

6th May 2014

To Parents/Carers of Pupils of Larkswood Primary School

CONSULTATION ON CONVERSION TO ACADEMY STATUS

On 28th April the governing body of Larkswood Primary School met and passed a resolution to consult on undertaking a process with the Department for Education that could result in the school becoming an Academy.

As part of this process, the Governing Body would like to consult parents, staff and other interested parties on any views or questions they may have about whether or not Larkswood Primary School should become an academy.

This letter is part of a consultation process that ends on Monday 9th June 2014. Responses received by that date will be considered by the Governing Body on 16th June 2014 and will inform their decision on whether or not to proceed with academy conversion. We encourage everyone to make their views known.

We have arranged two consultation meetings for parents on Monday 19th May 2014 at 9 am and repeated at 4.45 pm. In addition the Headteacher is available every Tuesday between 3 and 4 pm to meet with parents as part of the consultation.

What would change?

There would be three main differences if we converted to Academy status:

1. The school would no longer be 'maintained by the Local Authority'. It would instead be funded directly by the Department for Education. Funding would be on the same basis as it is currently but Larkswood would receive additional funding for functions that the Local Authority has previously provided and which it would now manage itself. The relationship with the Department for Education would be set out in a legal document called a funding agreement.
2. A charitable company called the Academy Trust would be set up to run the school. It would own the school site and assets. It is anticipated that all current governors would become governors of the Academy, continuing in their current roles for the remainder of their terms of office. Parents and staff would continue to be represented on the governing body.
3. The Academy Trust would be the employer of the staff with no role for the Local Authority.

If we become an academy it is proposed that our name would change to Larkswood Academy.



What would NOT change?

Some important matters would not change if we were to become an Academy:

- Our uniform and logos would not change.
- The curriculum, extra-curricular programme, school day, pastoral support and guidance, provision for pupils with special educational needs and general organisation of the school would not be affected.
- Pay and conditions and benefits for all school staff would not change. The employment rights of all members of staff would be protected by TUPE, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006. This means that these employment rights would transfer to the Trust under the same terms and conditions of employment. Pension rights and continuity of service record would be preserved.
- Pupil admissions would not change in principle – ‘fair admissions’ - but would be managed differently, by the school in partnership with the Local Authority.

What new opportunities would there be?

Larkwood Academy and its governing body would be committed to exercising the increased autonomy that Academy status brings for the benefit of our pupils.

Academy status is intended to promote innovation by giving school leaders more freedom to decide how best to meet the needs of their pupils, parents and wider communities. We see Academy status as being a key component in our future development as we intend to use it as a platform from which to develop the school further and focus on the best ways to raise standards for all Larkwood pupils. Academy status also enables purposeful partnerships with other schools to improve teaching and learning, to develop what is available for pupils and families, and to develop and share skills with opportunities for staff at all levels.

This letter is part of our consultation process which ends on 9th June 2014 at 12 noon and responses must be received by that date. The next step will be a meeting of governors on 16th June, to consider all responses and make a decision about continuing with the process. We welcome any comments you may wish to make. Comments on the proposal to become an academy should be made by letter or email to the School on school@larkwoodprimary.waltham.sch.uk or by post addressed to the Chair of Governors at the school address.

This letter is also published on the school website www.larkwoodprimary.co.uk

We will of course keep you fully informed of developments.

Yours sincerely

Jaynn Taylor
Chair of Governors

Lynne Harrowell
Headteacher

