



Alverton Primary School



7th January 2015

Dear Parents and Carers,

At the end of last term, an important letter was sent home (either by email or satchel post) along with the Friday News which began the consultation process for parents in regard to the possibility of Alverton School becoming a Multi Academy Trust alongside Pensans and Newlyn Schools.

We realise that this is an important decision for Alverton School to make and that, by sending the consultation letter out during the Christmas period, it may have been lost amongst the Christmas cards and general excitement. There are a number of circumstances and factors which necessitate the consultation process taking place within a fairly limited and strict timescale. This is in no way intended to diminish or limit the importance of the views of stakeholders, including parents, in helping Governors to make an informed decision about the school's future. Indeed, we would urge parents to consider carefully the issues around the possibility of conversion to a Multi Academy Trust and to complete the consultation form enclosed should you feel that you wish your voice to be heard, whatever your views.

It is impossible within the context of a letter to explain what is a fairly complex situation in any degree of detail. In addition to the meeting already scheduled for **Tuesday 20th January at 6pm**, I therefore propose to hold an additional parent consultation meeting next week in order to explore and explain the issues around the Multi Academy Trust more fully should any parents wish to know more. This will be held on **Monday 12th January at 2.30 pm**. You are also very welcome to attend the meetings at **Pensans School on Wednesday 14th January at 6.00pm** or at **Newlyn School on Thursday 15th January at 6.00pm**.

The information sent home is part of a standard pack which has been issued through the solicitors we have been using and the letters and documentation therefore have a tone which are not particularly "Alverton-esque". In addition, it has been brought to our attention that there was a mistake in the response to Question Four in the Frequently Asked Questions. I can confirm that the Penlee Multi Academy Trust would be made up of three (not four) schools and that each school will continue to be run by their own Headteacher.

We all remain committed to trying to do the best for Alverton and its pupils in what is a rapidly changing educational landscape. Should you wish to speak to me directly, please feel free to give me a call.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Higgs'.

Martin Higgs
Executive Headteacher

19th December 2014

Dear Parent or Carer

Conversion to Penlee Academy Trust

We are writing to inform you that, following agreement by the Governors, our school is now actively pursuing conversion to Academy status, having concluded that conversion would be a positive move for our school.

At the heart of this proposal are the best interests of Alverton Primary School. In a time of enormous and very rapid change to the education system, Governors believe that preserving and developing the best of what we do as a school, is most easily achieved by seeking academy status to become a 'converter'.

Our priority is to enable the school to continue to provide an excellent education for our children while protecting the school's role at the heart of our community and retaining the school's unique qualities and strengths. We recognise that the role of Local Authorities in supporting schools is diminishing and that it is Government policy to encourage effective schools to become academies.

The Governing Body believes the best solution is for our school to form a local primary school partnership of Alverton Primary School, Newlyn School and Pensans Community Primary School. The partnership would be a multi-academy trust (MAT) and each school would convert to become an academy. The partnership would be known as the Penlee Academy Trust but each school would keep its name.

The schools in this partnership are united by a shared vision and a shared set of values. Through collaboration, we aim to:

- Ensure that children's learning is at the heart of everything that we do
- Enable each child to achieve the highest standards possible in all aspects of their school life
- Provide challenging and exciting environments where all children are safe and happy and develop a love of learning
- Value each child as a unique individual so that they realise their full potential as learners and members of the community.

The school will retain much of its independence while benefitting from being part of the Trust. There will also be a greater opportunity for the pupils and staff to work together across the three schools.

The Governing Body has therefore voted to consult on joining the Trust with a view to converting to academy status from 1st March 2015.

We are now consulting with the school's parents/carers, pupils, staff and wider community to hear your views and establish if there is any significant objection that would make the Governing Body re-consider its proposal. The consultation period will end on 26th January 2015.

