

CONSULTATION REPORT

1. Background

The Governing Bodies of five schools have been considering a proposal to convert or transfer their schools and to join an existing multi academy trust, Castleman Academy Trust.

1. Ferndown First School
2. Ferndown Middle School
3. Ferndown Upper School
4. Corfe Hills School
5. Parley First School

The Governing Bodies of the five schools individually and collectively resolved in September 2019 to consult upon this proposal.

The Academies Act 2010 requires the Governing Body of a Local Authority maintained school to carry out a formal consultation on this proposal, as set out below.

5.1 Before a maintained school in England is converted into an Academy, the school's governing body must consult such persons as they think appropriate.

5.2 The consultation must be on the question of whether the school should be converted into an Academy.

5.3 The consultation may take place before or after an Academy order, or an application for an Academy order, has been made in respect of the school.

This report describes the consultation programme undertaken by the Governing Bodies, the feedback from this programme and summarised the outcome of consultation.

2. The Role and Responsibility of the Governing Bodies

The Department of Education Governance Handbook 2017 summarises the purpose of governance as *'to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.'*

The DfE Governance Handbook further states that it is the responsibility of the Governing Body to develop *'a clear and explicit vision for the future set by the board, in collaboration with executive leaders, which has pupil progress and achievement at its heart'* with a *'determination to initiate and lead strategic change when this is in the best interests of children, young people and the organisation, and to champion the reasons for, and benefits of, change to all stakeholders;*

It also states;

'As the accountable body, the board is the key decision maker. It may delegate operational matters to executive leaders and governance functions to committees (including LGBs in a MAT) or in some cases to individuals, but the board as a corporate entity remains accountable and responsible for all decisions made and executive leaders operate within the autonomy, powers and functions delegated to them by the board.*

**the board should be taken to mean the accountable body for the school or group of schools: in local authority (LA) maintained schools, this will be the governing body.*

Therefore, it is within the remit of the Governing Body, given current Government policy, to assess the benefits and risks of academy status and to decide whether it is appropriate for their school.

3. The Purpose of Consultation

The purpose of consultation is for the Governing Body, in accordance of the Academies Act 2010 and the DfE Governance Handbook 2017, to present the proposal to stakeholders, to gather feedback on the proposal and to understand the level of stakeholder interest, support and objection.

The Governing Body can then determine whether there is any significant stakeholder objection to the proposal that would cause them to reconsider.

4. Consultation proposal

For Ferndown First, Ferndown Middle, Ferndown Upper and Parley First Schools each to convert to academy status and for Corfe Hills School to transfer as an academy, to join the Castleman Academy Trust.

5. Consultation Process

The academy consultation was planned to run from Friday, January 24th until Friday, February 28th, 2020, a period of four (4) academic weeks. During the consultation period following a request from representatives of teaching and support staff trade unions and professional associations, it was agreed to extend the consultation to March 30th to enable those representatives to consider and respond to the proposal.

The five schools recognised that it was important for the consultation to be managed consistently and cohesively so agreed to run a coordinated consultation.

A summary of the consultation plan identifying the different stakeholders, how those stakeholders were consulted and what information was to be provided, is below.

Stakeholder	Approach	Information
Parents and carers of pupils attending the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter and consultation document sent to all parents and carers on Friday, January 24th 2020. • Four consultation meetings held on Tuesday and Thursday February 4th and 6th, 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 9.00am 04/2/20 FFS ○ 2.00pm 04/2/20 FMS ○ 6.00pm 04/2/20 FUS ○ 6.00pm 06/2/20 CHS • Consultation survey opened midnight on February 6th, 2020 and closed midnight Thursday, February 27th. • Consultation presentations published February 7th, 2020 • Meeting Q&A summaries published Feb 12th, 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent & Carer Letter • Consultation Document • Consultation presentation • Consultation on-line survey • Meeting Q&A summary
Staff employed by the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter, consultation document and FAQs sent to all staff on Friday, January 24th, 2020 • Joint consultation meeting for all staff held on Monday, February 3rd, 2020 • Consultation survey opened midnight on February 6th, 2020 and closed midnight Thursday, February 27th. • Consultation presentations published Feb 7th, 2020 • Meeting Q&A summary published Feb 12th, 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff letter • Consultation Document • Staff FAQs • Consultation presentation • Consultation survey • Meeting Q&A summary
Unions & professional associations for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint letter with copies of staff letters, consultation FAQs and document and staff presentation prepared on Feb 7th, 2020. • Pack distributed to representatives on February 26th • Consultation meeting held Tuesday, March 10th, 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union letter • Staff letter • Consultation Document • Staff Consultation FAQs • Consultation presentation

6. Consultation meetings

6.1 Parent/carer consultation meetings

There were four parent/carer meetings attended by a total of 101 parents and carers as follows;

School	Parent Meeting dates & times	Attendees
Ferndown First School	Tuesday, February 4 th 9.00am	37
Ferndown Middle School	Tuesday, February 4 th 2.00pm	24
Ferndown Upper School	Tuesday, February 4 th 6.00pm	36
Corfe Hills School	Thursday, February 6 th 6.00pm	4

The format of the four meetings was similar. The Headteacher of the host school welcomed parents and made introductions to the Headteachers from the other four school, the Trust CEO and project manager.

The Headteachers and CEO of Castleman Academy Trust then gave a presentation outlining

- the reasons for the proposal
- the benefits of being part of an expanded Castleman Academy Trust
- Trust's governance, leadership and management.
- How staff would be affected by the proposals
- what would remain the same in each school

Parents and carers were given the opportunity to ask questions of the panel of Headteacher, CEO and project manager.

A summary of the Questions & Answers from the four meetings was then published on Wednesday, February 12th 2020 is attached as appendix A.

6.2 Staff consultation meeting

A joint meeting was held on Monday, February 3rd at Ferndown Upper School attended by a total of 120 staff.

