



20 June 2018

## **Proposal to become an Academy and the setting up of a new Multi-Academy Trust**

Dear Stakeholder,

**Green Lane Infant School, Highfields Primary School, Medway Community Primary School, Shenton Primary School, Sparkenhoe Community Primary School and Uplands Infant School** are writing to tell you about some exciting proposals for strengthening the way our schools work together.

Firmly rooted within our communities, in recent years our six schools have been developing strong links with each other as well as other schools and partners and together we have enjoyed some close collaborative working. More recently we have been exploring the possibility of each school becoming an academy and together forming a new multi-academy trust that will enable us to deliver increased learning opportunities for the children in our schools that in turn will help to broaden the perspectives, opportunities and ambitions of all young people.

We are therefore writing to let you know that the Governing Bodies of the six schools have decided to explore this further more formally, and we have together signed a 'memorandum of understanding' (a document that sets out some core principles for working together) and initial academy conversion applications have been submitted to the Department for Education. We are considering forming a new multi-academy trust, to be called the **Attenborough Learning Trust**.

The governors from each of these schools are committed to making sure that any new partnership supports our collective aim to provide outstanding education for our pupils and all the children educated by the new multi-academy trust.

We are at a very early stage of the process. Our schools have formed a small steering group to consider and develop our ideas for working together more closely. Our work so far has revealed a number of important similarities in our views about what makes for a highly effective and inspirational educational experience for our children, and so it has been possible to identify shared values and aims as well as opportunities and benefits. These opportunities and benefits include:

- Increased learning opportunities and access to a wider range of resources for our children that can improve children's outcomes
- A greater focus around families and our communities offering improved and a wider range of support and enrichment services, such as after school clubs
- Access to a wider experienced group of specialist teaching and support staff for our schools and increased opportunities for all our staff to share, broaden and develop expertise in support of our children and their families
- Opportunities to be more efficient in the way the schools operate



- Increased capacity and opportunities for each school within our new multi-academy trust to support each other, and to help support others to improve outcomes for children.

Over the next few months we will develop our ideas and proposals more fully and will work with the Department for Education (DfE) and the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), in shaping the plans. We must stress that making these applications does not mean that becoming academies is inevitable. It merely engages us with the Department for Education so that we can discuss our ideas and thinking and secure their support to progress to the next stage which is consultation and developing the proposals more fully.

Once we have received the required approvals from the DfE and RSC to progress into the development process we will begin a period of formal consultation with our communities, including all parents, carers, staff and other interested community groups and individuals, where your views are welcomed in order for our schools to make the best possible decisions on behalf of our communities. We expect the timing of this will be in the autumn term when we plan to hold consultation events for each of the schools.

Before then we wanted to take this opportunity to let you know about our thinking, to share some early information with you, and to offer you the opportunity to ask any initial questions you may have. During this process the governors are committed to considering the views of all parents, carers, staff and other interested groups and individuals. We have enclosed with this letter some further information in the form of some general 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQs) about what becoming an academy may mean for our school, and a copy of this letter and the FAQs will be made available via each of the school's websites and on our academy communication web pages to be launched shortly. There is also general information available on the Department for Education website. (<https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/academies>).

We would like to hear from you with any questions, concerns and opinions. These can be emailed to us at [info@attenboroughlearningtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@attenboroughlearningtrust.org.uk) or you can send a letter to any of the schools. We will do our best to respond to all queries directly and to keep you informed of progress. However, we may not be able to answer all questions straight away as some may require more planning or research and therefore we will respond and publish your questions/comments and responses as appropriate as the plans develop on our academy communication web pages and we will consider them before a final decision is made.

We are very proud of each school's heritage and wish for this to continue. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the schools. We will be in touch with more information as our plans progress.

### **What happens next?**

Our initial academy applications have been submitted to the DfE. We have started and are continuing our research, design and planning work and will be responding to queries and information requests from the DfE. We will write to you again once we have further information on the timings for starting the development phase and to inform you of the formal consultation plans.

We would be grateful if you would circulate this letter to your colleagues.

Yours sincerely,



Trudy Lower  
Headteacher

Jane Ridgewell  
Headteacher

Steve Williams  
Headteacher

Min Chauhan  
Chair of Governors

Hanif Asmal  
Chair of Governors

Mike Berriman  
Chair of Governors

**Highfields Primary School**

**Highfields Primary School**

**Medway Community  
Primary School**

Gita Patel  
Headteacher

Rhian Jones  
Headteacher

Michelle Orton  
Headteacher

Yunus Hussein  
Chair of Governors

Lee Jowett  
Chair of Governors

Khalid Mahmood  
Chair of Governors

**Shenton Primary School**

**Sparkenhoe Community  
Primary School**

**Uplands Infant School**

Gina Samuel-Richards

**Chair of the Project Interim Steering Board**