



Lawn
Primary
School

25th February 2019

ACADEMY CONVERSION CONSULTATION

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you may be aware the Governing Board has been exploring formal collaborations with other schools for a while now. After careful consideration and following a meeting, the governors voted overwhelmingly in favour on becoming an academy and joining Transform Trust. Governors would now like to begin the formal process of consultation with you to consider the conversion of the school into an Academy with Transform Trust. We believe that this move will have many benefits for our children, families and staff, and will enable us to work with other highly regarded schools to share expertise in all areas of school life - whilst at the same time maintaining all of the attributes that make our schools so special.

An Academy is a publicly-funded all-ability local school which is independent from Local Authority control. Transform Trust is a Nottingham & Derby based Multi Academy Trust, who also run a Teaching School we have been partnering with over the last year.

Each school within the Transform Trust retains its own individuality, ethos and values. In terms of the day to day life of the school, there will be little difference to that which is currently experienced by the pupils and parents, and we will be maintaining our strong identity. The Headteacher will continue to make operational decisions and share the strategic leadership with our Governing Board but we will also benefit from sharing best practice amongst other schools.

We have created a Multi Academy Trust consultation page on our website where you will find information on our proposal and our FAQs document.

The formal consultation period opens on Tuesday 26th February 2019 and we will be holding meetings with parents, staff and other stakeholders during that time in order to hear their views. The consultation period will run from 26th February 2019 until 2nd April 2019. As a part of that process we would like to invite you to attend a parent and carer information meeting about Academy conversion where you will have the opportunity to express your views and raise any questions or concerns. This will be an informal drop in meeting where Governors and Senior Staff will be present to talk on a 1:1 basis about any concerns or issues that you may have.

Following the consultation period, it will be for the Local Governing Body to consider all the comments and opinions expressed during the consultation process and then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State.

Norbury Close, Allestree, Derby DE22 2QR

Telephone: (01332) 550178

Email: admin@lawn.derby.sch.uk

Website: www.lawn.derby.sch.uk



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The meeting for parents and carers will be held in the school hall on Monday 11th March from 5-6pm.

Attached to this letter is a frequent questions and answer sheet (FAQs) which will hopefully answer some of the main questions you may have.

We look forward to engaging with you in discussions over the coming weeks and hope that you can see the opportunities and security that we think this proposal offers. Most importantly we think that it will allow us to continue to offer the very best experience to our children.

Yours sincerely

Dr Ruth Larsen
Chair of Governors

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Academy FAQs

As you may already be aware, the Governing Body of Lawn Primary School is consulting to become an Academy under the Academies Act 2010. Further information about what becoming an Academy means, who our choice of partner Transform Trust is, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

Will Lawn definitely become an Academy?

The Governing Board is consulting to consider converting to Academy status. However, the school is not obliged to become an Academy until the contract between the Academy Trust and the Department for Education (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed. The Governing Board has not commenced any formal dialogue with the DfE at this stage. The Governing Board will not commence such a dialogue until parents and carers of pupils and staff at the school have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. Any comments or representations which are made about the proposals will be considered by the Governing Board before a decision is taken to apply to DfE for the Academy Order. The Governing Board will not agree to make that application unless they are content that conversion would be in the best interests of the school, taking account of all of the legal and practical ramifications.

What is an Academy?

An Academy is essentially an independent school which is funded by the state. It is independent of the Local Authority and receives its funding direct from central government.

Who is Transform Trust?

Transform Trust is a multi-Academy Trust with 16 primary schools presently. A multi-Academy Trust is an umbrella organisation for Academies to join but each is run differently. Transform are based in Nottingham and Derby and have an ethos which we feel best matches the school. The school already has some experience of Transform – we have become a member of Transform’s Teaching School (an alliance of 50 schools), and we believe in their desire to support our School. We also like the way they celebrate the individual identity of the school and allow the School’s Governing Board to carry on determining the name, uniform and holidays that best suit the school. We see this in the schools they already support. More details on Transform can be found on their websites: www.transformtrust.co.uk and www.transformteachingschool.co.uk

What are the benefits of being an Academy?

In the school’s opinion, the benefits would be as follows:

- Academies are independent of Local Authority control – this means that Academies have more freedom about how they conduct themselves;
- Academies receive their funding direct from central government – this means that Academies control more of their funding because none is retained by the Local Authority for the provision of central services;
- Academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects – Academies are charitable companies and so have more freedom to undertake innovative projects;

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best practice across a Multi-Academy Trust –we already know that Headteachers and staff members within Transform Trust meet regularly and create an environment where colleagues support each other. We believe this can lead to the most supportive yet rapid school improvement.

Are there any disadvantages to becoming an Academy?

As a stand-alone Academy we would become directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety, and property maintenance. However, as part of a multi-Academy Trust (such as Transform Trust), these matters would be managed centrally by Trust staff. Academies receive more funding from central Government to help them meet these additional costs.

Will the admissions arrangements change?

Lawn Primary School's admissions arrangements are set by the Local Authority, and the Local Authority also decides which pupils should be offered places at the school. As an Academy within Transform, we will be in a position to put in place our own admission arrangements, but it would not be our intention to vary these arrangements. The Academy will still be bound by the national Admissions Code and Admissions Appeals Code. If the Trust or Academy wanted to change its admission arrangements, consultation would be required.

Will the structure of the Governing Body change?

There are no current plans to alter the structure of the Governing Body although this will be subject to review in the future.

Will staff leave?

If the school converts to an Academy, all staff currently employed by the School will automatically transfer to the new Academy on their current pay and conditions. Although the Trust will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, neither the Trust or the Governing Board intends to take such a step in the foreseeable future and in any event, any change to pay and conditions would need to be consulted upon with staff representatives. We will invite staff to speak to staff from other Transform Trust schools to gain reassurance that there have been no changes whatsoever since the Trust was founded.

Will the School change?

We do not intend to change our school except in ways which we think will improve the school. For pupils, they will be able to participate in Trust-wide events (annual Children's Awards, Children's Parliament, Sporting & Arts events) but in the main it is unlikely that they will see significant change in their day to day school lives. Academies do have the power to vary their curriculums and vary the length of the school day, however, we do not intend to take any such steps at this stage and would engage with parents and carers, staff and pupils if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future..

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Can you revert to LA control once you have become an academy?

There is no current mechanism for an academy to return to local authority control.

How can I make find out more?

There is also more information about Academies on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

If you can't find the answer to your question here, or on the DfE website, and cannot attend the meeting please email governors@lawn.derby.sch.uk and we will try to assist.

How can I make representations?

The closing date for representations to be made is 2nd April 2019. Representations can be made in writing to the school addressed to The Chair of Governors. Or by email to:

governors@lawn.derby.sch.uk

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