



Hand in Hand
Promoting Excellence

DISLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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January 22nd 2019

Consultation exercise on Multi Academy Trust status

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

As you may be aware, the Governing Body of Disley Primary School has been discussing its potential future status 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 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) with partner secondary and primary schools (presently Lostock Hall Primary School and Poynton High School).

As a local partner to our school and community I would like to invite you to help us 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 we believe we have the capacity and potential to be a transformational leader within the education sector. To this end, 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 young people 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.

Will Disley Primary School definitely become an academy?

The Governing Body is consulting over plans to convert to academy status and has not yet submitted an application to the DfE. The school is not obligated to become an academy until a contract between any new Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and the Department for Education, known as the Funding Agreement, is signed. Such an application would only be submitted after the end of the consultation period.

The academy trust will not sign the Funding Agreement until parents and carers of children at the school, staff at the school and partners from local schools and our children themselves have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. A range of meetings and other communication methods will be established in order to facilitate the consultation.

Any comments or representations which are made about the proposals will be considered by the Governing Body before it takes the final decision on whether or not to convert to an academy. The Governing Body will not vote to proceed with academy conversion unless it is content that the conversion would be in the best interests of the school, taking account of all of the legal and practical ramifications.

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 children, 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.

To respond to our consultation please contact me by email on academyconversion@disley.cheshire.sch.uk . The closing date for representations to be made is Tuesday 5th March 2019. Thank you for taking the time to read this rather extensive 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.