The Headteacher of Ferndown Upper School welcomed staff and made introductions to the Headteachers from the four schools and project manager.

The Headteachers, CEO of Castleman Academy Trust and project manager gave a presentation outlining

- the reasons for the proposal
- the benefits of being part of an expanded Castleman Academy Trust
- Trust's governance, leadership and management.
- how staff would be affected by the proposals
- what would remain the same in each school

Then staff were given the opportunity to ask questions of the panel of Headteacher, CEO and project manager.

A summary of the Questions & Answers from the five meetings was then published on Wednesday, February 12th is attached as appendix B.

6.3 Trade union meeting: March 10th

Representatives of teaching and support staff trade unions and professional associations were invited on March 3rd to attend a meeting with Headteachers and the CEO. The notes from that meeting are attached as appendix C but in summary the NASUWT representative asked a number of questions collated from staff members, which were answered by a group of Headteachers, Trust CEO and project manager.

Representatives were separately asked to submit their formal responses to the consultation by March 30th, although none were received.

7. Consultation survey

The Governing Bodies carried out a survey of parents, carers, teachers and support staff using an online survey form, which was open from midnight on Thursday, February 6th and closed at midnight on Thursday, February 27th.

The survey comprised the following questions:

1. **For which school are you completing this survey?** (*List of five schools*)
2. **Which best describes your relationship with the school?** (*List Parent/Carer, Teacher, Support staff or member of school community*)
3. **Did you attend a consultation meeting?** (*Yes or No*)
4. **What do you like about your school?** (*Open answer*)
5. **Do you support the proposal for your school to join the Castleman Academy Trust and convert to or transfer academy status?** (*Yes, Maybe, No or Don't know*)
6. **Please explain your response to question 5.** (*Open answer*)
7. **Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposal?** (*Open answer*)

7.1 Survey participation rates

By the close of consultation at midnight on Thursday, February 27th a total of 169 parent/carers, 46 teachers and 24 support staff survey responses had been received, broken down as follows

School	Respondent Type	Universe (Num.)	Responses (Num.)	% Response Rate
FFS	Parent/carers	344	19	5.5%
	Teacher	18	1	5.6%
	Support Staff	48	1	2.1%
FMS	Parent/carers	584	59	10.1%
	Teacher	36	16	44.4%
	Support Staff	51	8	15.7%
FUS	Parent/carers	886	48	5.4%
	Teacher	62	16	25.8%
	Support Staff	38	10	26.3%
CHS	Parent/carers	877	22	2.5%
	Teacher	60	9	15.0%
	Support Staff	62	5	8.1%
PFS	Parent/carers	311	21	6.8%
	Teacher	12	4	33.3%
	Support Staff	41	0	0.0%
All schools	Parents/carers	3002	169	6%
	Teachers	188	46	24%
	Support staff	240	24	10%

The average parent/carers response rate of 6% across all schools was about average for a schools' consultation. However the staff response rates were notably lower than average at 24% for teachers and 10% for support staff. (It should be noted that the number of pupils on roll (NOR) is used for the parent/carers universe).

7.2 Breakdown of Q5 responses

The responses to Q5 "Do you support the proposal for your school to join Castleman Academy Trust and to convert to or transfer academy status?" per school and per respondent type were as follows;

7.2.1 Ferndown First School

School	Respondent Type	Responses (Num.)	Response to Q5 as number and % of universe							
			YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
FFS	Parent/carer	19	12	3%	3	1%	0	0%	4	1%
	Teacher	1	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	1	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%

To summarise;

- Of the 19 parents that responded to the question of whether school should convert to academy status (5.5% of the universe of pupils), nearly two-thirds (12) said YES and three (3) said MAYBE. There were zero NOs.
- Of the two staff that responded the teacher was in favour (YES) and the support staff member responded MAYBE. There were zero NOs.

7.2.2 Ferndown Middle School

School	Respondent Type	Responses (Num.)	Response to Q5 as number and % of universe							
			YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
FMS	Parent/carer	59	33	6%	11	2%	6	1%	9	2%
	Teacher	16	6	17%	6	17%	3	8%	1	3%
	Support Staff	8	6	12%	2	4%	0	0%	0	0%

To summarise;

- Of the 59 parents that responded to the question of whether school should convert to academy status (10% of the universe of pupils), over half (33) said YES and six (6) said NO.
- Of the 16 teachers that responded (45% of teachers in the school), about one-third said YES, one third MAYBE and three (3) said NO to the question of whether school should convert to academy status.
- Of the 8 support staff that responded (16% of support staff in the school), three quarters said YES and there were zero NOs.

7.2.3 Ferndown Upper School

School	Respondent Type	Responses (Num.)	Response to Q5 as number and % of universe							
			YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
FUS	Parent/carer	48	16	2%	11	1%	10	1%	11	1%
	Teacher	16	1	2%	2	3%	13	21%	0	0%
	Support Staff	10	1	3%	3	8%	6	16%	0	0%

To summarise;

- Of the 48 parents that responded to the question of whether school should convert to academy status (5.4% of the universe of pupils), one third (16) said YES and one-fifth (10) said NO.
- Of the 16 teachers that responded (26% of teachers in the school), over three-quarters said NO to the question of whether school should convert to academy status.
- There seem to be 3 broad themes to their objections, judging by the responses to Q6:
 - School doing well on its own so no need to change
 - Unconvinced of the benefits of partnership for the school
 - Unconvinced that an all-through MAT can help a secondary school

- It should also be noted that the NASUWT rep collected written feedback on the proposal, which was shared with the Headteacher.
- Of the 10 support staff that responded (26% of support staff in the school), more than half responded NO to the question of whether school should convert to academy status.

