



## STAMFORD PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL

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### Stamford Park Junior School Consultation on Proposed Conversion to Academy Status

Dear Consultee

As you may already be aware, the governing body of Stamford Park Junior School (SPJS) has applied to become an academy under the Academies Act 2010, and is proposing to join the Hamblin Education Trust (HET). 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.

#### **Will SPJS definitely become an Academy?**

The governing body has submitted an application to convert to academy status and is working towards a conversion in autumn 2019. However, the school is not obliged to become an Academy until the contract between the HET and the Department for Education (DfE) (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed.

The HET will not sign the Funding Agreement until parents and carers of pupils at SPJS and Stamford Park Infant School (SPIS), staff, local residents and others, have had the opportunity to comment on whether SPJS's academy conversion should take place, and until the governors of SPJS finally resolve to convert to an academy.

Any comments or representations which are made about the proposals will be considered by the governors of SPJS before taking a decision on whether or not to convert to an academy, and by the HET before a decision is taken to sign the Funding Agreement. Details of how to provide comments and representations are set out later in this letter.

The SPJS governors will not resolve to convert to an academy, and the HET will not sign the Funding Agreement, unless they are content that conversion would be in the best interests of SPJS, taking account of all of the legal and practical ramifications.

#### **What is an academy?**

An academy is essentially a school which is independent of the local authority and receives its funding directly from central government. It is proposed that SPJS will become an academy as part of the HET. This means that the school will be part of an academy group currently comprising Altrincham Grammar School for Boys (AGSB) and North Cestrian School (NCS), and any schools that may join the HET in the future.



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### The benefits of being an academy?

In SPJS's opinion the main benefits are that:

- academies are independent of local authority control - this means that academies have more freedom as to how they conduct themselves.
- academies receive their funding directly from central government - this means that academies effectively receive more funding because none is retained by the local authority for the provision of central services. An academy can therefore choose exactly what to spend its money on.
- SPJS will benefit from the experience of the HET in areas such as curriculum development, teaching best practice and high-level support.

### Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?

The HET will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, health and safety, and property maintenance. However, as mentioned above, academies receive more funding from central government to help them meet these additional costs and, in any event, the HET already deals with these matters for AGSB and NCS.

SPJS acknowledges that its proposal to convert into an academy has impacted the relationship between SPJS and SPIS. Communication is ongoing between the two schools and SPJS is committed to working with SPIS to maintain and enhance current links.

### Will the admission arrangements change?

As a community school, SPJS's admission 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, the HET would be responsible for admission arrangements whilst also still being bound by the national Admissions Code and Admissions Appeals Code. There is currently no intention to change the current admission criteria, should SPJS become an academy.

### Will the plans affect staff?

If SPJS converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by the local authority will automatically transfer to the new academy on their current pay and conditions.

### Will SPJS change?

We do not intend to change SPJS except in ways that we think will improve the school even more. It is unlikely that pupils and parents will see much, if any, change in the day to day life of the school. Academies do have the power to vary their curricula, and the length of the school day. However, it is not intended to take any such steps at this stage and SPJS would engage with parents/carers, staff and pupils should it intend to make such changes in the future.

### How can I find out more?

**We would like to invite you to a drop-in session at SPJS on Tuesday, 25th June from 6.30pm - 8.00pm, to learn more about the proposals to become an academy, or to comment on the proposals.**

We are also holding meetings with staff, and will be holding another drop-in session for parents/carers of SPJS pupils at SPJS on Monday, 19th June from 6.30pm-8.00pm.

Please visit our website at [www.spjs.org.uk/academy-conversion](http://www.spjs.org.uk/academy-conversion) where you can find further information about the proposed academy conversion and the process that the governors of SPJS have gone through in determining the future of SPJS.

There is also more information about academies on the government's website at <http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

How can I make representations?

To respond to this consultation on whether SPJS's academy conversion should take place, representations can be made in writing to:

**Academy Consultation  
Stamford Park Junior School  
Cedar Lane  
Hale  
Altrincham  
WA15 9JB**

Or by email to:

[academyconsultation@spjs.org.uk](mailto:academyconsultation@spjs.org.uk)

**The closing date by which representations can be made is Tuesday, 9th July at 4.00pm.**

Yours faithfully

Mrs. C Downing (Head Teacher) and Mrs. J Whittaker (Chair of Governors)  
on behalf of the Governing Body of Stamford Park Junior School

11th June 2019