Monday 30th April 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Proposed Conversion to Academy Status**

The governing body of Hartburn Primary School has applied to become an academy under the Academies Act 2010 and is proposing to set up The Prince Regent Multi Academy Trust. In accordance with the requirements of the Academies Act 2010, the governing body is consulting on whether the school’s academy conversion should take place. Further information about what becoming an academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

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.

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It is proposed that Hartburn Primary School will become an academy as part of The Prince Regent Trust. This means that the school will be part of an academy group comprising of ourselves, Village Primary School and Wolviston Primary School.

At the heart of our school improvement strategy is a commitment to working in partnership with other strong schools. We wish to formalise these positive links. We wish to take this opportunity to reassure you that the education of your child will only continue to improve. We have selected partner schools who share this value for their own schools. The day to day running of the school will remain the same.

What are the benefits of being an academy?

In the school’s opinion the benefits are numerous:

* **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.

Will Hartburn Primary School definitely become an Academy?

The governing body has submitted an application to convert to academy status and is working towards a conversion around September 2018. However, the school is not obligated to become an academy until the contract between the 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, and pupils themselves have had the opportunity to comment on whether the school’s academy conversion should take place.

We have already 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 academy trust before a decision is taken to sign the Funding Agreement. Details of how to provide comments and representations are set out below.

The academy trust will not sign the Funding Agreement 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.

Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?

The Prince Regent Trust will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety, and, property maintenance. However, as mentioned above, academies receive more funding from central government to help them meet these additional costs.

Will the admissions arrangements change?

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 change?

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 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 Hartburn Primary School change?

We do not intend to change Hartburn Primary School except in ways which we think will improve the school even further. For the pupil’s, there will be no 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 and staff if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future.

**Uniform will not be changing.**

How can I find out more?

There is lots of information about academies on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

**If you can’t find the answer to your question within the information, or on the DfE website, please email the school with any questions/concerns and Mrs Armstrong/Mrs Steven will get back to you.**

Thank you for your continuing support.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J. Armstrong

Mrs K. Steven - Chair of governors