7.2.4 Corfe Hills School

School	Respondent Type	Responses (Num.)	Response to Q5 as number and % of universe							
			YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
CHS	Parent/carer	22	13	1%	6	1%	2	0%	1	0%
	Teacher	9	6	10%	3	5%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	5	4	6%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%

To summarise;

- Of the 22 parents that responded to the question of whether school should transfer academy status (2.5% of the universe of pupils), just over half (13) said YES and two (2) said NO.
- Of the 9 teachers that responded (15% of teachers in the school), two-thirds (6) said YES to the question of whether school should transfer academy status. There were zero NOs.
- Of the 5 support staff that responded (8% of support staff in the school), four (4) responded YES and one (1) responded NO to the question of whether school should transfer academy status.

7.2.5 Parley First School

School	Respondent Type	Responses (Num.)	Response to Q5 as number and % of universe							
			YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PFS	Parent/carer	21	5	2%	7	2%	2	1%	7	2%
	Teacher	4	4	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

To summarise;

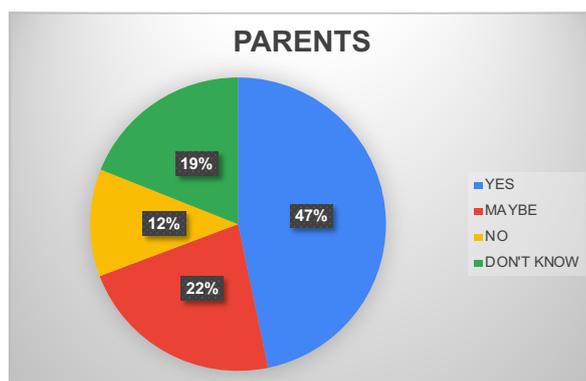
- Of the 21 parents that responded to the question of whether school should convert to academy status (6.8% of the universe of pupils), five (5) said YES and two (2) said NO.
- Of the 4 teachers that responded (33% of teachers in the school), all responded YES to the question of whether school should convert to academy status.

7.2.6 All schools

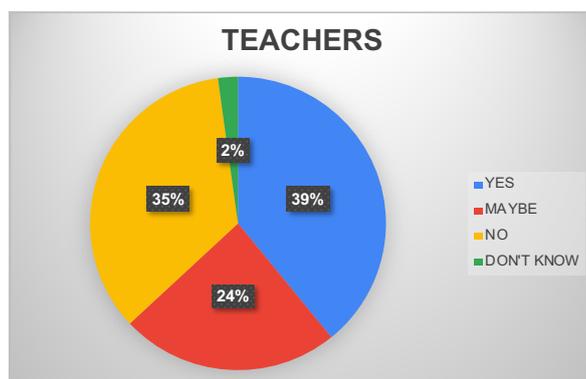
School	Respondent Type	Responses (Num.)	Response to Q5 as number and % of responses							
			YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All schools	Parents/carers	169	79	47%	38	22%	20	12%	32	19%
	Teachers	46	18	39%	11	24%	16	35%	1	2%
	Support staff	24	11	46%	6	25%	7	29%	0	0%

To summarise the overall results

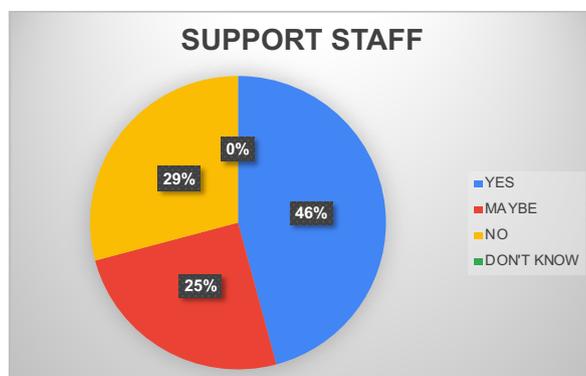
- 47% of parents that responded were in favour and a further 22% possibly in favour compared with 12% not supporting the proposal for their school to convert to academy status.



- 39% of teachers that responded were in favour and a further 24% possibly in favour. 35% of respondents did not support the proposal, mainly comprising staff from FUS.



- 46% of support staff that responded were in favour and a further 25% possibly in favour compared with 29% not supporting the proposal.



7.2.7 Impact of attending the consultation

It is interesting to note the variation in support for the proposal between those that attended the consultation meetings and those that did not.

- Of the 169 parent/carer survey respondents, 61 attended a consultation meeting and 108 did not. There is a significant increase in likelihood to support the proposal among attendees (62%) versus those that did not (38%). However, those that did not attend a meeting were much more likely to respond DON'T KNOW (25%) than those that did (8%)
- Of 46 teacher survey respondents, 36 did attend a meeting and 10 did not. Teachers that attended were no more likely to support the proposal (39%) versus those that did not (40%) compared with the average of 68%.
- For support staff, of the 24 survey respondents, 17 did attend a meeting and 7 did not. 53% of attendees supported the proposal versus 29% of non-attendees versus an average of 46%. Non-attendees were more likely to respond NO, 57% versus 18%.

A reasonable hypothesis from reviewing the comments in the survey, is that those that attended the meeting wanted to find out more about the proposal and were subsequently convinced or at least reassured by the presentation and subsequent Q&A.

8. Consultation summary and recommendation

The consultation on the proposal has been comprehensive and there has been meaningful engagement with stakeholders.

There has been little objection to the proposal in any school or among any stakeholder type and any NO responses have been outnumbered by YES responses.

There is, however, a minority (21%) of Ferndown Upper School teachers that do not support the proposal and their reasons are set out in section 7.2.3.

In summary, all five Governing Bodies are advised that the outcome of consultation has not demonstrated any significant objection that should cause them to reconsider the proposal for their schools to convert to or transfer academy status and join Castleman Academy Trust.

APPENDIX A: Q&A from the parent consultation meetings

APPENDIX B: Q&A from the staff consultation meeting

APPENDIX C: Survey data table

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF PARENT CONSULTATION Q&A

Please read this document in conjunction with the power-point presentation used at the consultation meetings and the consultation document giving full details behind the proposal.

