



Consultation Report The Priory Centre

November 2020

NEW BEGINNINGS, BRIGHTER FUTURES



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1. Introduction

In April 2020, The Priory Centre was issued with an Academy Order by the Secretary of State for Education. The Academy Order meant that the school could move forward in the next stage of planning which proposes that the school will become a sponsored academy and join Ethos Academy Trust (EAT) on the 1 April 2021.

The decision for The Priory Centre to become an Academy and to join Ethos Academy Trust was made by the Secretary of State following the school receiving an inadequate Ofsted judgement in January 2020. The school want to work within a Trust that has a strong focus on school improvement, working collaboratively across the group, and this work commenced in 2020. To date, the work has ensured that The Priory Centre has been able to access the very best support as it prepares for the academy transition.

One of the first priorities during the transition to academy status is stakeholder consultation. Consultation commenced on the 28 September 2020 and concluded on the 11 November 2020 and views were sought from parents and carers, staff, trade unions, the community and partners. Further within the report we have shared a breakdown of meetings that happened, communications which were issued, and a copy of all feedback received as part of the process.

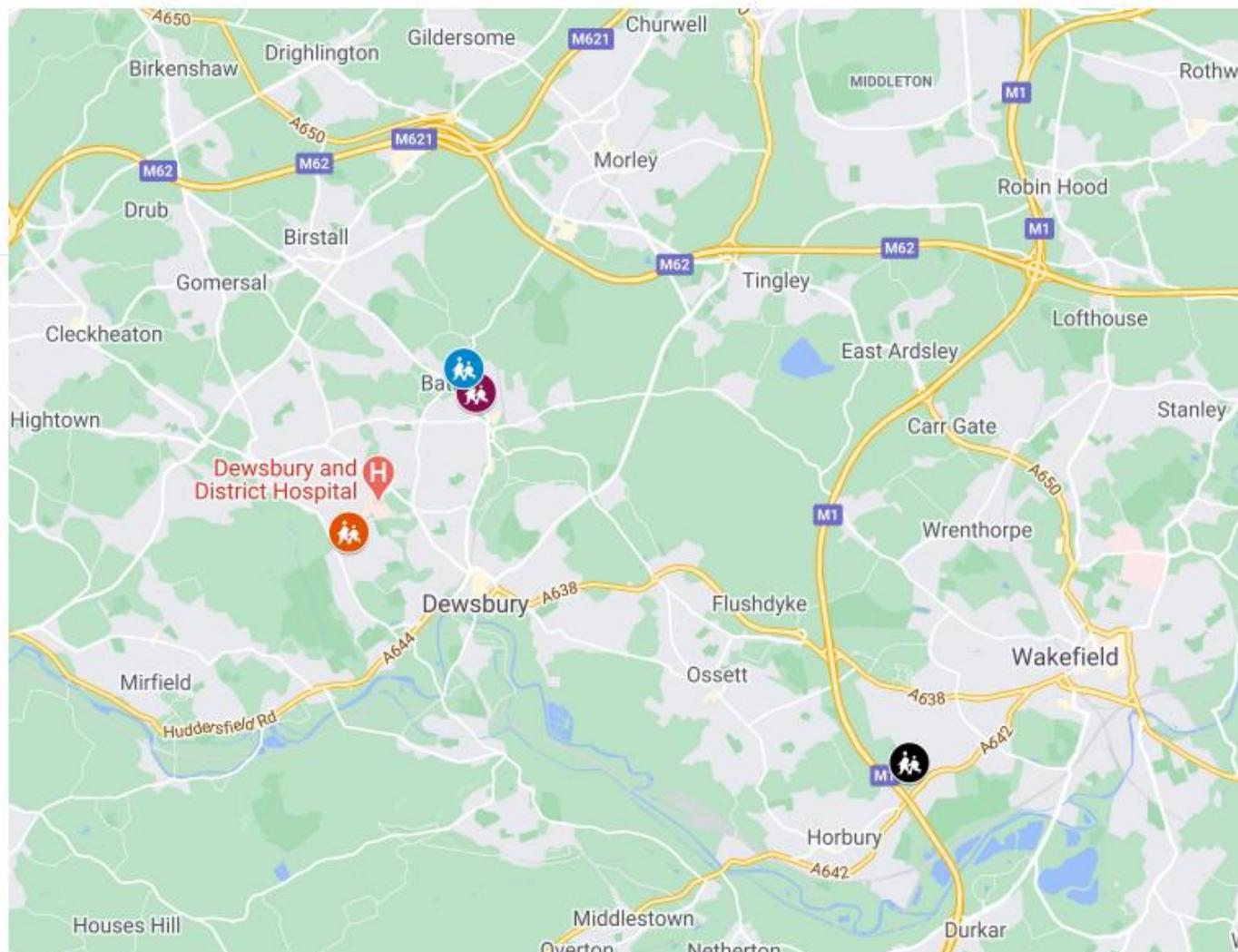
1.1 Geographic position of the school(s)

