

## **Upton Meadows Primary School – proposal to become an academy and join the Northampton Primary Academy Trust**

As you may already be aware, the governing body of Upton Meadows Primary School has applied to become an academy under the Academies Act 2010 and is proposing to join the Northampton Primary Academy Trust. Further information about what becoming an academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

### **Will Upton Meadows Primary School definitely become an academy?**

The governing body has submitted an application to convert to academy status and is working towards a conversion in April 2018. However, the school is not obligated to become an academy until the contract between the multi academy trust and the Department for Education (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed.

The academy trust will not sign the Funding Agreement until parents and carers of pupils at the school and staff at the school have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. We will be writing to all parents and carers to learn more about the proposals to become an academy, or to comment on the proposals. We will also continue to communicate with staff, and will keep pupils informed throughout the process.

Any comments or representations which are made about the proposals will be considered by the governing body before it takes the final decision to convert to academy status. Details of how to provide comments and representations are set out below.

The governing body will not vote to proceed with academy conversion 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. We are proposing to become an academy as part of the Northampton Primary Academy Trust (NPAT). This means that we will be part of a Multi Academy Trust comprising of Abington Vale Primary, East Hunsbury Primary School, Ecton Brook Primary, Headlands Primary, Lings Primary, Rectory Farm Primary, Simon De Senlis Primary and in partnership with Weston Favell Primary.

### **What are the benefits of being an academy?**

In the school's opinion the benefits are numerous:

- **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 receive more funding because none is retained by the local authority for the provision of central services
- **academies have more freedom over the curriculum taught** – this means that academies do not need to teach parts of the National Curriculum which they do not consider appropriate for their pupils
- **academies can set their own pay and conditions of service for their staff** – academies have the freedom to alter the pay and conditions of their staff (subject to normal employment law protections for staff) and so can provide staff with better pay and conditions than previously
- **academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects** – academies are companies and so have more freedom to undertake innovative projects, such as setting up and utilising trading subsidiaries.

### **Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?**

NPAT will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions and health and safety.

### **Will the admissions arrangements change?**

Admission arrangements will remain the same, would also still be bound by the national Admissions Code, and Admissions Appeals Code.

The current admission arrangements will remain in place for the time being. If the academy wanted to change its admission arrangements consultation would be required.

### **Will staff leave?**

If the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by the school will automatically transfer to the Multi Academy Trust on their current pay and conditions. Although the academy will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, the governing body does not intend 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.

### **Will Upton Meadows Primary School change?**

We do not intend to change Upton Meadows Primary School except in ways which we think will improve the school even more. For example we want to develop our work with other schools to benefit the children. For pupils, it is unlikely that they will see much, if any, change in their day to day school lives, at least in the first instance.

Academies do have the power to vary their curriculums and vary the length of the school day, however, it is not intended to take any such steps at this stage and would engage with parents/carers, staff and pupils if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future.

### **How can I find out more?**

There is 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, please email [lan.sharpe@NPATschools.org](mailto:lan.sharpe@NPATschools.org) who will try to assist.

### **How can I make representations?**

The closing date for representations to be made is Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018. Representations can be made in writing to:

Julia Kedwards  
Chief Executive Officer  
NPAT  
C/O Headlands Primary School  
Bushland Road  
Northampton NN3 2NS

Or by email to: [Julia.Kedwards@NPATschools.org](mailto:Julia.Kedwards@NPATschools.org)