



Hand in Hand
Promoting Excellence

DISLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Consultation exercise on Multi Academy Trust status

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you well and that you have managed to settle back into routine after the Christmas break. We return to school this term at an exceptionally important time for our school with some major decisions to make with regard to the future status and direction of our school. Our aim is always to ensure that we provide the best education, the best care and guidance and the best opportunities for your children and for the community we serve.

As you may be aware, there is an ever “changing face” in education through the movement towards all schools becoming academies and our Governing Body have been discussing our potential future status for the last two years and met on Tuesday 8th January 2019 to consider a resolution in this regard. I am now able to update you that the resolution to launch a formal period of consultation regarding potential conversion to academy status was unanimously passed. I have included at the end of this letter a copy of the exact wording of the resolution for your information. In summary, the Governing Body now seeks to consult on whether our school should convert to achieve academy status as part of a Multi-Academy Trust – The TRUE Learning Partnership – alongside both Lostock Hall Primary School and Poynton High School.

As a parent or carer of a child in our school I would like to invite you to help inform our discussions and consultations on this matter. I think it important at this stage to take an opportunity to explain “why now?” for our school. Disley Primary School is a truly great school and has the capacity and potential to be a transformational leader within the education sector. The talent and skills within our staff are the envy of others and we must ensure we continue to build the best school, with the best trained and supported staff, delivering the highest and most exacting standards for the children in our care now and for the generations of pupils to come. A conversion into The TRUE Learning Partnership now, at its current stage of evolution, would allow us to be a leader within that group of schools. There is no reason why Disley Primary School cannot be the best school “on the planet” and it is up to each and every one of us to ensure we work to achieve that goal, as our children, our colleagues and the community we serve should not settle for less.

I would like to provide you with as much information as possible, so that you may better understand the importance of the school potentially making this decision. This letter is rather long and detailed and I hope you are able to find time to consider its content carefully and respond to help inform our debate. Any questions or points you would like to raise will be considered by the Governing Body and can be e-mailed to me directly on: academyconversion@disley.cheshire.sch.uk

In summary, the Governing Body would like to consult on us potentially forming a Multi-Academy Trust together with local partner primaries and a secondary school. An academy trust is an independent company

which has charitable status and which receives its funding directly from the Department for Education. It is believed that joining the schools together in a new academy trust will provide exciting opportunities to improve education for our children and our community. There are many practical benefits to formal partnerships between locally based schools, not least in ensuring a true package of care and support for young people right through from the age of 4 to the age of 19.

Other practical benefits could include, but are not limited to:

- Joint staffing to support pupil welfare, for example, joint Family Support Workers, increased access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHs), enhanced access to learning mentors and tutors, joint working to further enhance special educational needs provision and greater joint working to support our young people as they move from age 4 to age 19 within our “learning community”.
- Significantly increased opportunities for training for staff to further raise the quality of teaching, learning and leadership.
- Opportunities to “pool resources” to ensure best value and economies of scale in contracts such as grounds maintenance, health and safety, computer resources, and various other business-related services such as payroll, human resources and finance systems.

The Governing Body believes that joining a Multi-Academy Trust of both secondary and primary partners will lead to significantly increased opportunities for pupils, staff and our community as a whole; bringing increased capacity, increased leadership development opportunities and the ability to exploit financial economies of scale through formal partnerships.

What happens next?

We are now entering a consultation period running from Tuesday 2nd January 2019 to Tuesday 5th March 2019. During this period we will be consulting with parents and carers, staff, Professional Associations, the Local Authority, the local community and local schools. It is our intention to hold a “Consultation Surgery” evening for parents and carers where we will present more details about potential academy status and hopefully answer any of the questions you may have on a 1-2-1 basis.

The Consultation Surgery is scheduled for Wednesday 6th February 2019 at 6.30pm at school. It would be helpful if you could submit in advance any questions you would like us to specifically address on the evening. Please email me directly with your questions on:
academyconversion@disley.cheshire.sch.uk

This is an exciting opportunity for our school and we would welcome your engagement as we progress on our journey. Thank you for taking the time to consider this rather lengthy letter. I value your support and challenge in ensuring we establish the right path forward for our school and our children.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Heather Taylor
Head Teacher

What exactly did the Governing Body resolve to consult upon?

The Governing Body of Disley Primary School RESOLVES as follows:-

The Governing Body is minded to pursue an application for academy status, subject to conducting an appropriate consultation exercise with all relevant stakeholders and complying with any other statutory requirements;

To submit an application to the Department for Education for grant support;

To delegate to the Headteacher in partnership with a sub-committee of governors the authority to:

- explore conversion
- to comply with applicable requirements of the Department for Education
- to engage appropriate professional advisors and,
- subject to the final approval of the Governing Body, to enter into any agreements necessary to achieve academy status as a Multi Academy Trust as part of a wider Learning Partnership based on Secondary Schools and Primary Schools partnership model and achieve the necessary conversion.

The Head Teacher and Governors will report back to the Governing Body as appropriate.

The Governing Body recognises that a number of issues will be clarified as more details of the DfE process and the possible governance models become available. The issues include:

- precise governance structure and membership of the Multi Academy Trust;
- details regarding the Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State and any conditions laid down;
- the agreement of appropriate arrangements with Cheshire East Council for the transfer of land, assets and contracts;
- appropriate consultation with all staff and,
- any other specific concerns of the Governing Body.