Notes

CAT = Castleman Academy Trust

DfE = Department for Education

LGB = Local Governing Body (within each school)

MAT = Multi-Academy Trust

Trust Board = Board of Trustees responsible for oversight of the CAT

Leadership Group consists of all head teachers in the CAT, chaired by the CEO

Rhonda Moore – CEO of Castleman Academy Trust

Philip Cranwell – Cranwell Consultancy – project manager employed by CAT to manage the proposal plans

School performance/day-to-day running of schools

How will the independence and great achievements across our schools not be diminished as part of the MAT?

The autonomy of each school will continue, but there will be greater opportunities to share ideas. The Trust will also ensure that schools are scrutinised by external partners as well as from within the trust so that standards are maintained. The application to the DfE required a detailed plan for future development and strategies of the trust, which has been put together by the head teachers.

Is there a plan to change the curriculum to a Trust-wide curriculum?

No, all schools will follow the national curriculum but decisions in how that is delivered will be school based. Being part of a MAT will give greater opportunity to collaborate and share ideas.

What guarantees can you give that the young people won't be unsettled by this change?

The role of the trust is to support its schools to be the very best for its young people. The head teacher, staff and day to day running of the school will not change, therefore the young people should not be unsettled. The schools have deliberately chosen a trust that shares their vision and ethos.

How is performance reported as an academy? Can we be sure that this proposal will improve outcomes?

Outcomes will still be reported to the DfE as individual schools and schools will still receive individual Ofsted inspections. Each school will report to the CEO, for onward reporting to the Board. The CEO will report overall performance of the trust to the Trust Board and to the schools. Research shows that voluntarily converted academies would appear to perform better than LA schools or sponsored academies. This link may provide further information on the performance of academies -

<https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/impact-academies-educational-outcomes/>

What are key success measures of an academy trust versus an individual school?

CAT has a number of Key Performance Indicators, at the heart of which is the performance of the schools. Whilst we measure academic outcomes, we also measure personal development of young people and ensure that our workforce feels valued and supported. We will always look for best value for money to keep our back-office costs as low as possible so that we can feed as much financial support as possible into the education of our young people.

Would schools still be responsible for their lunch provisions?

Yes, although they could look at economies of scale by tendering together.

Will each school still run its own PTA?

Yes, unless they wanted to run together.

Information about CAT

We are told that CAT is a strong organisation for two schools, what experience has it of running a larger trust?

Most MATs started with 2-3 schools. The Trust Board members have a wealth of knowledge and experience, including primary and secondary education, accountancy, safeguarding, HR and IT. All trustees are volunteers, the CEO is the only paid trustee. The CAT had an external review of governance in 2019 by a National Leader of Governance recommended by the Regional Schools Commissioner's Office. He reported that our ways of working are seen to be scalable to this level.

Rhonda has a background of working across the South West Region as a National Leader of Education, working to draw people to work together on a regional scale. Philip Cranwell has completed 300+ previous academy conversions and has put us in touch with other trusts who have followed a similar path. We have had to submit an extremely detailed application to the DfE, which has been approved.

Proposed growth of CAT

What is the consequence if one school decides to opt out, particularly with regard to the children's journey through the pyramid?

Existing collaboration between schools would continue for transition, however it would not be within the context of a single organisation. All Governing Bodies believe this is the right move for their school and are currently in agreement to move forward, subject to the outcome of the consultation, therefore would be unlikely to pull out unless the consultation is very strongly against the proposal.

Why are some schools within the pyramids not involved? Why can't Ferndown form its own trust?

Some schools in both pyramids have become part of other MATs, however we will continue to work closely with all local schools to share best practice and ensure smooth transition. West Moors have been involved in the process and their application has also been approved by the DfE. However, they have chosen to pause their application temporarily whilst they address other issues.

As Hampreston First School pupils are likely to attend Ferndown Pyramid schools, we will continue to work with them to ensure good continuity and excellent transition between schools. As such, they have been involved in developing the plans we presented to the DfE. As a Church of England school, they have additional Diocesan requirements and therefore are not looking to join the Trust at this time.

The DfE is reluctant to start new Trusts and is encouraging those schools not part of a Trust, to join an existing one.

Will academisation preserve the 3 tier system?

Yes, the school funding agreement from the DfE will lock the structure of the pyramid for the future. It could only change if the Secretary of State were to dictate the removal of the 3-tier system. The governors are mindful of ensuring security for future generations coming through their schools and believe this to be the best option for securing the future of the Ferndown pyramid of schools

Corfe Hills School is already an academy. Why are they joining a MAT?

The school is a stand-alone academy that converted in 2012 but the DfE are encouraging single academies to join MATs. We will then be working on a 4-19 journey for pupils in both pyramids.

Potential further growth in the future

You say that the government are encouraging schools to convert to academies, therefore many schools are looking to join a trust. What happens if other schools wish to join Castleman? What is your upper limit?

We have a commitment to remain a small community trust with no more than 10 schools. Evidence suggests that a MAT larger than 10 schools becomes more difficult to manage. The head teachers are all passionate about improving SEND provision across the schools and if a special school were to seek to join the MAT, we would give that serious consideration because of the skills such a collaboration would bring.

Can CAT decline schools that won't fit with their ethos and vision?

Yes, the existing Broadstone Schools have been involved in the processes to date and their school communities have been informed about the schools looking to join the trust.

Some newly formed MATS get swallowed into chains, when all the benefit of a local MAT would be lost. Do you have any concerns about that happening in the future?

As a MAT of 7 schools we would be in the top 20% largest MATs, therefore the likelihood is quite small. The DfE rates the size of MATs by pupil numbers, alongside the number of schools involved.

Changes/Risks

We have heard about lots of potential benefits with the risks being minimal, but what are the risks?

