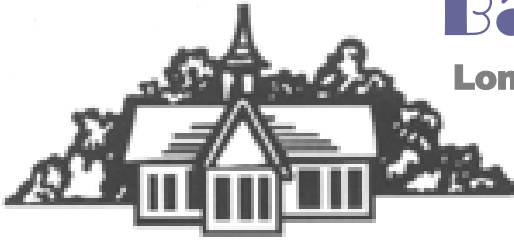


Balcombe C E (C) School

London Road, Balcombe, West Sussex, RH17 6HS



Chair of Governors: Ian Tremble

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14th November 2023

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO JOIN THE HURST EDUCATION TRUST

Dear Parents and Carers,

As part of the consultation process, we wrote to all stakeholders on 20th October 2023 inviting them to complete a survey form to tell us what they thought about the proposed conversion and whether they supported it or not, and why.

The results from the consultation feedback form were as follows:

- 18 respondents (81.9%) indicated that they supported the proposal
- 0 respondents (0%) indicated that they did not support the proposal
- 4 respondents (18.1%) indicated they were unsure if they supported the proposal

Governors have had the opportunity to consider the strength of stakeholder feeling and review the comments that were raised through this survey. There were two issues raised by parents / carers and these are addressed at the end of this letter. The governing body is very grateful to stakeholders for their engagement and support throughout the whole consultation process.

At our recent meeting governors reviewed stakeholder feedback and voted unanimously to continue with the proposal to convert to academy status. This means that the governing body will begin the legal process of joining the Hurst Education Trust and work towards an academy conversion date late in the summer term.

The governors remain determined to secure the best possible future for our school and will keep communicating with parents and staff throughout the process. If there are any further questions, we would encourage you to email us on: chair@balcombeschool.co.uk

Once again, thank you for your ongoing engagement and support in helping us work towards the very best future for our school.

Yours sincerely

Ian Tremble
Chair of Governors

Wendy Millbanks
Headteacher

Further issues raised during the consultation survey

Comment: Looks a bit like a move in the direction of privatisation to me, which, as a concept incentivised by profit, is concerning into the future.

Response: All academy trusts are charities and are therefore non-profit making. Their accounts are audited and published on an annual basis.

Comment: My main concern is the current inability to return to being a local authority led school in the future, should this be preferable. Also, I have concerns about how academy trusts/their scope could evolve in the future, with any impact on eg selection of pupils, staff pay etc.

Response: All we can do is make our decisions on the best information available at the time. The governing body believes that joining HET provides the best opportunity for the school and its pupils in the current and future times.

Balcombe CofE Primary school will remain non-selective. It would not be permitted to become academically selective. Questions regarding staff pay and recruitment have been answered extensively in the FAQ documents which are available on the school website.