

PROTEST GROUP JOY AT ACADEMY U-TURN

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A CAMPAIGNING group has claimed victory for parent power after a secondary school abandoned plans to become an academy.

Governors at Bournville School and Sixth Form Centre announced they were no longer looking to convert the 1,200-pupil school into an academy following a three-month consultation on whether to opt out of local authority control.

Head teacher Barbara Easton confirmed in a letter to parents that the school would not become an academy following a majority vote at a meeting of governors to postpone consideration of academy status until after September 2012.

The decision follows a campaign by parents and staff, which saw also teachers from the NASUWT and NUT teaching unions poised for strike action over the matter.

Mrs Easton said in a letter to parents: "Following a governing body meeting on October 12 the decision was made not to proceed with academy status for the time being.

"It was felt that the school is not



Letter: Campaigners against plans to turn Bournville School into an Academy, and headteacher Barbara Easton.

yet ready for such a significant change. Thank you to everybody who contributed to the consultation."

A campaign called Hands Off Bournville School was launched in the wake of the consultation, which included a petition calling for the academy conversion to go ahead only if the majority of parents supported the move.

Members of the NASUWT and NUT teaching unions were set to strike on October 11, but called it off

at the 11th hour on understanding that governors would review their position at the meeting.

Parent Sarah Barton, from the campaign, hailed the decision as a "victory for pupils, parents staff and the community".

She said: "This is a huge relief and shows just how much opposition there was to Bournville School becoming an academy.

"Hundreds of people supported our campaign and teachers put themselves in the difficult position

of preparing to strike over it, which is not an easy decision to make."

A total of 17 schools in Birmingham have converted to academy status since the start of this year, including Aston Manor, Holyhead School in Handsworth and Plantsbrook School in Sutton Coldfield.

Freedoms for schools which switch to academy status include the ability to set pay and conditions for staff, changing the lengths of terms and school days, plus freedoms around the delivery of the curriculum.