



Ash Green

Primary School

Head Teacher: Mrs. R. Foster BA (Hons), PGCE, NPQH

18th January 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

ACADEMY CONVERSION / MULTI ACADEMY TRUST : SOCIETAS TRUST

Ash Green Primary is currently a Local Authority Maintained school. Over a number of years, the Governing Body have been thinking about and discussing the benefits of conversion to Academy status. This process began in 2012, when Mr Addison was Headteacher. Since my appointment as Headteacher in June 2014, these discussions have continued and we have looked at different options.

We now believe that not only is it the right time to convert the school's status, it is indeed necessary in order to safeguard the identity and ethos of the school. Due to the political agenda that all schools will become an academy we feel that we need to take action now in order to allow us to be in control of the future of the school.

As an Academy our funding would change slightly as it would come directly from the DfE rather than the Local Authority. We would join over 5000 other schools that have successfully converted and be in a better position to manage the school in the way we want and the way we need to in order to continue providing a high quality education with the absolute best value-added learning experiences possible. Equally as important to consider is the real risk of not converting and being ultimately forced to join another Academy chain or Multi Academy Trust (MAT); one who more than likely does not share our values and ethos.

After a process supported by the Local Authority in which several existing Multi Academy Trusts were considered and visits to the Governing Body have made, we have decided to become part of the Societas Trust. The Societas Trust is a group of six local Primary schools. The other schools in the partnership are

- Ellison Primary in Wolstanton
- Gladstone Primary in Longton
- Goldenhill Primary in Goldenhill
- Summerbank Primary in Tunstall
- Sutherland Primary in Blurton

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Ash Green is committed to this particular partnership because of the way the Societas Trust is structured. Leaders and Governors at Ash Green Primary have always strongly held and share the view that our school must retain our own unique identity as Ash Green Primary within any partnership we belong to. At the heart of the Societas Trust structure is the key driver that all schools are equal partners .

- Each school retains its own unique identity.
- Each school retains its own governing body
- Each school retains control on how the individual school' s money is spent for its own children
- Each school retains control over its curriculum
- Each school retains its own leadership (no executive head/ lead school)
- All schools working collaboratively, not competitively.

Of course, providing the best possible opportunities and outcomes for the children at Ash Green is at the centre of all the thinking around any moves forward to academisation. At recent discussions at staff meetings, staff were asked to consider the benefits to our children that this partnership will bring. These are a few of the potential benefits staff identified:

- Interaction and learning opportunities with children from different backgrounds and other cultures
- Shared experiences : Music and Performing Arts, Sports, possible residential activities together
- Using expertise of specialists in other settings to further enhance our curriculum

The Heads at these schools have worked together over a number of years and therefore our collaborative activities to support Teaching and Learning have developed to the point where all schools wish to formalise our successful partnership. All six of the schools have appreciated the benefits of collaborative working over a number of years. We have also come to further appreciate the possibilities of formalising the partnership we currently have and of the potential future benefits that our partnership will bring. The benefits identified include:

- Valuable opportunities to develop collaborative learning opportunities for the children in our schools
- Improved standards for children for all schools within the partnership
- Operational efficiencies through economies of scale as a group of six schools
- Additional continuing professional development opportunities
- Strengthened relationships between communities that cover a diverse geographical, socio-economic, ethnic and cultural region; further embedding a celebration of diversity and mutual respect.

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Even though Ash Green Primary will be part of the Societas Trust, this does not mean that we will not be working in partnership with other schools, in particular Trentham High and Priory CE Primary. As a main feeder to Trentham High, our partnership working is ongoing and will remain to be a high priority to enable the best opportunities and transitions for our children. Being part of the Societas Trust does not negate this partnership in any way.

Part of the Academy conversion process is for us to consult with you as parents. We want to hear your suggestions and opinions. Please find attached a Frequently Asked Questions document. Please can I ask you to read this and also refer you to www.gov.uk/government/policies/academies-and-free-schools for further information. Please note that this letter and the FAQs will also be put on to the school website at www.ashgreenprimary.co.uk. If you want to comment please write to the school marked 'Academy Consultation' or email ashgreen@sgfl.org.uk as soon as possible, consultation closes at 12pm on Friday 19th February 2016.

In order to ensure that Ash Green Primary School continues with its current ethos and is able to remain as a community school for all our children both now and in the future, the Leaders and Governors firmly believe that conversion to Academy status as part of the Societas Trust represents the best course of action for our school.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Foster
Headteacher

Rob Knight
Chair of Governors

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