

Full Council – 26 May 2016

Notice of Motion submitted under Procedural Standing Order

14.2.1(a) (Part C)

It was moved by County Councillor Hennessy and seconded by County Councillor Driver that:

Academy Schools

This Council recognises, and supports, the strong historic relationship between the County Council and our schools. Council extends its thanks and congratulations to all, including Parent Governors, who work in education across our County in providing the best of opportunities for our young people to grow and thrive.

Whilst welcoming the changes to the proposed policy of compelling schools to become Academies, Council is concerned that the Secretary of State still intends to introduce measures to enable her to insist that schools become Academies if they are graded below 'Good' by OFSTED or if significant numbers of schools in a local authority area become Academies.

Council believes that the obsession with school structures, rather than focussing on outcomes for children, has caused unease and uncertainty across the sector, deflecting the attention of Head Teachers and Governors from their focus of providing the best education that they can.

Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Education and all Lancashire MP's welcoming the change of policy and committing the Council to continue working with all involved in Lancashire children's education to ensure the very best outcomes in the future stating that:

- (i) Over 90% of Lancashire's schools are rated as 'good' or 'outstanding' by OFSTED
- (ii) There is no evidence to support the view that Academies produce better results than local authority schools.
- (iii) Currently, where a local authority school requires improvement, the Council provides help and advice from its highly skilled and professional team of officers. This is not necessarily so with Academies and the Government's proposals are not clear as to how failing Academies will be helped to improve.
- (iv) Council is concerned that there are no proposals in the White Paper to reimburse local authorities for the significant costs that would be incurred in the process of converting to Academies and objects to the proposal to transfer council owned land on which schools are built to the Secretary of State.
- (v) Council is also concerned that local authorities will be left with insufficient authority to carry out the proposed residual duties recommended in the White Paper, particularly those relating to:
 - (a) ensuring that every child has a school place;
 - (b) ensuring the needs of vulnerable children, particularly SEND pupils, are met;
 - (c) acting as champion for all parents and families;
- (vi) Council considers that the proposed Regional School Commissioners, to whom Academies will be responsible and to whom parents can raise their concerns, are both

unelected and remote. They are a very poor substitute for the current system where parents can raise their concerns with their local Council and Councillors who are known and accountable to them and who know the local schools and the communities they serve.

On being put to the vote the motion was CARRIED and it was:

Resolved: That,

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