

Hawthorn Community Primary School

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Dear Parent/Carer

Consultation to Convert to Academy Status

You may well be aware that the Government is encouraging all schools to consider converting to Academy status. After careful consideration, the School's Governing Body has decided that they wish to explore conversion to Academy status and, in particular, to join with Montsaye Community Learning Partnership (MCLP), who are a Multi Academy Trust.

Please be assured that this is not a decision that the Governors have taken lightly and that they have investigated the pros and cons of joining with a number of different Academy trusts. The reason that MCLP has been chosen as the Trust that we wish to engage with, is because Governors feel that they will be able to support the school on its programme of school improvements without the school losing its own identity. The Governors feel very strongly that they do not wish the ethos of the school to change and that they do not wish to become part of a large Academy chain that would expect us to follow their corporate line.

Currently MCLP is made up of one secondary school and seven primary schools all based in our local area. The seven primary schools have all been graded as either good or outstanding by OFSTED and although the secondary school, is currently in special measures, their most recent HMI monitoring visit during September 2018 identified that they were exceptionally pleased with the progress that the school was making towards the removal of special measures.

One of the main reasons for the decision by the Governors of the school to investigate converting to Academy status is the declining support that is currently being offered by the Local Education Authority. As I am sure that you are aware, Northamptonshire County Council is experiencing severe financial issues and education, along with many other services is experiencing cutbacks which threaten the standard of education that Local Authority Schools are able to provide.

Since our own OFSTED Inspection in March 2017, the school has received very little support in its efforts to improve from the Local Authority, and instead we have been supported on our improvement journey through school to school support offered by Ann Davey who is the Acting Chief Executive Officer of MCLP. We therefore feel that we already have a very positive working relationship with members of the trust and feel that with their support we can continue on our journey towards being a 'good' school.

We are writing to consult with staff, parents and local community partners to determine whether the School should proceed with conversion and we would like to invite your views on the matter.

What is an Academy?

Academies are publicly funded state schools that are independent of the Local Authority and receive funding directly from Central Government.

Why is this being considered?

As a successful Community School, gaining Academy status would give us the autonomy to continue to develop our School and to strive towards achieving higher standards. As a Multi Academy Trust, there will be greater opportunities for working more closely with other local schools and the wider community of schools. The benefits of a school-led system where local schools collaborate are highlighted in the Government's White Paper "[Educational Excellence Everywhere](#)".

What are the advantages of conversion?

The Government is clear that the greater freedoms enjoyed by Academies are designed to allow schools to develop and to build on individual strengths in response to the needs of the community. We feel that the additional freedoms and flexibilities would enable the Governors to better secure the long term future of our School, particularly at a time when the role of the Local Authority is being seriously challenged.

In addition to this we believe that the formal partnership with MCLP, and the opportunity to work with the 'good' and 'outstanding' primary schools who are already a part of the Trust will have a number of benefits for all. This includes a more targeted approach to the long term future of the schools, strengthening our local vision, the pooling of resources which will improve teaching and management practice within the schools as well as a greater control of our finances and better management of these for the benefit of children attending the schools.

There are some specific educational benefits as follows:

- Hawthorn will continue to benefit from the school to school support that has been in place for the last twelve months.
- Staff will have opportunities to share good practise and undertake training with colleagues from other schools within the trust.
- Services such as HR, payroll and finance will be provided centrally which our new bursar, Mrs Jo Marshall has prior knowledge of, as she was previously employed at another school who are part of the trust.
- The experience of moderating standards of work with good and outstanding schools.

What are the disadvantages of conversion?

Greater freedoms do bring additional responsibilities including statutory duties as an academy trust company, but the School is confident it can manage these.

Will any changes to the School be made as a result of conversion?

It is unlikely that there will be any immediate major changes. **Hawthorn will continue to function as an individual school serving our local community.** There are no proposals to change the name of the School, nor to change uniforms, admission arrangements or the general management and planning of the school day for our children. We hope and intend that present staff will remain with us and continue to serve the School as they do at present. At this time we do not anticipate making any major changes to how Hawthorn operates.

Please be assured that the unique character, ethos and values of the School would remain unchanged should academy conversion take place.

How to take part in the consultation process

At this stage we are not committing the School to conversion to Academy status. We are consulting with everyone associated with our School before Governors meet again to make a final decision.

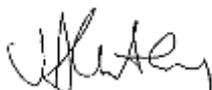
We would ask that you let us have your views by emailing academyconsultation@hawthorn.northants.sch.uk. by 12pm on 30th November, 2018. There will be an open meeting for you to come and raise any queries you may have or make comments about this, a date will be arranged soon after half-term as we are keen that you have the opportunity to question members of the MCLP Board, should you wish to.

The consultation will close on 30th November, 2018. The Governors will meet after this date to consider how to proceed.

Yours sincerely,



Jackie Brookes
Chair of Governors



Julie Clubley
Headteacher