



Engagement Report

Grasmere Academy

November 2023

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1. Introduction

In July 2023 the Department for Education confirmed that an application for Grasmere Academy (GA) to join Smart Multi Academy Trust (MAT) had been approved and an Academy Order was issued. The Academy Order meant that the school could move forward in the next stage of planning.

As this is a voluntary transfer and GA is already a Single Academy Trust, there is no requirement for an official consultation. However, stakeholder engagement is extremely important to both GA and Smart MAT who organised information and events to provide stakeholders with insight of the process surrounding the transfer and the decision making that took place.

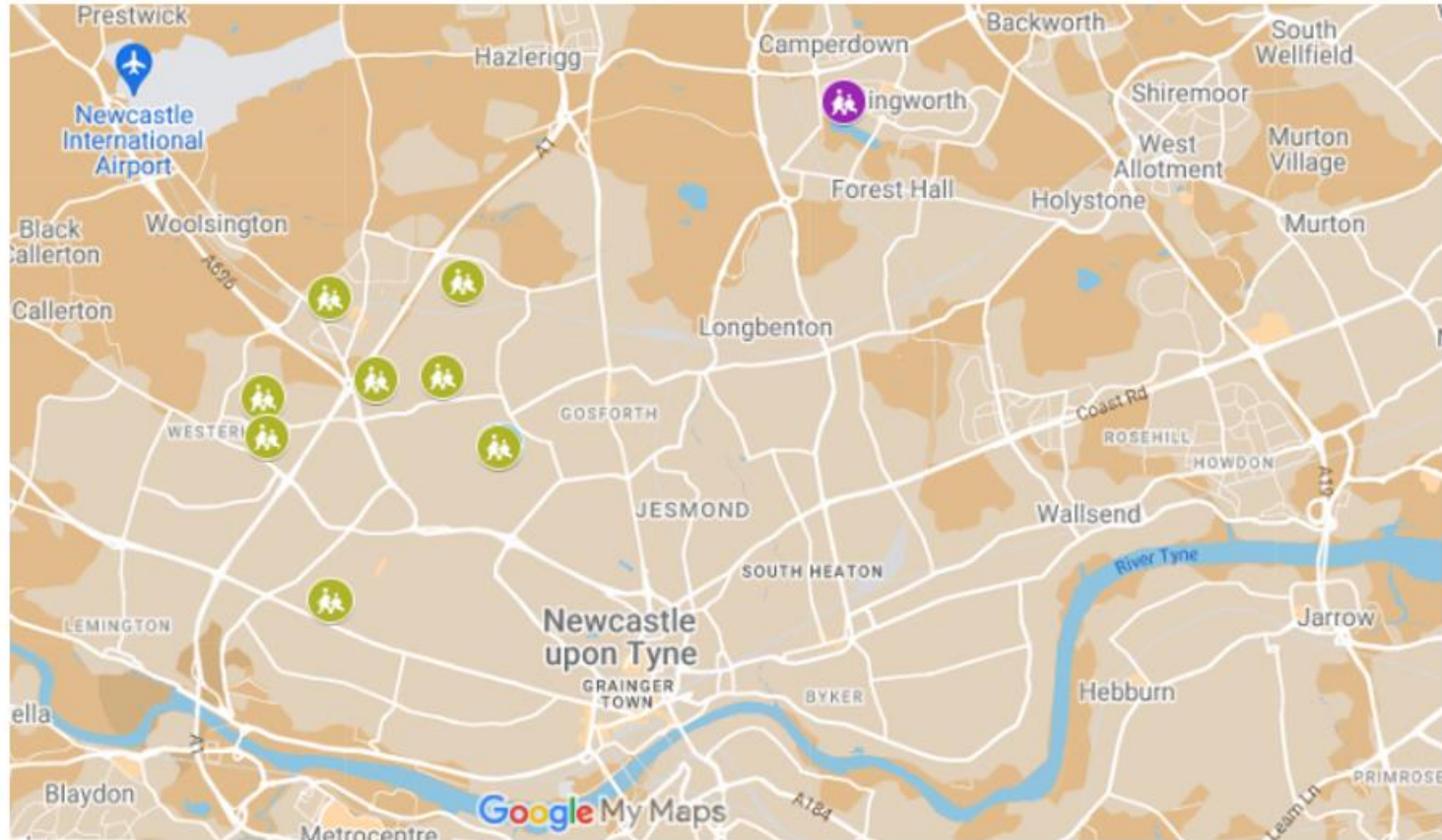
Stakeholder engagement commenced on 11th October 2023 and concluded on 7th November 2023 and both staff, families and other stakeholders were given an opportunity to ask questions and share their views in a number of ways. Further within the report we have shared a breakdown of meetings that happened and communications which were issued. A copy of all feedback received as part of the process will also be issued to all stakeholders in the form of an FAQ document.

