

Chorlton Parents Against Academy

Why it would be wrong for Chorlton High School to become an Academy

As concerned parents we summarise the main reasons we believe a move to Chorlton High School becoming an academy would not be in the best interests of our children, future pupils and the local community.

1. If it is not broken why fix it?

We have an excellent school, with fine facilities, hard working staff and good leadership. Our school has good results and good links with feeder primaries.

The Tory Education Secretary, Michael Gove is in a hurry to push successful schools like Chorlton High into converting to Academies. No longer funded through the elected Local Education Authority, Academies are funded directly from the department in London and are accountable to the department in London. Converting to an Academy would bring no financial gain to the school. It would, though, fundamentally change the way in which the school is run. Forever.

2. No democratic control and no accountability

Out would go the elected Governing Body. In would come an Academy Trust of four, selected from an approved list drawn up by Gove's department. The Trust would then construct a new Governing Body, which might include parents and even local Councillors. They would advise the Trust on how they believe the school should be run, but in the end The Trust makes the final decisions. The Trust is not elected. It is not accountable to parents or the community. If things went wrong, neither parents nor the local Council would have the power to put things right.

3. No privatisation

Academy Schools are different. They do not have to employ qualified teachers or trained headteachers and some heads of academies can find they are less important than 'business managers'. In the short term that is unlikely to affect a school like ours, but many of Michael Gove's advisers think that 'for-profit' providers should be allowed to run schools. No one involved with Chorlton High School wants that

and if the school stays as it is, no company can take the school over. It could not become a school run for profit.

4. Keep it local. Keep it inclusive.

Our school is inclusive for all pupils from our catchment area. Regardless of background or ability, pupils can gain a place at our school. The school has good links to the feeder primaries. An Academy school has greater powers to change the admissions criteria. Pressures to compete in the 'market for league table results' have affected the intakes of pupils in Academy schools. Whatever the aspirations and values of the current staff, the facts show that in Academies there is pressure to alter the pupil population to improve results.

If the school becomes an Academy, then there will be less money in the Local Education Authority, which translates to less money for our local primary schools, too. Future links to local primaries would be determined by the future business interests of the Trust, not by the needs of local parents, and on the advice of local headteachers. Manchester primary schools currently are virtually all, like Chorlton High School, part of the Local Education Authority.

5. Use your head

All the teacher trades unions, the NUT, Nasuwt, and the ATL, as well as the staff unions Unison, UNITE and the GMB, are opposed to Academies. At the last teachers' union meeting at the school, staff voted overwhelmingly to oppose becoming an Academy. The latest findings show that, when comparing like for like, Academy schools get lower exam results than those that have chosen not to become Academies.

We have confidence in and respect for th current headteacher, Andy Park, who is committed to keeping the ethos of the school.

But, if Chorlton High converts to an Academy, everything could change in the future. Andy Park might be the last teacher with commitment to all of our children to lead the school.

Leaflet compiled by parents with the help of Anti-Academies Alliance: Come to the Anti-Academies Alliance Meeting Thursday 8th March 7pm The Dining Hall, Chorlton High School. Everyone, including primary school parents, will be welcome.