



Ravensdale Junior School

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17th October 2018

PROPOSED CONVERSION TO ACADEMY

Dear Parent/Carer

As you may already be aware, the Governing Body of Ravensdale Junior School is consulting to become an Academy under the Academies Act 2010. Further information about what becoming an Academy means, who our choice of partner Transform Trust is, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

Will Ravensdale Junior definitely become an Academy?

The Governing Body is consulting to consider converting to Academy status. However, the school is not obliged to become an Academy until the contract between the Academy Trust and the Department for Education (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed. The Governing Body has not commenced any formal dialogue with the DfE at this stage.

The Governing Body will not commence such a dialogue until parents and carers of pupils and staff at the school have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. We have written to all parents and carers and have also invited them to a meeting on Wednesday 14th November 2018 at 6.30pm, to learn more about the proposals to become an Academy, or to comment on the proposals.

We will also hold a meeting 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 a decision is taken to apply to DfE for the Academy Order. Details of how to provide comments and representations are set out below.

The Governing Body will not agree to make that application unless they are content that

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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.

Who is Transform Trust?

Transform Trust is a multi-Academy Trust with 16 primary schools presently. A multi-Academy Trust is an umbrella organisation for Academies to join but each is run differently. Transform are based in Nottingham and Derby and have an ethos which we feel best matches the school. We have invited you to meet members of the Transform Trust leadership team at the coming meeting on November 14th 2018. The school already has some experience of Transform – we have become a member of Transform’s Teaching School (an alliance of 48 schools), and we believe in their desire to support our School. We also like the way they celebrate the individual identity of the school and allow the School’s Governing Body to carry on determining the name, uniform and holidays that best suit the school. We see this in the schools they already support. More details on Transform can be found on their websites: www.transformtrust.co.uk and www.transformteachingschool.co.uk

What are the benefits of being an Academy?

In the school’s opinion, the benefits would be as follows:

- **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 control more of their funding because none is retained by the Local Authority for the provision of central services;
- **Academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects** – Academies are charitable companies and so have more freedom to undertake innovative projects;
- **Academies can share best practice across a Multi-Academy Trust** – we already know that Headteachers and staff members within Transform Trust meet regularly and create an environment where colleagues support each other. We believe this can lead to the most supportive yet rapid school improvement;

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Are there any disadvantages to becoming an Academy?

As a stand-alone Academy we would become directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety, and property maintenance. However, as part of a multi-Academy Trust (such as Transform Trust), these matters would be managed centrally by Trust staff. Academies receive more funding from central Government to help them meet these additional costs.

Will the admissions arrangements change?

Ravensdale Junior School's admissions arrangements are set by the Local Authority, and the Local Authority also decides which pupils should be offered places at the school. As an Academy within Transform, we will be in a position to put in place our own admission arrangements, but it would not be our intention to vary these arrangements. The Academy will still be bound by the national Admissions Code and Admissions Appeals Code.

If the Trust or 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 the School will automatically transfer to the new Academy **on their current pay and conditions**. Although the Trust will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, neither the Trust or the Governing Body intends 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. We will invite staff to speak to staff from other Transform Trust schools to gain reassurance that there have been no changes whatsoever since the Trust was founded.

Will the School change?

We do not intend to change our School except in ways which we think will improve the school. For students, they will be able to participate in Trust-wide events (annual Children's Awards, Children's Parliament, Sporting & Arts events) but in the main it is unlikely that they will see significant 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, we do not intend to take any such steps at this stage and would engage with parents/carers, staff and students if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future.

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How can I make find out more?

A meeting will be held at the school on Wednesday 14th November 2018 at 6.30pm. 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 please email admin@ravensdalej.derby.sch.uk and we will try to assist.

How can I make representations?

The closing date for representations to be made is Thursday 29th of November at 4pm.

Representations can be made in writing to the School addressed to The Headteacher.

Or by email to: admin@ravensdalej.derby.sch.uk

We look forward to seeing many of you at the meeting on 14th November 2018 at 6.30pm.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Zoe Cannon

Headteacher, Ravensdale Junior School

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