

## Submissions and questions from professional bodies

- a) Questions submitted by the NUT school representative

*JBa responses below each question*

What is the evidence for any claim that the school will be better funded as an academy?

*We do not claim that the school will be better funded as an academy. The funding per pupil given to the school will not differ if we are an academy. However, we do believe that there will be some marginal gains in terms of the budget – for example, we will gain from the interest accrued on our annual budget, and will given the Educational Services Grant which at present goes to the LA. However, the Government is phasing out this grant over time. In summary the proposed academisation is not based on an assumption that the school will have more money, but we do believe we will be marginally better off once all the additional fees and services are sourced and paid for.*

- 2 Does any such claim take into account the fact that we will be unable to achieve the economies of scale possible for the local authority? If so, how has this been assessed?

*I am not aware of any specific economies of scale currently achieved by the LA. As a school Marple already sources many services away from the LA and have invariably found more cost effective solutions.*

- 3 How do we know the school will be better funded when we don't know details of the future academy funding changes planned by the Government?

*As with number one, I don't think we will be better funded. I think ALL schools will face relative decreases in funding over time, whether academies or not.*

- 4 How will we ensure that the school is able to access support services of a similar quality to those provided by the local authority, given that the private market for such services is undeveloped?

*I am not sure I agree that the market is undeveloped, and nor am I convinced that the services available through the LA will automatically disappear. All the current secondary academies in Stockport (with the possible exception of the sponsored academy) buy back certain services from the LA, and some buy back more than MHS currently does. We already source some essential services such as HR from outside the LA and have had no issues with quality.*

- 5 How can we be sure that, in an undeveloped market with few providers locally, we won't be tied in to a poor deal with one provider?

*As above, we have not had this experience with the services we currently buy away from the LA.*

- 6 How long will any fixed price contracts with a service supplier last and what guarantee will there be against future price rises after any loss-leading period is over?

*Service contracts tend to last 1-3 years. Where we have already engaged with commercial contracts we have found them to be more cost effective than the LA solutions – for example, we are making a significant saving by working with our current catering provider and have*

*negotiated a favourable contract for the next three years.*

7 What plans have been put in place to ensure that we can replicate the services we currently receive from the local authority?

*As above – we plan to buy some services back and already source others from elsewhere.*

8 Has a needs assessment been made of services that we will require in the future, including details of how we can access such services outside the local authority family of schools?

*We review the services we require every year through the annual 'service level agreement' procurement process. We therefore believe that we have a good handle of what services we need, and have not had any issues sourcing different services when needed.*

9 What information is there about the insurance costs we will face as an academy to cover the significant risks posed by potential emergencies such as fire, flood, pupil accidents, major crimes etc?

*A comprehensive insurance package has been factored in to the model budget plans for post-academisation.*

10 Have any contingency plans been put in place to deal with such emergencies?

*I am not sure what this question is asking? Critical incident plans exist in school at the moment and will remain in place post academisation.*

11 Won't our insurance costs be higher, either in the short or longer term, once we move out of collective insurance arrangements for the local authority family of schools?

*Our insurance cost models, based on like for like comparisons with Kingsway School (recently academised) show that the cost does increase but not significantly.*

12 How can we make any assumptions about future funding as an academy when changes to the LACSEG mechanism are imminent but unspecified?

*The Educational Services Grant (ESG) has now replaced the LACSEG. It is allocated on a per-pupil basis, based on pupil numbers from census data. The ESG is set to reduce over time and then cease to exist, a funding issue that will affect all schools regardless of status. Once the NFF is introduced it is anticipated that our overall income will rise during the bedding in period. However, we have not factored any increase into the future budget plans for the school whether as an academy or as a state school.*

13 What start-up costs will the school face on transfer to academy status?

*The legal fees are advised to be in the region of £28,000 (DfE source). The Government will give the school £25,000 towards these costs.*

14 Does the governing body have the technical expertise or the time it will need to take on its new responsibilities to protect the school in areas such as finance, the law, personnel and other technical areas?

*The school will TUPE all staff with the same terms and conditions, and has no intention to veer away from these at all. The STPCD will be adopted. Additional financial scrutiny is expected as an academy and external auditing is much more thorough than present.*

*Professional HR advice is already paid for.*

15 Is there a business plan that has been put together by the head and governing body, to show how our finances will be affected in the short, medium and long term?

*In order to facilitate workable financial models, our planning assumes the same level of funding per pupil whether we are an academy or a state school (which is in line with the current funding process). These financial models show that the school will be marginally better off in the short term, despite increased insurance costs etc. In the longer term all schools are likely to be affected by Government changes to funding – state schools and academies are likely to be affected in similar ways.*

16 How will the DfE or YPLA be able to give us the expert advice we need, given that such advice should be based on local knowledge which those organisations do not have?

*I am not anticipating regular contact with the DfE. The services we will buy, either from the LA or from external sources, will have knowledge of the local context.*

17 With the DfE administrative budget being cut by a third, how can we be sure of the level of support we will need when that support will be provided centrally instead of through the local authority?

*As above, I don't anticipate the same level of support from the DfE*

18 Is the 'business case' for moving to academy status based on an assumption about including a sixth form presumption?

*No – this has not been factored in to the plans in any way*

19 If so, what will be the impact of the major cuts to school sixth form provision (equivalent to some £280 per pupil) announced by the Government?

*NA*

20 (If the school has a deficit) what plans to repay the deficit have been discussed with the YPLA?

*The school has a surplus budget*