



Report – Community and Children’s Services Committee

The proposed federation of City of London Academy (Southwark) and Redriff Primary Academy to form a Multi-Academy Trust

To be presented on Thursday, 6th March 2014

To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London in Common Council assembled.

SUMMARY

1. This report seeks approval of the formation of a Multi-Academy Trust between the City of London Academy Southwark and Redriff Primary Academy. The schools are close to signing the final agreements before submitting them to the Secretary of State for Education. It requires the approval of the Court of Common Council to enter in to the arrangement and agree to extend the City of London’s academy sponsorship to Redriff Primary Academy.

MAIN REPORT

Background

2. The City of London Academy Southwark (COLAS) has been in discussions with Redriff Primary Academy (Redriff) over formalising the arrangements to establish Redriff as a feeder school to COLAS in the respective admissions policies. This led to further discussions on an all-out federation to take advantage of educational and resource-based opportunities. It was subsequently agreed by the governing bodies of both Academies that it would enter into a multi-academy trust (MAT) arrangement.
3. In forming the MAT the City of London’s academy sponsorship will extend to Redriff as the academy would come under the structures and governance of the City of London Academy Southwark Limited.

4. The primary decision to federate rests with the two academies, which are separate legal entities. The City of London as sponsor of COLAS is asked to give its support to the proposals before they are formally progressed by each academy and submitted to the Secretary of State for Education for approval.
5. The Community and Children's Services Committee has been monitoring the progress of discussions between the academies and the Department for Education. To strengthen the case for federation a business case, risk register and arrangements for governance have been developed. The necessary consultations have taken place, including with the London Borough of Southwark who agree with the proposals.
6. Redriff, which converted under more recent academy arrangements and does not therefore have a sponsor, is rated outstanding by Ofsted. It is based in Rotherhithe and many of its pupils go on to COLAS. The results at Key Stage 2 have exceeded national expectations over the last six years. The school is a National Support School and the head teacher is a National Leader of Education. Both schools were keen to formalise this through designating Redriff as a feeder school to COLAS in the admissions policy. The discussions then moved on to proposals for a hard federation through the MAT framework, in which the two academies intend to secure continuous school improvement for both schools.
7. The potential educational benefits identified from such an arrangement include: improving transition from primary to secondary education, raising standards in teaching and learning, and providing continuity of provision for vulnerable pupils and their families. The proposal to establish a MAT is in line with government policy on education, which promotes collaboration between schools as a means of securing improvements in educational standards. The proposal supports the City of London's corporate objectives of enhancing services and outcomes for children and young people in the City and City fringes.

Current Position

8. As the Committee responsible for the City academy schools, the Community and Children's Services Committee agreed to the development of the proposal in June 2013 and, following receipt of further information on the business case, the governance arrangements and the financial implications, approved the agreement in principle.
9. A new Funding Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding and amended Articles of Association have been agreed by the academies and the final documentation is being finalised before its submission to the Secretary of State.
10. In getting agreement from the Secretary of State to the MAT, the Redriff Primary Academy company would be wound up and incorporated into the City of London Academy Southwark Ltd. company. The proposed governance and administrative arrangements would be implemented upon getting agreement from the sponsor (The City of London) and the Secretary of State. Once agreed and signed off Redriff would become a City of London Academy, under the sponsorship of the City of London.

11. At the time when COLAS was established sponsors were expected to contribute start-up funding. As Redriff has already been established no capital commitment is expected from the City of London. Redriff would, however, be able to take advantage of the opportunities afforded to the City academies as a result of its sponsorship by the City of London. This includes governance arrangements and administrative support. It is also expected that Redriff will benefit from any funding made available to the City schools.

Conclusion

12. The City of London has worked hard to enhance the quality of its offer to the three City academies and being an academy sponsor accords with the City of London's tradition of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. It has also enabled the Corporation to support the economic and social development of communities in the boroughs surrounding the City of London.
13. The inclusion of Redriff as a City of London Academy accords with the strategic objective, as set out in the City of London Education Strategy 2013-15, '*To explore opportunities to expand the City's education portfolio and influence on education throughout London*'.
14. We therefore **recommend** that the federation of the City of London Academy Southwark Ltd and Redriff Primary Academy, as set out above, be approved and that the City of London extends its academy school sponsorship to Redriff Primary Academy.

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 14th day of June 2013.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

THE REVEREND DR MARTIN DUDLEY
Chairman