



Barnet Joint Trade Unions Press Release: 8 June 2010

“Stop mass privatisation of Barnet Schools – ‘Big Society’ is just big sell off of public assets!”

The Council Trade Unions have responded to the news that up to **35** Barnet schools rated by Ofsted as ‘outstanding’ are being strongly “invited” to be fast tracked into becoming Academies without any consultation.

Underneath the political hype and spin the reality of what it means to become an academy is very different. Once again politicians are promoting ‘*political dogma*’ without thinking about the long term consequences.

- There is **no evidence** of a public clamour for the creation of new academy schools. A recent public opinion survey conducted by Ipsos MORI found that 96% of parents did not want state-funded schools to be run as academies.
- There will be an **increase** of bureaucratic burdens on volunteer school governors as they undertake a raft of statutory functions that previously were discharged on behalf of the school by the local authority or other relevant body.
- The Government has **not** given any assurances about how recurrent capital costs of any new academy schools would be paid for.
- There is **no** guarantee on future revenue funding.
- **No** guarantee has been given to any school beyond March 2011 on the level of funding. In a harsher public spending context, a new academy school would need to ensure that it could remain financially solvent and self-sufficient.
- Schools may receive more money, but the reality is that any additional money would need to be offset against the additional cost to schools paying for services **no longer** provided by local authorities because of the reallocation of funding to the school. It would actually mean more public money having to be spent on “back office” functions such as human resources and financial management as each school handles this separately.
- Previous experience from the existing **200 academies** has shown that the majority of members of the governing body before the school

became an academy (particularly parent governors) have been **replaced** by **unelected corporate and business sponsors**;

- There would be **no protection** for the governing body if your school encountered a future financial overspend or budget deficit. Currently, all local authorities have statutory powers that enable them to provide financial support to schools in financial difficulty. Such support would no longer be available and, moreover, individual governors might not be fully indemnified against any financial liability or loss arising from a failure of the schools provision.
- The Government's invitation to all primary, special and secondary schools to transfer to academy status is a complete distraction at a time when schools need to focus on delivering **high educational standards** especially when the future financial position of schools, local authorities and other public services is so uncertain.
- Barnet Council Trade Unions are calling on Barnet Schools' Governing Bodies not to make a rushed decision without consulting parents, teachers, support staff and local residents.
- Our society is grounded in the belief that public money needs to be accountable. Academies are not democratic. They are not accountable to the local authority so are not accountable to the public. The Governors are appointed not elected. They are not covered by **Freedom of Information** legislation.

End.

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Information/links

- 1. School Governors may rebel against government plans to turn schools into academies**

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/jun/04/governors-academy-decisions>

- 2. Anti Academies Alliance**

<http://www.antiacademies.org/Home/literature/briefings-2/whatdoestheacademiesbillmeanforstateeducation>