

Poplar Street Primary School

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Consultation on Poplar Street Primary School converting to Academy Status as part of the Carillion Academies Trust.

Dear Parents,

You will be aware that many schools in Tameside and across the country are considering their future status in the light of the Government's initiative that all schools should become academies.

The austerity measures imposed by the government have vastly reduced our Local Authority's ability to support schools in Tameside effectively. So, over the past year, our Governing Body has been exploring a range of options to secure the best future for our school. Having investigated a number of options, including national multi-academy trusts and local academy trusts, we have agreed to examine further the opportunity of converting to academy status as part of the Carillion Academies Trust. I would like to assure all parents that by consulting on this issue now, Poplar Street Primary School is aiming to develop greater levels of control over our long-term future. It is our belief that this development will only enhance the educational experience and opportunities for all of our children. As a school that is rated 'Good' by OfSTED, Poplar Street is in a strong position to be able to choose its future direction and if it joined the Trust, we would play a strong part in influencing its future strategy and policies, particularly within the Tameside area. Academy status is intended to promote innovation and flair by giving school leaders more freedom to decide how best to meet the needs of their pupils, parents and wider communities. A key part of this Government's aim is to create a more diverse school system, offering excellence and choice, where each school has a strong ethos, clear vision and acts as a centre of excellence, networking with other schools. We believe Academy status will help us to achieve this vision. Further information about academy status is provided in the annex below.

We are committed to ensuring that, in making this change, the ethos, values and identity of Poplar Street Primary School will be retained. Many would not change if we were to become an Academy:

- We will retain our current ethos and values as represented by Poplar Street's tree diagram and its motto 'Working together - Aiming High'
- We will continue to be named Poplar Street and our uniform / logos won't change
- Our Creative Curriculum, extra-curricular program, school day, pastoral support and guidance and general organisation of the school will not be affected
- The teaching and the resources currently provided at our School will all continue
- There would be no staff changes as a result of conversion to Academy status.

This letter is part of our consultation process which ends on 26th May. Any responses must be received by then. The next step will then be a meeting of Governors to consider all responses and to factor them into our decision-making process. We welcome any comments or questions parents may wish to make in writing or by email to Mrs. Pam Chapman at the school office, pamchapman@poplarstreet.tameside.sch.uk. If you would like to hear more about the proposal and ask questions, there will be a meeting of parent/carers and the wider community on 21st June at 6pm. This letter is also published on the school website - www.poplarstreet.tameside.sch.uk.

With regards,

Iain Linsdell
Head teacher

Working together - aiming high

ANNEX

Key differences that would occur as a consequence of becoming an Academy as part of the Carillion Academies Trust

- The school would cease to be maintained by the Local Authority but would instead be funded and maintained directly by the Department for Education. This will mean that the school will retain the Education Services Grant portion of its budget that is currently retained by the Local Authority.
- The basis for the running of the school will be through a Funding Agreement with the Department for Education.
- The Carillion Academies Trust, which is a charitable company limited by guarantee, will enter into the relevant land agreements under which the school will occupy the existing site.
- The Trust will be the conduit for funding, with each school within the Trust being funded on the basis of its pupil numbers (similar to the current arrangement for us as a Local Authority maintained school).
- The schools within the Trust will agree a proportion of their budgets to be retained centrally by the Trust for common services and contracts.
- The Governance of the Trust is likely to be distributed as below:
 - A small group of Members who hold the directors of the Trust accountable;
 - A group of directors responsible for the overall strategy of the Trust and responsible for all the schools within the Trust;
 - Committees of the Trust Board with responsibility for specific areas and who report to the Trust Board;
 - Local Governing Bodies which will be responsible for school-based issues and who will report to the Trust Board. Local Governing Bodies will be represented on the Trust Board and Trust Committees and thereby influence and contribute to the decision-making and strategies of the Trust as a whole.
- The school staff will become employed by the Trust. The employment rights of all members of staff will be protected by TUPE, Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations which came into force in 2006. This means that these employment rights will transfer to the Trust under the same terms and conditions of employment. Pension rights and continuity of service record will also be preserved.
- Academies become their own admissions authority which permits them to influence the admissions criteria of the school if they wish. There is an overriding requirement to act in accordance with the School Admissions Code and we will always look to continue to provide excellent education for the local community and fair access for all children.
- Academies are permitted certain freedoms, for example, exemption from following the national curriculum. In practice, all schools continue to be overseen by OfSTED and children will continue to be subject to national assessments at the end of year 2 and 6.