



Elstow School

Abbeyfield Road, Abbey Fields, Elstow, Bedford, MK42 9GP

Telephone: (01234) 302300 Fax: (01234) 307300

E-mail: enquiries@elstowschool.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs. Jenny Jackson

Elstow School – Academy Consultation

Our Ref:

We believe that our pupils are entitled to the very best possible education. At a time when other parts of the Borough are undergoing significant changes and switching to a two-tier system, we are able to focus on the longer term picture and what will enable us to serve children and their families into the future.

A growing number of schools nationally and locally have already left the control of the Local Authority and become **academies**. The Governors believe that now is the time for Elstow School to make this move, and to do so in partnership with Bedford Free School. We believe that this change will provide the School with added freedom and benefits to develop further the standard of education currently offered at the School.

What is an academy?

Academies are publicly funded schools, independent from local authority control. This independence brings increased responsibilities and opportunity.

What is a multi-academy trust?

A multi-academy trust (MAT) is a single entity established to oversee and improve high educational standards across a number of schools. In our case, the MAT would initially be made up of two schools - Elstow School and Bedford Free School – and the Trustees would be drawn from existing governors from these schools.

You can view further detail on academies at the Department for Education website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies>

When would the school change to become an Academy?

If the process goes forward, conversion is likely to be complete in April 2017.

Why convert to Academy status?

The school will have more freedom and flexibility in terms of how it operates and how it uses its funding.

Who would run the Academy?

The Head Teacher would run the school supported and advised by a local governing body. The multi-academy trust would become the legally responsible authority.

What is the aim of the new multi-academy trust?

We want to create a family of schools within which students are empowered and supported to achieve extraordinary academic and personal outcomes, preparing them for a fulfilling life. We would do this in line with the values of respect, honesty and high expectations, and operate on the principles of:

- Inclusivity
- Aspiration
- Parental-choice
- Knowledge-based curriculums
- Partnership, and



- Transparency.

Would the school change in terms of how it is day-to-day?

We do not intend to change how Elstow operates. As a high-performing school, its Head Teacher and staff will continue to be free to run the school as they see fit. Over time, we anticipate that it would work closely with other schools in the MAT, to the benefit of its pupils – but this would be an evolutionary approach, as the Head Teacher sees fit.

What would happen to the staff?

All staff currently working at the School have the right to continue to work at the Academy.

What happens to my views?

We really value your views, and we will be extremely grateful to all those who complete the questionnaire. We will pass on your views to the Secretary of State for Education, who will then decide if the School should go ahead as an academy.

What happens now?

Before we can become the Academy, it is necessary for the Secretary of State for Education to enter into what are known as **“Academy Arrangements.”**

‘Academy Arrangements’ refer to the Funding Agreement - the contract between the Secretary of State and the Academy Trust under which the Trust agrees to establish, maintain, and run the school and the Secretary of State agrees to provide funding for it.

These are standard arrangements these days, and the Department for Education publishes “Model Funding Agreements” here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/academy-conversion-process#model-funding-agreements>

The Governing Body would like your views

A consultation questionnaire is available to be completed alongside this summary document - you can download a copy from the school website at www.elstowschool.co.uk

We are also organising information events – and we would be delighted to meet with you at either of these:

Elstow School – Thursday 5th January 2017, 2.45pm – 3.45pm

Bedford Free School – Thursday 5th January 2017, 7pm – 8pm

You can also write or email questions to the Head Teacher at consultation@elstowschool.co.uk

Elstow School, Abbeyfields Road, Elstow, Bedford, MK42 9GP

Alternatively, if you would like to arrange a meeting to discuss the proposal, please contact the school on 01234 302