The Chair of Governors and Headteacher will be available to answer any questions you might have at a meeting to be held on Tuesday 20th January 2015 at 6.00pm. We have also prepared a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document to help answer some of the questions we anticipate you may have. If you have any feedback on the proposal that you would like to share with the Governing Body, then please do complete the attached questionnaire and return to school. The questionnaire is also available on the school website.

If you are unable to attend on the above date you are welcome to join consultation meetings at the following schools:

Pensans School – Wednesday 14th January at 6.00 pm

Newlyn School – Thursday 15th January at 6.00 pm.

The Governing Body will then consider a report on the academy consultation before making a final decision on the proposal.

We look forward to seeing you all at the consultation meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Higgs'.

Martin Higgs
Executive Headteacher

PENLEE ACADEMY TRUST PROPOSAL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is an Academy?

An academy is an independent state school that is run by an Academy Trust. The Academy Trust enters into an agreement with the Secretary of State for Education that sets out its responsibilities and accountabilities for the effective running of the academy. The academy is funded directly by the Government and is no longer run by the Local Authority. The Trust is given charitable exemption, which means it must operate much like a charity.

2. What is a Multi Academy Trust?

A Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is when two or more academies come together in partnership. Our Governing Body believes that the best option is to form a local primary school partnership of Alverton, Newlyn and Pensans to establish a MAT. The partnership will be known as the Penlee Academy Trust but each school will keep its name. Each school will convert to an academy. In the future, it will be possible for other academies to join the Trust. Through partnership the Penlee Academy Trust will support member academies in:

- developing and sharing best practice in teaching, learning and curriculum
- creating a skilled, motivated, expert workforce
- ensuring high standards through mutual challenge of performance
- making optimum use of their resources.

3. How would converting to an Academy benefit our School?

Becoming an academy will give the school more freedom to make decisions about the best way to provide an outstanding education for our pupils. The school will have the opportunity to provide a more innovative approach to teaching and learning and improve the pupil experience and performance. With the sharing of high quality staff and resources across the Trust, we will be able to meet the needs, interests and aspirations of our pupils. It is a positive way forward and will enhance the educational provision benefitting our pupils now and in the future.

4. Who will be responsible for running our school?

The Penlee Academy Trust will have a Board of Directors with equal representation from all three schools. The Trust Board will delegate most powers to run each school to a Local Governing Body (LGB), which will have a very similar role to the current Governing Body. These powers have been agreed by Governors from all three schools. The vast majority of Governors will be the same as now.

Each school will continue to be run by their Head but Governors and Headteachers from all three schools have decided to appoint a Partnership Director who will ensure that the Trust operates efficiently and effectively, liaising between the schools and the MAT board and providing appropriate support and challenge to the schools.

5. What is the process to become an Academy?

The Governing Body has voted in favour of this proposal and an application has been submitted to the Department of Education. The Secretary of State has approved our application and issued an Academy Order, which allows the school to convert subject to some legal tasks. The school must also complete a consultation with all stakeholders which include parents, carers, pupils,

staff and the wider community. We are holding consultation meetings for these stakeholders at each school as follows:

Pensans School – Wednesday 14th January at 6.00 pm

Newlyn School – Thursday 15th January at 6.00 pm

Alverton Primary School – Tuesday 20th January at 6.00 pm.

We will become an academy on 1st March 2015, should the final decision to convert be agreed by the Governing Body.

6. Would the school have to change its name, logo or uniform?

There is no obligation for a school to change its name. This is a decision for the school, and the Governing Body proposes to keep the current name and current school uniform.

7. How will being an academy affect staff?

Currently, the employer for staff is the Governing Body of the school. After conversion all staff at the schools will be employed by the Penlee Academy Trust. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions.

8. How are the children affected?

In many ways the children will not notice any immediate difference. They will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. We will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all our children. However, in time the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the pupil experience

9. Will we get more money as an academy?

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. They also receive additional funding in the form of the Education Services Grant to cover the services that are no longer provided for them by Cornwall County Council and to cover the costs of academy status. The whole of the school budget would come direct to the school from central Government allowing the school to control the whole of their spending.