The map on the next page shows where The Priory Centre is in relation to where other Ethos Academy Trust (EAT) schools are located. All schools within EAT are based in Kirklees, West Yorkshire. They have excellent road connectivity due to the proximity of the schools to each other meaning that travel time between schools permits staff to meet regularly in support of school improvement and their professional development. The Priory Centre would be approximately 20 minutes' drive away from any of the other Ethos academies.

Ethos Academy Trust

Location of Schools in the Trust

-  Engage Academy
-  Reach Academy
-  Ethos College
-  The Priory Centre



2. Consultation Methodology

The overall aim of the consultation process was to ensure that everyone who has a stake in the decision of the school to become an Academy and join Ethos Academy Trust had the opportunity to hear about the plans and to share their views.

The objectives of the process were to:

- Provide relevant background information for stakeholders;
- Explain the reasons for the proposed transition to academy status;
- Set out the stages in the process for the school to become an academy with Ethos Academy Trust and the associated timelines;
- Answer questions raised.

The principles laid down by the project team for the consultation were that it should be:

- An open and transparent process;
- Accessible to all stakeholders in terms of:
 - The times of the events;
 - The language used (jargon-free wherever possible and acronyms fully explained);
 - Being well-publicised.

A variety of media were used to consult including:

- Direct letters;
- Text messaging;
- Publicised virtual meetings involving presentations and questions and answer sessions;
- Frequently asked questions and comments slips;
- Online survey;
- School website (See Appendix 1).

2.1 Direct letters

Letters introducing the consultation were sent to the following groups and are included in Appendix 2a, 2b, 2c.

- Parents/Carers/Community members;
- School Staff;
- Trade Unions;
- Chair of the Interim Management Board.

2.2 Online survey

A Google Survey was created and used as an online tool to provide everyone with an opportunity to have their say and to gauge reaction to the proposal to convert to academy status and join Ethos Academy Trust. The results of the survey can be found in this report under section 3.2.

2.3 Publicised meetings

The following timetable of events was communicated to stakeholders and carried out during the consultation period:

Date	Time	Event	Venue
13 October	2:00pm	Trade Union Meeting	Virtual Meet
13 October	3:00pm	Staff Consultation Meeting	Virtual & Physical Meet
21 October	5:30pm	IMB Consultation Meeting	Virtual Meet
21 October	4:00pm	Parent/Carer and Community Consultation Meeting	Virtual Meet

2.4 Staff, Parent/Carer and Community Meetings

At each of the consultation meetings a presentation was shared with information about Ethos Academy Trust and why the Priory Centre is converting to an academy. A sample copy of the presentation can be found in Appendix 3a and 3b. The presentation was also shared online with parents.

2.5 Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

At Appendix 4 is the FAQs document that was distributed to parents/carers, unions and staff in the school and a copy was also displayed on the school website.

3. Overview of the Feedback received

Appendix 5 contains all the questions, comments and feedback received from the various meetings and surveys which took place throughout the consultation period. Numbers of participants in meetings and survey responses are outlined on the next page.

3.1 Attendance at Consultation Meetings

Date	Event	Venue	Number in attendance
13 October	Trade Union Meeting	Virtual Meet	10
13 October	Staff Consultation Meeting	Virtual & Physical Meet	24
21 October	IMB Consultation Meeting	Virtual Meet	6
21 October	Parent/Carer and Community Consultation Meeting	Virtual Meet	0

3.2 Google Online Survey

We received 5 completed surveys online. Full detailed feedback is provided on pages 8-9.

