



Lealands
High School
A Specialist Sports College
Aspire Believe Achieve

Lealands High School

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Headteacher: Mr J Burridge BA (Hons) PGCE, MA, NPQH

4th February 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

LEALANDS HIGH SCHOOL – CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

This letter gives you information about the decision made by the Governing Body on 3rd February to convert to academy status with the ambition to form a multi-academy trust (MAT) with Leagrave Primary School initially and with other secondary and primary schools subsequently. The Governing Body believes that this is the best way of continuing to raise standards and to work with others in the best interests of our students and school by sharing expertise. The application procedures are very thorough and the Department for Education has agreed in principle to the school applying to become an academy. It is also very important that we listen to the views of parents and carers and this is the purpose of this letter.

Ofsted Good and Outstanding Schools

Lealands was judged to be Good in May 2013 and again in March 2017. Ofsted report that since joining the school in 2011, the headteacher has led the school very well and in 2017 reported that the school leaders had shaped an inclusive school, where there are high expectations of what all pupils can achieve, and where every individual pupil receives strong levels of support, guidance and care. As a result, almost all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most vulnerable, move successfully to the next stage of their education or employment.

In addition, many of you will be aware that in December 2018 Ofsted judged Leagrave Primary to be outstanding, with exceptional leadership and very strong pupil outcomes. The school continues to deliver outstanding results as well as providing extensive support for other schools in Luton, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

Lealands and Leagrave have worked together for some time; along with other local primary schools in our Lea Springs Partnership, to support transition and better consistency of high quality education between phases.

Leagrave and Lealands have received overtures in the past to join other academy trusts but because of the combined strength of our schools and outstanding judgement for Leagrave Primary, we feel well placed to determine our own destiny working together in the best interests of the community we serve. As schools, we share a common ethos and a strong local accountability model. We believe that working more closely together, we can build on the strengths of both schools to ensure the very best opportunities and outcomes for our students.

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We believe that together we will enable local schools, their governors and leaders and the communities that they serve, to come together and take responsibility to provide an even better education in the Luton education community, rather than just in their individual schools. The MAT would continue to support, to draw upon and contribute towards the work of Luton Borough Council and the local teaching school alliances.

Consultation with Parents

We are therefore proposing a consultation period of four weeks from 4th February 2020. This will include a meeting for parents to attend to meet with representatives of the school and to ask questions on 13th February 2020 from 5pm.

During this period, we will publish a list of frequently asked questions on our website and invite feedback from parents and carers. You are also invited to tell us what you think in writing or by email to admin@lealands.luton.sch.uk using the heading 'Consultation'.

If we decide to go ahead with our plans, we are anticipating that we will open as an academy from **1st September 2020**, or shortly thereafter.

One of the best source of information on academies is the Government's website:

www.gov.uk/become-an-academy-information-for-schools

Why are we making these proposals?

There are a number of reasons why we are applying for an Academy Order to create our own multi-academy trust. These include:

- In recent times, the school has been approached by other multi-academy trusts with a view to joining them, but we were unconvinced of the benefits for our pupils. As a consequence, we set out to demonstrate that we are ready to shape a trust for the mutual benefit of our schools, and other local schools, that want to benefit from working even more closely together.
- Funding would come directly from central government, not through the local authority, which would provide additional capital and revenue funds. This would help to give us greater freedom to spend our money where we think it would most benefit our students, including those high quality services offered by Luton. The new MAT would be very closely held to account for its expenditure decisions by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- By forming a multi-academy trust with other schools we would be able to work more collaboratively to raise standards of achievement. We will expand the range of curriculum and enrichment opportunities we offer our children and ensure that our transition arrangements prepare the pupils really well for the next stage of their education. The trust will ensure greater coherence of excellent education from primary to secondary school.
- We would be able to provide greater opportunities for professional and career development for teachers, support staff, governors and school leaders, while recognising the unions and maintaining the current terms and conditions of staff. This would help with both the recruitment and retention of staff.
- Economies of scale mean that, together, we would negotiate contracts and services, including many already provided locally, that represent better value for money with any savings directly benefitting the pupils. We would have the opportunity to bid for capital money to further improve our school environment.

- We would be able to choose the partner schools who we want to work with that share our values and ethos and mutually benefit from the already excellent leadership from all levels of the schools.

What is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)?

- Within a MAT, all schools are governed by one academy trust. Each school retains its own local governing body, which reports to the Trust Board. The schools' governing bodies would operate within a scheme of delegated authority from the Trust and would include elected parent governors.
- The MAT would be accountable and responsible for the performance of each of the academy schools. This structure would allow the Trust to respond to the needs of its schools rapidly with tailored support and challenge that arrives at the right time.
- As the MAT would be a single entity, it is envisaged that schools would achieve strong collaboration and drive up standards by providing a consistent and shared strategy and vision. This shared vision would be an essential part of our due-diligence for schools prior to joining. Our growth strategy, which would be a blend of primary and secondary schools, would be to grow to about 3,000 pupils.
- There would be no plans to alter the admissions policy for Lealands High School or for other schools in the Trust and each would preserve its individual identities and traditions where these add value. We would continue to adhere to the locally determined school term dates and the number of days open to pupils during the academic year.
- The school would continue to teach the national curriculum but with the freedom to include a wider range of opportunities for the pupils. Schools in the MAT would also take a full part in national examinations and assessments, such as GCSEs and SATs.
- If the school does become an Academy, all teaching and support staff would automatically transfer to the new Academy Trust, on their current pay and conditions. All new staff would be employed under current national pay and conditions agreements. We intend to meet with staff to discuss all of these issues and listen to any of their concerns.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Your feedback and views really do count and we will keep you fully informed of future developments.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,



Mr P Troughton
Chair of Governors