There is a risk that if schools do nothing, they may face a "gentle decline". Once schools leave LA control, they cannot go back. Joining the wrong trust is a significant risk therefore governors and head teachers have considered a number of trusts, in consultation with the Regional Schools Commissioner's office, but all feel that CAT is the best fit for their schools. Governors were concerned that their schools may lose their identities if aligned with other MATs they looked at as potential partners. Governors and head teachers from all schools are involved in shaping the structure of the larger CAT to something that will meet their requirements. Ferndown governors believe that with this proposal, they are securing their schools for future generations coming through the pyramid.

We've heard a lot about what will remain the same, but what will change either now or in the future?

As a larger organisation we can save money through economies of scale or by sharing resources, and staff will have greater CPD and career development opportunities within the organisation. Over time, you may see small incremental changes through schools working more closely together with direct support from the trust. Teachers will work together to share best practice and ideas across key phases.

If schools decided not to proceed now and at some point in the future the government dictates that they have to convert, what would happen?

The pyramid would continue its existing collaboration, but governors may have to make a decision in the future that would be under very different circumstances and may not have such a favourable outcome.

Financial implications

We hear that schools are financially better off as academies. Where does the money for academies come from?

It is a myth that academies are financially better off. All schools are funded by the same funding formula, but whilst the LA will take a slice from maintained schools, academies will receive all their funding to deploy as they feel appropriate. The advantage of joining a trust is the ability to make efficiencies across a larger organisation, enabling more funding to be available for the education of the children.

The enlarged CAT would receive automatic capital funding from DfE of £0.5-£0.75M to deploy amongst its schools as needs require. Maintained schools have to bid for capital funding from the LA and Single Academy Trusts have bid to the DfE. A trust can also apply to the DfE for extra grants as they become available.

What will the cost be of any extra management structure?

The trust is committed to a low cost, simple organisation. We employ a Finance Director and an HR Director and buy in additional expertise as required. However, as a larger organisation it may be more cost effective to employ rather than buy in additional expertise. The MAT central charge will be driven by Head Teachers who will plan the additional services they'd like the trust to provide, whilst keeping central costs to the minimum.

What provisions will be in place to prevent financial difficulties and therefore the need to expand again? Will greater resources go to schools in need, to the detriment of schools doing well?

CAT would be in the top 20% of largest MATs in the country, therefore if funding became a major concern, it would be a national problem. Governing Bodies have agreed that schools will retain management of their funding including their reserves, but with a responsibility for each school to set a balanced budget. If a school is unable to do so, trustees have the power to intervene to prevent the trust getting into financial difficulty. The leadership group and governing bodies could agree to provide a short-term loan to another school in difficulty. The DfE hold the trustees to account financially.

School Admissions

Will the admission process change?

Admissions will not change and will continue to be managed by the Local authorities.

Will appeals follow the same process?

Yes, any variations in admissions across the trust will be due to schools sitting within two different local authorities (Dorset and BCP).

Involvement of outside agencies (including the Local Authority)

How will EHCP funding from the LA be affected?

Funding will remain the same, as will the processes around reviews and the involvement of the LA. However, we will be able to develop our expertise throughout the trust to better support the children.

Would there be any changes to safeguarding, exam boards?

Schools will have the same responsibilities and will still be working with the LA with regards to safeguarding issues. Head teachers will continue to make decisions with their staff around exam boards.

Land and Buildings

Where are the trust offices based?

Currently at Broadstone Middle School, but we may be able to use accommodation at other schools if central services expanded. Headteachers would be involved in those discussions.

What guarantee is there that you won't sell school land, or close the leisure centre?

The land and buildings will continue to be owned by Dorset Council and leased to the trust for a term of 125 years. The trust will still have to get permission from the LA for major changes to school premises. The leisure centre is owned and managed by Dorset Council but the trust are in negotiation with the LA over the terms of school use.

Will this proposal affect the planned expansion of Parley First and Ferndown First Schools? How will Ferndown Middle School cope with any increased places as a result of first school expansion?

The responsibility for place planning remains with the LA, so the intention is for proposed expansion plans to continue. Dorset Council will continue to pay for building work to accommodate additional school places, even if the schools join CAT. Place planning conversations with the LA have already been taking place and will continue regardless of the outcome of this proposal.

Collaboration between schools

Will the strong relationships with feeder schools be maintained, to ensure a positive journey for the children?

Would joining Castleman negatively impact on how our schools work with other schools outside the MAT?

Schools in both pyramids are already working closely together to ensure excellent transition for the children. By joining CAT, there will be more formal structures in place to ensure even closer collaboration between member schools. However, we are committed to continuing to work with all schools in the area, for the very best outcomes for our children, and existing collaborations and relationships will continue for all schools, whether part of Castleman or not.

Can you give us reassurance that the strong relationship Corfe Hills has with Lockyers Middle School, a main feeder school, will be maintained?

There is a commitment to work with colleagues across all feeder and counterpart schools both within and outside the trust, because that is what is best for our young people. Corfe Hills governors have already made changes to their Admissions Policy from September 2020 to give pupils from Lockyers, Allenbourn and Broadstone Middle Schools priority over other feeders. This admissions policy will remain unchanged. All the feeder schools work closely together to ensure that the children arrive at Corfe Hills are the same point educationally. Part of the DfE application process was to state how we will work with other schools outside the Trust.

As a result of sharing resources, will there be more support for SEND children?

As a larger group of schools, we could put in place more trust-wide support, if that is what the leadership group wanted. In Philip Cranwell's experience, SEND is an area where schools can work together most effectively to meet the needs of those children.

West Parley has expertise in SEND – will you share that amongst other schools? If so, how will you ensure that this provision is not spread too thinly?

The school already shares that expertise and will continue to do so. The school has provision for 10 places with 5 currently filled and it would be down to the school to ensure that quality remains high. The school currently buys in specialist part-time support but the Head Teachers could decide to employ a full-time member of staff to work across all schools in the trust.

Staffing

What are the implications for existing staff?

