

## **Derby NASUWT Branch Submission for Derby City Council Overview and Scrutiny Commission Meeting on *Building Schools for the Future – Choice and Diversity***

Derby NASUWT Branch represents 1,245 teachers employed in Derby local authority maintained schools (community, foundation, voluntary aided and centrally attached teachers) and 30 members at Landau Forte Academy. Derby NASUWT also has members in the fee-paying schools sector in Derby and a handful of members at Derby College. Derby NASUWT Branch represents teachers at all grades, including headteachers.

Derby NASUWT Branch is opposed to those aspects of the local authority's proposals which convert current Derby community or foundation schools to academies or convert community schools to academies or trusts. This submission deals with the threat posed by academies. Derby NASUWT Branch supports the position statement of the local authority trade unions and the recent Midlands TUC Council resolution on this issue (attached). I have also forwarded resolutions passed by NASUWT school branches at Sinfin Community and Da Vinci College (Merrill College NASUWT school branch has adopted the position statement of the local authority trade unions).

At the time of writing this submission, Merrill College, Sinfin Community, Bemrose Community and Da Vinci College were all reported to be potential academies and this submission assumes that one or all of these schools will be identified for academy conversion in the local authority's proposals.

Derby NASUWT Branch is opposed to the Council's proposals because of their impact on the following:

- 1) Educational Standards;
- 2) Terms and conditions of service of teachers;
- 3) Value for Money;
- 4) Reduction of accountability, including local community accountability.

### **Educational Standards**

Derby NASUWT Branch is fully committed to providing high class education for Derby's population and we consider that conversion to academy status will worsen educational provision rather than improving it. The City Council proposals fail to recognise the improvements in educational standards brought about by the local authority and existing school staff in the last four years:

- 1) All the schools concerned have improved to such an extent recently that they have moved out of special measures and there have been some very drastic improvements in standards, e.g. Da Vinci College.
- 2) This improvement has been made against a background of turbulence in every school which staff have managed to overcome:
- 3) For example, Merrill College suffered the long-term sickness absence of the previous head and a long delay in recruiting a candidate for headship of sufficient calibre. There have been marked improvements in behaviour which have accompanied the improvement in standards. It is not an exaggeration to say that the school has been transformed and that this is easily apparent when visiting the school.

- 4) Sinfon Community School was burnt down in the spring term of 2006 and many pupils suffered very lengthy interruptions in their schooling. Despite this, the school performed very well in its recent OFSTED inspection.
- 5) At one stage, High View School was notorious as one of the worst in the country. Following collaborative restart led by the local authority and an executive headteacher, together with a successful PFI rebuild, this school has also been transformed.
- 6) Bemrose School has successfully improved to the stage where it is now a popular school. It is a highly committed local school serving its community.

It is a matter of concern to NASUWT that Derby College is a potential academy sponsor. There is no guarantee that Derby College would employ qualified teachers to deliver Key Stage 4 and 5 lessons in any academy which it owns.

### **Terms and Conditions of Service of Teachers**

These would be put under threat by academies, which would not employ staff in accordance with the Schoolteachers' Pay and Conditions Document. Teachers employed at the point of transfer would enjoy some TUPE protection, but this would not apply to new staff. The average pay for lecturers is under 75% that of the average pay of secondary school teachers, a major concern for NASUWT. Derby already has one academy, Landau Forte College, which does not recognise trade unions and is widely viewed as a virulently anti-union employer.

### **Value for Money**

Derby council taxpayers have already invested a large amount in the PFI Schools, Merrill and Da Vinci. Sinfon is being rebuilt after its destruction by fire and only Bemrose would enjoy a new build from becoming an academy (which is likely to be a PFI build, the default position for procurement of new schools under BSF). In return for an investment after tax of £1.2 million, the academy sponsor would get brand new buildings, paid for by the Derby taxpayer, or in the case of Bemrose prime building land in the City. The spiralling cost of PFI facilities management and service provision is already eating into the allowance which other Derby schools receive. All Derby schools are likely to suffer a considerable real-terms reduction in funding as a result of the academy proposals, including primary schools.

### **Reduction of accountability, including local community accountability**

All the potential academy schools have active and successful governing bodies, representing the communities which they serve and which also include staff representatives. These governing bodies are democratically accountable. They will be replaced by a majority of company appointed private sponsor nominees who are completely unaccountable, either to the communities which the schools serve or at local authority level.

### **Conclusion**

It is not too late for the local authority to withdraw its proposals. OSC Commission members will see from the trade unions' position statement that, amongst our other recommendations, we are asking for a partnership approach to lobbying the Office of the Schools Commissioner to release Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding for Derby schools without the precondition of additional academies. Derby NASUWT Branch believes that Derby's schools, the future of our children and the livelihoods of teachers and other school staff, depend on the Council adopting our recommendations.

**Dave Wilkinson (Derby NASUWT Branch Secretary)**