential.

Annexes

Annex 1 Oxfordshire County Council Academies Programme, End of Year Report - 2014

Annex 2 Draft Protocol for Positive Working Practices between Oxfordshire County Council and Academies in the County

Annex 3 Academies Conversions Update Table – March 2015

RECOMMENDATION

10. **The Education Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the contents of the report.**

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