



Dear Parents / Carers,

6th October 2016

RE: ACADEMY INFORMATION MEETING – Wednesday 19th October 2016

I write further to my announcement earlier in the week, that the Full Governing Body at Wollaston School has taken the decision to become a Multi-Academy Trust. I would like to explain in some detail the reasons why Governors have come to this decision.

The Academies programme began in 2000 when the government decided that one of the best ways to improve schools that were in difficulties would be to link them with successful schools that could share good practice and help them to improve. These schools became known as Sponsored Academies.

In 2010, the government gave schools opportunities to become Converter Academies, either as stand-alone Academies, or working together in groups which became known as Multi-Academy Trusts. Initially there were financial advantages for schools in becoming Academies, but only the schools deemed Outstanding by Ofsted were allowed to do so. At that time, Wollaston School was deemed a Good school by Ofsted.

In the last 2 to 3 years, the rules about Academisation have relaxed and many more schools have become Academies. Currently, Wollaston School is one of only two secondary schools in Northamptonshire that are not academies, out of a total of about 40 secondary schools.

You will, no doubt, have heard in the media this year that the government is keen for all schools to become Academies. At the same time, cuts in public sector spending have meant that there is increasing financial pressure on local authorities in meeting the needs of their remaining schools, including Wollaston and it is clear that in the near future, the Local Authority will be responsible for fewer aspects of education in the County, possibly limited to vulnerable children, admissions appeals and the planning of new schools.

The process of converting into an Academy is by application to the Department for Education [DfE]. The preferred model of the DfE is for clusters of schools to group together as Multi-Academy Trusts. There are two main reasons for this. The first reason is that it makes schools financially more viable because they are able to work together to reduce costs of administration, payroll and other similar essential components of the school budget. The second reason, and the most compelling one, is that schools will be able to work together to share best practice in the classroom and, in the case where primary and secondary schools group together, have a much more holistic understanding of each child's journey from the age of 4 to 18 because primary and secondary teachers will be able to work together more closely.

In the last few months alone, several schools in East Northants have joined Multi-Academy Trusts and our Governing Body believe that it is in the best interests of Wollaston School to follow this pathway.

I would like to give parents the opportunity to ask any further questions at an Academy Information Evening, which will take place at school in our main Hall at 6.00pm on Wednesday 19th October 2016. If you would like to attend this evening, please reserve your seats via www.wollastonschool.eventbrite.com

I look forward to meeting with parents on that evening.

Yours sincerely

Joe Cowell

Headteacher CC. Staff & Governors