- Staff no longer employed by Dorset Council or Corfe Hills Academy Trust after conversion, all staff will work for Castleman Academy Trust.
- Transfer of employment under TUPE regulations with protection of employment terms & conditions of employment at point of transfer.
- The Trust has developed principles of employment, which are applicable after the point of transfer, subject to the final TUPE consultation.
 - Terms, conditions and pay at least equal to that agreed nationally/locally
 - Contract of employment to work in your named school
 - Work towards a single tier workforce: transferred, new and promoted staff on same T&Cs
 - Full protection of pension rights for either Teachers Pension Scheme or Local Government Pension Scheme
 - Recognition of Continuity of Service

Will the staffing levels at the trust be expanded because of increased admin requirements?

The DfE dictate that the trust must have a Financial Director and a CEO, but beyond that the leadership group will devise where they would like most support from the trust and what the structure of that support might look like. However, CAT are committed to a simple, low-cost structure.

Corfe Hills is to have a change of headship. Are there plans to second excellent teachers away from Ferndown Upper to support Corfe Hills? Will that affect Ferndown pupils?

The headship vacancy at Corfe Hills, which governors hope will be filled by September 2020, will not affect staffing at Ferndown Upper unless staff choose to apply for the vacancy when it is advertised. However, the two schools are already working together to identify strengths that they can share. The approach of CAT is to help facilitate ideas that come from within the schools, not dictate from the trust down. There could be opportunities to share specialist teachers across the secondary schools for small subject areas which may not be feasible to staff for a single school.

Will our children start seeing different teachers in front of their class?

Teachers will continue to teach in their current school and Head Teachers will be responsible for staffing and deployment in their schools. But there will be an opportunity for staff to meet together, to collaborate and share ideas/resources. However, staff would have the opportunity to apply for vacancies at other schools in the trust.

We hear that trusts can employ unqualified teachers – is there an intention to do that?

There is no such intention, but LA schools can also employ unqualified teachers if they wish.

Governance

What difference will this make to current governance procedures? Particularly with regards to involvement in appointing senior staff?

In practice, very little will change. Governors will continue to be involved in the appointment of senior staff including head teachers. Governors' priorities for their schools and students are unlikely to change, and will remain as important as ever. The trust will be an additional 'stakeholder', who will provide the task of overseeing school outcomes, whilst each Local Governing Body will focus more closely on the running of their school.

Term Dates

Would there be any planned amendments to term dates?

CAT will follow term dates as set by the local councils, although schools within the trust will look for some common Inset days.

Consultation Process

1st September is quoted as a target date – is this realistic?

Yes, that is achievable if the consultation is positive.

Will the on-line survey be per household or per parent?

Each parent can complete but will be asked to supply an email address to ensure no duplication. All parents are encouraged to complete the survey to get as big a picture as possible.

If we've children at more than one school, can we complete one survey for each school?

Yes – one of the questions will be to ask which school you represent for each form you complete.

It is government policy for schools to convert to academy and the head teachers and governors have clearly done a lot of work already. Has the decision already been made? If so how do we know that you will listen to the consultation?

Whilst academisation is the government policy, there is no legislation to make it compulsory. The governing bodies have considered a number of academy options, and feel that this is the best MAT for their schools. They have a strategic responsibility to do what is in the best interest of their school, therefore it is a genuine consultation. Philip Cranwell will write a report after the consultation has closed and the governors have a duty to consider objections and seek mitigations as appropriate.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF STAFF CONSULTATION Q&A

Castleman Academy Trust (CAT) and its Expansion

If the trust were to have a new CEO who had a different outlook, how vulnerable are we to become an academy chain?

The trust will always interview prospective trustees to ensure that they are aligned with our vision and values and many come from schools within the trust. The Trust Board would always look for a CEO with the same values and vision and the Leadership Group would be involved in the appointment. Trustees will be asked to sign up to a Memorandum of Principles.

What would happen if the CEO did go off on a tangent?

The Trustees would have the ability to intervene, but both the leadership group and governing bodies would be able to flag any concerns with the Board.

What is the composition of the trust board and will that change significantly to ensure appropriate expertise is represented on the board?

Governors from all schools were invited to become board members. Broad areas of expertise include HR, finance, small business owners, primary and secondary educational experience.

When will you be able to share details of the trust board members?

The details are on the trust website governance page and there are no proposals to change this, although the Board currently has one vacancy. The trust is a charitable organisation bound by charity law and trustees are volunteers. Trustees cannot be paid and there are strict rules about finance and conflict of interest. The trust's accounts are available on the trust website.

Is there a trustee on the board to represent the creative arts, in these times of funding squeeze?

Not currently, but we are committed to ensuring a broad curriculum across all schools. Additionally, the governing bodies of each school will be looking to support a broad and balanced curriculum in their school and governors have been extremely impressed with the collaboration that has already taken place between heads.

What are the disadvantages of joining a MAT?

A document will be circulated which will include all risks to the plan, alongside the risks of remaining maintained schools. Head teachers feel that there is little advantage in remaining with the LA due to the dwindling support available. It was recommended that staff look at the research completed by Leora Cruddas and the Confederation of School Trusts to find out more about the benefits of joining a MAT.

Governors and heads have been discussing academisation for a number of years and have been looking at the options. Discussions with the Regional School Commissioner's team led to a number of recommended options which they have carefully considered and discussed. They are attracted to CAT because they like their ethos and approach, and their support of our ethos of working together as a pyramid. This can be seen as an exciting opportunity

Will the trust aim to make all the schools similar?

No, the USP of CAT is that we encourage schools to retain their individuality. Head teachers and governors will continue to work together with staff to ensure that their structure is right for their school. Head teachers confirmed that currently, staff and governors review the staffing structure each year to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements of their pupils and that process will not change.

Governors have been keen to understand those decisions that will remain with the governing body/school and those decisions that will be made by the Trust. Trustees are ultimately responsible for outcomes across the trust, but the staffing structure, planning and curriculum delivery to ensure great outcomes remains the responsibility of the school.

