



## Oakfield School

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 @SchoolOakfield

26 February 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

As you may already be aware, the governing body of Oakfield School is considering converting to an academy under the Academies Act 2010 and is proposing to join The Consortium Academy Trust. The governing body is now consulting on whether the school's conversion to academy status should take place. Further information about what becoming an academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

### **Will Oakfield School definitely become an academy?**

The governing body is considering making application to convert to academy status and is working towards a conversion this academic year. 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, staff at the school, pupils themselves and other local stakeholders have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. We are writing to all parents and carers to inform you of the proposal to join a multi academy trust and to invite you to a meeting at Oakfield School on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 5:00pm. The meeting is an opportunity to learn more about the proposal to become an academy or to comment on the proposals. We have also held meetings with staff, and will be keeping 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 Consortium Academy Trust. This means that we will be part of a Trust comprising Cottingham High School and Sixth Form College, Croxby Primary, The Hessele Academy (a through school comprising Hessele High School & Sixth Form College



**Headteacher:** Mrs R M Davies BEd (Hons)

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and Penshurst Primary), Holderness Academy & Sixth Form College, Howden School, Keyingham Primary, Winifred Holtby Academy and Wolfreton School and Sixth Form College.

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

The governing body believes the benefits are numerous:

- academy trusts enable the strongest leaders to take responsibility for supporting more schools, develop great teachers and allow schools to focus on what really matters – teaching, learning and a curriculum that is based on what works
- 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?**

The Consortium Academy Trust will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities and pensions. However, as mentioned above, academies receive more funding from central government to help them meet these additional costs, and in any event, The Consortium Academy Trust already deals with these matters for Cottingham High School and Sixth Form College, Croxby Primary, The Hessle Academy (a through school comprising Hessle High School & Sixth Form College and Penshurst Primary), Holderness Academy & Sixth Form College, Howden School, Keyingham Primary, Winifred Holtby Academy and Wolfreton School and Sixth Form College.

Once the school has converted, there is currently no route to revert back to being a maintained school under local authority control – academy conversion is a permanent change to the school's status.

If the school was a school causing concern in the future, the Secretary of State may have the power to force the school to transfer to a different academy trust. However, in those circumstances, it is likely that the Secretary of State would have the power to intervene even if the school remained a local authority maintained school.

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

All places at the school are commissioned by local authorities.

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 Oakfield School will automatically transfer to the new academy 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 Oakfield School change?**

We do not intend to change Oakfield School except in ways which we think will improve the school even more. For pupils, it is unlikely that they will see much, if any, change in their day to day school lives.

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?**

A meeting will be held at the school on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 5:00pm. We would encourage you to attend if you have any questions, or simply want to learn more.

There is also 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, and cannot attend the meeting on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 5:00pm, please email [admin@oakfieldhull.co.uk](mailto:admin@oakfieldhull.co.uk) using 'academy consultation' in the subject line.

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

To respond to this consultation on whether the conversion of the school to academy status should take place, representations can be made in writing to:

The Chair of Governors, Oakfield School, Hopewell Road, Hull HU9 4HD

Or by email to [admin@oakfieldhull.co.uk](mailto:admin@oakfieldhull.co.uk) using 'academy consultation' in the subject line. The closing date for representations to be made is **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024**.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Davies, Headteacher

Lee Morfitt, Chair of Governors