10. How will admissions to the school be affected?

The school will become its own admissions authority but will be required to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The Local Authority will continue to have responsibility for making sure there are sufficient places locally and will coordinate the admissions process for all schools. This means parents/carers will still only have to complete one application per child. Applications for September 2015 entry will still be via the coordinated process.

The Trust will manage its own admissions process including regularly publishing the Academy's admissions policy. Any changes to the policy will need consultation in line with the School Admissions Code.

11. Does becoming an academy change the relationship with other schools and the community?

No, academies must ensure that they continue to be at the heart of its community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other schools and the wider community.

12. Will our responsibilities in relation to SEN and exclusions change?

No. Responsibilities as an academy in relation to SEN and exclusions will be just the same as they are now.

13. Can a child with a statement nominate an academy as their school of choice?

Yes. Schools converting to academy status can retain the admissions criteria they currently use. These arrangements and related processes must at all times comply with the School Admissions Code.

ALVERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS
AND ESTABLISH THE PENLEE ACADEMY TRUST

QUESTIONNAIRE

About you (*Please tick one that applies to you*)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Carer | <input type="checkbox"/> Local resident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support staff | |

1. What do you like about Alverton Primary School?

2. Do you support Alverton Primary School converting to an academy and establishing the Penlee Academy Trust?

Please answer Yes, No or Maybe

3. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed academy?

On completion of this questionnaire, we would ask you to either drop it into
school reception or post it to the school by Monday, 26th January 2014.

Rationale for forming a MAT

Newlyn, Alverton and Pensans schools are committed to working in a formalised partnership that builds on an already successful collaboration.

The three schools are currently part of the Penwith Education Trust and, whilst recognising the value of collaborative working in this large organisation, believe that working in a smaller and more manageable group would enable us to become more effective. We consider that the opportunities for raising standards of teaching and learning by building on the existing links and relationships will be maximised through a more streamlined structure.

The reasons for wishing to be part of the Penwith Education Trust in 2012 were rooted in a desire to improve the quality of education in our shared community. In looking to form a smaller group, we retain the same aims. However, we recognise that the educational landscape nationally and locally has shifted significantly since the formation of PET and we therefore believe that we must look at an alternative model in order to act in the best interests of the children in our schools.

Although our MAT is made up of our three schools, we remain committed to working with all schools in the local area, and indeed nationally, where we consider that these extended partnerships will have a positive impact on our children's learning.

Our aim is to bring together the strongest elements of each school. This means that we will seek to enable teachers, pupils and governors to work more closely together with a view to raising standards in each school. We also intend to make the most of the resources available to us through a more strategic use of our combined purchasing power. This will in turn allow us to direct additional resources towards our core purpose of teaching and learning.

As three schools in close proximity, we serve the same community and share the same values. We aim to ensure that the children in our care have the best possible opportunity to reach their full potential.

Penlee MAT Values

We share the **co-operative values**:

- **Self-help** – encouraging all within the organisation to help each other by working together to gain mutual benefits. Helping people to help themselves.
- **Self-responsibility** – to take responsibility for, and answer to, our actions.
- **Democracy** – to give our stakeholders a say in the way we run our school.
- **Equality** – equal rights and benefits according to their contribution.
- **Equity** – being fair and unbiased.
- **Solidarity** – supporting each other and those in other co-operatives.

Consistent with the values of the founders of the Co-operative movement, we believe in the **ethical values** of:

- **Openness**
- **Honesty**
- **Social responsibility**
- **Caring for others**

Penlee MAT

Newlyn, Alverton and Pensans Schools

Vision Statement

The schools in this partnership are united by a shared vision and a shared set of values. Through collaboration we aim to:

- Ensure that children's learning is at the heart of everything that we do
- Enable each child to achieve the highest standards possible in all aspects of their school life
- Provide challenging and exciting environments where all children are safe and happy and develop a love of learning
- Value each child as a unique individual so that they realise their full potential as learners and members of the community.