



**Cllr Hannah Clare
Green Group Member for Brunswick & Adelaide
Ward**

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Date: 20th November 2019
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The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Dear Minister,

We are writing to you as Green Councillors on Brighton and Hove City Council regarding the plans for academisation at Moulsecoomb Primary School.

As we are sure you are aware, earlier this year an academy order was given following an inadequate OFSTED judgement. Parents have since led a strong campaign against the decision to turn the school into an academy, with the support of the wider community and councillors.

At last Monday's Children, Young People and Skills Committee, councillors were given a report on progress¹, which showed the vastly improved results at Moulsecoomb School. We were delighted to see positive improvements across phonics, KS1, KS2 and early years results this year, along with clear signs of the school improving through the guidance and support of our local authority.

The report also displayed the results of the recent parental ballot, undertaken at the request of councillors, where 96.5% of parents (on a 61% turnout) said 'No' when asked whether the school should become an academy. This result makes it very clear to us as leaders in our community, that parents wish for the school to remain under local authority control.

¹ Meeting of Children, Young People and Skills Committee, Monday 11th November 2019

[https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000883/M00009733/AI00076383/\\$20191031020448_020391_0067149_CommitteeReportTemplate210617newsavedformat.docxA.ps.pdf](https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000883/M00009733/AI00076383/$20191031020448_020391_0067149_CommitteeReportTemplate210617newsavedformat.docxA.ps.pdf)

Members of staff also oppose the school's academisation. Represented by three unions, the GMB, the NEU and UNISON, they have voted to take strike action, which will take place on 21st November.

Despite the strong opposition to academisation within the school, the community and the council, the recent meeting of the Regional School Commissioner's Headteacher board identified New Horizons Academy Trust as a sponsor for the school. This follows the withdrawal of two trusts previously.

We are concerned, following reports in the press, regarding the suitability of New Horizons Academy Trust. They have previously withdrawn from another academy and we are worried they may do the same for Moulsecoomb.

As a result of this, Green councillors have requested that more information regarding the sponsor be given to a future meeting of the committee, including the due diligence undertaken by the trust. We have also requested copies of the minutes of the board, which although they ought to be publicly available, currently aren't.

As a local authority, we are bound to cooperate with the law regarding the academy order. However, we do not think that this is the best outcome for the children at the school and therefore request that you revoke the academy order for Moulsecoomb Primary School.

It is clear that Moulsecoomb is improving, and while the school still assesses as "Requires Improvement", we believe that Brighton and Hove City Council is best placed to oversee improvements at the school.

There is a huge strength of feeling across the whole community and cross-party consensus that the improvements shown at Moulsecoomb will continue under local authority control. We would be saddened to see the academisation continue, an action which completely ignores parent, staff and community concerns.

As community representatives, we will not stand by as local parents and children demand the school is kept under local authority control, while academisation continues. We ask you to reconsider the academy order, and allow Brighton and Hove City Council the chance to continue supporting the community at Moulsecoomb.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

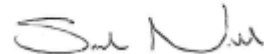
Yours sincerely



Cllr Hannah Clare



Cllr Elaine Hills



Cllr Sarah Nield

Green Group members on Children, Young People and Skills Committee

On behalf of the Brighton and Hove Green Group of Councillors