Financial Implications

How is money shared out between schools?

Each school will receive the same funding formula from the DfE. The Head Teachers will work out the central services they would like from the trust which will dictate the trust central budget, which will be allocated on a percentage basis for each school. Each school will be responsible for allocating its spending and each school will retain its reserves.

Is there any estimate as to the percentage top-slice the Trust will be likely to take?

We will look at the detail of this once the governing bodies have finally committed to go ahead with the expanded trust. The CAT commits to being simple and low-cost and that commitment will continue. Schools are already paying for back-office services, we are looking to make that cheaper with economies of scale.

Will schools in deficit get financial support from the trust?

The trust would help support a school to recover from the deficit, which may involve a short-term loan. But it is a really important principle for head teachers and governors that schools will retain their surpluses, although they could agree a short-term loan to another school. Schools, as now, will be required to set balanced budgets.

Land and Buildings

What is the system for large building projects?

Maintained schools bid to the LA for capital funding, however the proposed size of CAT would mean that the DfE directly pay £0.5-075M per annum for capital works across all buildings. Therefore, the trust would need an asset management plan and can deliver project funding for schools in the trust.

Can the trust sell off assets?

No, the land is owned by the LA and the trust will have a 125 year lease. The Trust would have to seek permission from the LA to make any material changes to the buildings.

Collaboration Between Schools

Where you mention more centralised working together for extra-curricular activities, how is that achievable geographically?

That refers to working together on organisation and support to enable schools to provide more extra-curricular activities at achievable costs.

With two upper schools, is there scope for combining classes for marginal subjects?

Yes, there could be scope for appointing one member of staff to work across both sites.

With the opportunity for more centralised resources, would you support music specialist bid to become their own independent music hub?

If that's what schools wanted to do and head teachers can recommend such a course, then the trust would seek to support.

Staffing

Will there be any redundancies?

Not as a result of joining the Trust.

Will there be a pay date change?

We've not yet done the pay analysis, but we will avoid that if we can. If there were a change in pay date, there would be an appropriate consultation.

Will pay still be negotiated under the Green Book and NJC guidelines?

Yes, there will be no detriment to working for CAT, scales will be at least as good as the national and local guidelines.

With a proposed date of 1st September, will there be enough time to put HR and financial resources in place? How will that take place?

Head teachers and governors have started planning for HR and business transition. This plan will be implemented once the governing bodies have agreed to move forward following consultation. At that point, finance staff will come together to plan financial resources.

Will there be a requirement for new personnel?

Not at the moment. We have an HR SLA as a 2-school trust, but will do a procurement exercise as a larger trust. Where we currently have six SLA contracts, we would plan to move to single contracts across all schools.

If you are centralising services, can you confirm that there will be no redundancies?

There are no plans for redundancies – structures would be reviewed when staff leave post. Restructuring will be focussed on processes and systems rather than personnel. However, whilst CAT will operate a structure based on autonomy, that comes with the responsibility of head teachers and governors to set a balanced budget. That might require difficult decisions for them in the future, but that would not come as a result of joining CAT.

What reassurance can you give that the needs of secondary pupils will be reflected in the leadership structure of the MAT?

The two secondary head teachers have already looked at the strengths and weaknesses of each school to identify where they can support each other. Rhonda brings a host of contacts who can support CAT across all phases. It will be the role of the two secondary heads to ensure that key stages 3-5 are supported appropriately. We have expertise from the secondary phase on the trust board. The trust improvement plan that was submitted to the DfE as part of the application reflects all phases within the trust and was put together by the leadership group.

Does the trust commit to STPCD?

Yes, the trust commits to providing at least as good as STPCD. The Trust also adheres to the Burgundy Book and the Green Book.

Will the trust remove TLRs from schools?

No, all employment T&Cs will continue on transfer and TLRs will continue to form part of the Trust Pay Policy. The Head teacher and governors will continue to make decisions on TLR appointments. The Trust will need to ensure that it is treating all staff fairly and will deal with any variances in liaison with governing bodies and head teachers.

If one school chose to make redundancies to balance the budget but there was an opening for staff elsewhere, would in-house transfers have preferential treatment to outside candidates?

Through the 'suitable alternative employment' rules, in that scenario staff can be offered an alternative post in another school.

Therefore, from the receiving school's perspective, would the head teacher not be in full control of recruitment in this instance?

This is employment law that the trust has to comply with, but it would only be if there was the ability to offer an equivalent job.

Who is responsible for recruitment?

Head teachers remain responsible for recruitment in their schools, with the staffing structure agreed by the head and governors.

Ferndown Middle School has subject curriculum leads, which we have found to be a beneficial system. We know that Broadstone Middle operate differently, would we be expected to move to the Broadstone model?

No, it will remain the responsibility of the head teacher and governors to decide the staffing structure in their school.

Term Dates

Would there be a confirmation of term dates?

The Trust will follow the term dates set by the local authorities, but there may be some joint INSET days.

APPENDIX C: NOTES OF TRADE UNION MEETING, MARCH 10TH

Present

Val Beardsmore (VB)	NASUWT
Jo Di-Pede (JDP)	Head Teacher of Ferndown First School
Rhonda Moore (RM)	CEO, Castleman Academy Trust
Philip Cranwell (PC)	Project Manager, CAT
Tracey Thorne (TT)	HR and Operations Director, CAT

Apologies

Caroline Peer –	ASCL
Robert Donnelly	GMB
Craig Martin	Unison
Ian McCann	NEU

Introductions were made round the table.

Background

PC confirmed that this is not the TUPE meeting, which will follow later. This is merely a consultation meeting for union representatives to find out more about the proposal. VB I has spoken to a number of members via their school representatives but has not yet been able to speak to all schools. She posed the questions that have arisen from her conversations with colleagues.

Q Are you going to make a decision tonight?