1.1 Geographic position of the school

The map on the next page shows where Grasmere Academy is in relation to where other Smart MAT schools are located. All schools within Smart MAT are based in Newcastle. They have excellent road connectivity due to the proximity of the schools to each other meaning that travel time between schools permits staff to meet regularly in support of school improvement and their professional development. Grasmere Academy is no more than 30 minutes away from other Smart MAT schools.

Grasmere Academy

- Stocksfield Avenue Primary
- Kenton Bar Primary School
- North Fawdon Primary School
- Mountfield Primary School
- Kingston Park Primary School
- Cheviot Primary School
- Farne Primary School
- Wyndham Primary School
- Grasmere Academy



2. Engagement methodology

The overall aim of the engagement process was to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to ask questions and find out more about the how the decision to merge with Smart MAT was reached, the process that will take place and the benefits to both GA and Smart MAT following the merger.

The objectives of the process were to:

- Provide relevant background information for staff, families and other stakeholders;
- Explain the reasons for the transfer from a Single Academy Trust (GA) to join Smart, a Multi Academy Trust;
- Set out the stages in the process for the school to join Smart MAT and the associated timelines;
- Answer questions raised.

The principles laid down by the project team for the engagement were that it should be:

- An open and transparent process;
- Accessible to all stakeholders in terms of:
 - The times of the events;
 - The language used (jargon-free wherever possible and acronyms fully explained);
 - Being well-publicised.

A variety of media were used in the engagement including:

- Direct letters to staff by email
- Direct letters to families using Seesaw and pupil mail
- Emails to other key stakeholders such as Governors, local schools, unions and North Tyneside Learning Trust
- Text messaging to families
- Publicised physical meeting involving presentations and question and answer session which took place at school on 18th October 2023 at 4pm for staff and trade unions and 20th October 2023 at 2.30pm for families and other stakeholders
- Frequently asked questions and comments slips
- Online survey using Google Forms
- A publicised email address for questions and comments to be sent to
- School website (Appendix 1) with a regularly updated dedicated area publishing the correspondence to families and other stakeholders; presentations from 20th October meeting; frequently asked questions and all the questions received from families and other stakeholders, with answers from GA and Smart MAT.

3. Overview of the engagement process

3.1 Engagement meeting

Two separate meetings took place. The first, for staff and trade unions, was held on 18th October 2023 at 4pm. It was attended by two trade union representatives and 4 members of staff from Grasmere Academy who were then passing on the information to other colleagues. This was a joint meeting with the staff of both Grasmere Academy and Stephenson Memorial Primary School and was held at Stephenson Memorial Primary School. The purpose of holding the meeting collaboratively was to allow to Kerry Lilico, Executive Headteacher for both schools, to ensure consistent communication of important messages to all staff simultaneously.

A meeting for parents, carers and other stakeholders took place on 20th October 2023 at 2.30pm. This meeting was attended by 5 parents/carers and 1 headteacher from a local secondary school. Questions and answers were captured at this meeting to be incorporated into a post-engagement FAQ document to issue to all stakeholders – Appendix 2.

3.2 Feedback results

Stakeholders were invited to provide feedback via the following methods:

- By email at info@grasmereacademy.org.uk
- By completing the paper feedback form at the end of the FAQ document issued to families and returning it to reception at GA
- By completing the online feedback form available at www.grasmereacademy.org.uk

No feedback was received by email or via the paper form. Four responses were received through the online survey and all were positive, although they didn't include any specific questions or feedback. The results can be seen on the following page.

Google Survey Responses

Timestamp	Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are?	Have you received enough information regarding the reasons why the school is considering joining Smart Multi Academy Trust?	Have you received enough information about Smart Multi Academy Trust?	Do you support the proposal for Grasmere Academy to join Smart Multi Academy Trust?	Did you (or will you) be attending our scheduled engagement meeting?	Any Further Comments or questions
12/10/2023 10:06:36	School staff member	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
12/10/2023 11:31:59	School staff member	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
12/10/2023 15:45:31	Parent / Carer of a pupil currently at Grasmere Academy	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
17/10/2023 8:02:08	NTAF Board Member	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	

3.3 Themes and key messages

Details of the questions asked throughout the engagement process is available in the post engagement Q&A document (Appendix 3) . Whilst only a small number of questions were asked, they were well considered and mainly focused on the growth of Smart MAT and what GA joining would mean for them.

4. Next steps

Staff, families and other stakeholders have been informed that both GA and Smart MAT are available to answer any additional questions they have beyond the engagement period in relation to the transfer.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 School Website

Appendix 2 FAQ Document

Appendix 3 Q&A