Google Survey Responses

Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are?	Have you received enough information regarding the reasons why the school is becoming an academy and joining Ethos Academy Trust?	Have you received enough information about Ethos Academy Trust?	We are consulting on a proposed name change of the school and would like to know your thoughts. Please add comments in the box below on your ideas of a new name for our school	We would like to consult on the introduction of a school uniform. One sweatshirt per pupil will be provided by the Trust free of charge and additional uniform items can be purchased. Do you agree we should introduce a uniform?	Do you support the proposal for The Priory Centre to become an academy and join Ethos Academy Trust?	Do you agree that the Secretary of State should enter into a Funding Agreement (contract) for The Priory Centre? To understand more about what is a Funding Agreement log onto https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-and-free-school-funding-agreements-multi-academy-trust	Any other comments?
Staff Member	Yes	Yes		Yes	Don't know	Don't know	
Staff Member	Yes	I had previously visited their site to gain information.	Inspire	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Staff Member	Yes	Don't know	STAR Academy	Yes	Yes	Don't know	I would like whatever happens to benefit the students in our care and also the staff, who have shown professionalism and resilience throughout the preceding months in providing daily continuity and care for the students, at a time which has been challenging to say the least. They kept the Priory afloat for the students and as such should be respected and rewarded for this.
Staff Member	Yes	Yes		Don't know	Yes	Yes	



Staff Member	No	No	St George's PRU	Yes	Yes	Yes	<p>Forced academy conversion can be traumatic and brutal for the staff being taken over, fearful for jobs roles etc. At what point will there be conversations, discussions, enlightenment and transparency around staffing structures, contracts, roles etc.</p> <p>When will the medium- and long-term strategy for The Priory be shared so that progress can be made towards it instead of treading water, and constantly wondering?</p>
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3.3 Themes and Key Messages

Appendix 5 contains all the questions, comments and feedback received from the various consultation events / media used throughout the consultation period. A summary of all the responses and the messages contained therein, with implications for the school and Ethos Academy Trust are provided in the remainder of this section.

Stakeholders are most interested in:

3.3.1 Providing assurance around staff contracts, structures and terms and conditions.

Through meetings, trade union feedback and the online survey the overwhelming message has been the need to provide clarity on staffing matters as soon as possible. The Trust are currently working with the local authority so that we can provide the answers staff require as soon as possible. Three key areas that inform future recommendations are pupil numbers, the remit of the Priory Centre and finance. Once we have agreed the longer-term position on these, we will be in a position to provide greater clarity on contractual matters for staff.

3.3.2 The future direction and opportunities available to the school being a member of Ethos Academy Trust and the educational impact which can be made working together

Staff are really keen and enthusiastic to move forward and work with the Trust and some are already benefiting from those opportunities by working together now during the transition phase.

3.3.3 Clarity on local governance and delegations

Consideration should be given to the composition of the local governing board and their associated delegations. Colleagues are keen to understand how this will work in practice and what the membership will be and what the final scheme of delegation will look like.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

On compiling all the feedback and reviewing the data received, the conclusion that can be drawn is that there are no apparent legitimate reasons why the school should not become an academy according to the timescales outlined.

The Trust have demonstrated their commitment to working with the Priory Centre and Wakefield LA and look forward to moving forward together to make a positive difference to the children we are responsible for.

It is clear from the feedback received that staff are nervous and clarity surrounding future job security, structures, terms and conditions etc would be well received. There is a lot of work going on at the time of preparing this report which will inform final proposals and it is recommended staff hear any future proposals first hand and have an opportunity to ask questions as they go.

5. List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Extract from School & Websites
Appendix 2a	Invite letter to Parents/Carers/Community
Appendix 2b	Invite letter to Staff
Appendix 2c	Invite Letter to Trade Unions
Appendix 3a	Parents/Carers/Community Presentation
Appendix 3b	Staff Presentation
Appendix 4	Frequently Asked Questions for Stakeholders
Appendix 5	Feedback Received from consultation meetings and online survey