(PC) The decision has been postponed until 30th March due to the delay with informing the unions.

Q The proposal talks about risks of staying as maintained schools. What are the perceived risks?

(PC) Whilst it is not high risk, at the staff briefing we described the risks of staying as maintained schools. JDP explained the reasons why her school has been considering the academy journey for many years and exploring the options. Heads are concerned about the falling levels of support available from the local authority. Given that forming their own trust is not an option, the heads and governors have been keen to join a trust where they could form part of the decision-making process of how that organisation would look. In conversation with other head teachers in the group, there could be a risk of the pyramid breaking up by going down a different route. There is also an attraction in having other schools across each phase in the organisation. All schools were keen to maintain as much autonomy as possible, and the heads feel that this is the best option.

RM confirmed that, as an existing two-school trust, they are treating this as a new arrangement and all heads and governors have been involved in developing what the new organisation will look like.

Q How will top slice differ from DC top slice?

(PC) The top slice will be agreed from the bottom up. The leadership group of head teachers will decide what services they would like from the trust and that, alongside the key personnel, will determine the top slice. The percentage is likely to be around 3% which is much lower than other trusts because heads and governors want to keep money in their schools. The leadership group have also done some work around school improvement that could be offered by the Trust.

Q Will schools end up with a lesser budget because they will have to support other schools?

(PC) As part of the process, we have had lengthy conversations with governors and headteachers and all want to retain their autonomy to run their schools. Therefore, schools will keep their reserves, but all agreed to set a balanced budget. PC confirmed that as long as the trust holds that viewpoint in the long term, there shouldn't be cause for concern. The process is safeguarded

because the CEO and heads will sign off the trust central budget. The leadership group will be involved in the discussions each year around central services required and the top slice.

Q There are concerns about accountability sitting with a trust board of a few people, rather than Dorset Council, resulting in the board leaning heavily towards a business, rather than educational point of view?

(RM) We work hard to ensure a balanced board, completing an annual skills audit to look for a broad skillset. Most trustees have previous experience in governance at school level. We have sought to fill vacancies over the past two years with educational experience from within the governing bodies. We have appointed one trustee with secondary headship experience, and another who is a retired deputy. The board are mindful to ensure that the CEO has educational rather than business experience. The leadership group has a strong voice in the future direction of the trust to ensure that this will continue.

Q Would the new small Y7/8 plan be blocked?

No-one was sure what this question refers to and it was suggested that VB seeks clarification from the member of staff who asked the question.

Q Transfer of staff – is there an expectation for staff to move between schools?

PC shared the presentation given at the staff meeting showing the measures that will be followed. Staff will only be work in another school with their agreement because either they wish to enhance their professional development or because they apply for a job in another school.

Q Have your policies been agreed with unions?

(RM) We have always used BCP policies because they have been agreed with unions; we buy in that support and will continue to do so.

Q As they get updated – will you ensure that your policies are also updated?

(RM) Yes, we will work towards all schools following the same policies. The Trust guarantees to follow STPCD and LA agreements as a minimum.

Q Some schools are splitting MP6 and 6a. We are in process of negotiating with Dorset that this disappears from policy because of unfairness across the county. Will you follow this?

PC showed a chart indicating that schools are currently on 3 different pay scales. VB confirmed that the option recommended by unions is 6 points for MPS and 3 points for UPS, making it easier for staff moving between schools. RM confirmed that we will seek advice, discuss with headteachers and governors then come to a solution with the information gathered.

Q What about a school's leadership structure – will that be autonomous to schools?

(PC) Yes, head teachers will decide their leadership structure but this would be moderated to ensure fairness across the trust.

Q Going forward with developments, how much input will teachers have?

(RM) As part of the application, Head teachers put information together about their strengths and weaknesses to produce 9 action plans. Jo confirmed that she will not change the way she works in terms of discussion with colleagues – such opportunities won't be any less and will not change. PC confirmed that, as an employer, the trust is able to take a view of benefits for all staff and can offer different opportunities such as staff networks. Other effective trusts will do annual surveys, staff forums etc. Rhonda confirmed that the trust already runs successful governor forums and carries out a staff wellbeing survey twice a year.

Q What are the outcomes of the staff surveys?

The EHT and CEO will look through them for trends, as well as addressing individual concerns.

VB confirmed that any concerns have been allayed and she understands how and why the trust are proceeding with the planned proposals, although keeping it going with those principles will be the challenge. RM confirmed that as a leadership group, they have redesigned and talked about our shared values and vision, and there are nine action plans that the Trust Board, Governing Bodies and leadership group have signed up to.

APPENDIX D: SURVEY DATA TABLE

School	Respondent Type	Universe (No.)	Responses (no.)	% Response Rate	Response to Q5 as number and % of universe							
					YES		MAYBE		NO		DON'T KNOW	
					No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
FFS	Parent/carer	344	19	5.5%	12	3%	3	1%	0	0%	4	1%
	Teacher	18	1	5.6%	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	48	1	2.1%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
FMS	Parent/carer	584	59	10.1%	33	6%	11	2%	6	1%	9	2%
	Teacher	36	16	44.4%	6	17%	6	17%	3	8%	1	3%
	Support Staff	51	8	15.7%	6	12%	2	4%	0	0%	0	0%
FUS	Parent/carer	886	48	5.4%	16	2%	11	1%	10	1%	11	1%
	Teacher	62	16	25.8%	1	2%	2	3%	13	21%	0	0%
	Support Staff	38	10	26.3%	1	3%	3	8%	6	16%	0	0%
CHS	Parent/carer	877	22	2.5%	13	1%	6	1%	2	0%	1	0%
	Teacher	60	9	15.0%	6	10%	3	5%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	62	5	8.1%	4	6%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
PFS	Parent/carer	311	21	6.8%	5	2%	7	2%	2	1%	7	2%
	Teacher	12	4	33.3%	4	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Support Staff	41	0	0.0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%