



Head Teacher: Mrs SA Welsh
Augusta Close, Darlington, DL1 3HT, Telephone: 01325 240499, Email: admin@whinfield.net

1.3.23

Dear Parents/Carers,

Whinfield Primary School's Governing Body and leaders have, over the last few years, considered the long-term future of Whinfield Primary School. They have agreed it is the right time to take steps to convert to become an Academy and also that Whinfield should join The Education Village Academy Trust (EVAT).

You will know that due to a reducing number of children in our catchment we have already taken steps to reduce the number of pupils we accept each year. This change means our classes remain full and has helped us plan our lessons with the right staffing levels to deliver the best possible education to our pupils.

Meanwhile Local Authorities, including Darlington Borough Council, have been slowly shrinking as have the services they provide to support schools. If the School became an Academy, EVAT would deliver the services that Darlington Borough Council currently support us with such as HR, finance and legal advice.

Joining an existing Multi-Academy Trust such as EVAT will also allow us to share expertise and resources with other Trust schools and to buy in specialist services in a cost-effective way. Whinfield staff would transfer to be employees of the Trust and this would allow them to access training and development opportunities and to share best practice.

Joining the Trust should not make a difference to our pupils and parents/carers. If the conversion goes ahead we would still be Whinfield Primary, though possible 'Academy' rather than 'School', and our uniform would stay the same. All our staff will be the same people, and our Governing Body would continue to meet to discuss the day-to-day running of our school. Our admissions criteria for children to enter Whinfield and the start and end of the school day would also remain the same.

We would like to invite you to consider this proposal and are launching a consultation today to allow parents, carers, the local community and other schools to comment. The consultation period will last for just over six weeks, ending on **Monday 17 April at 4pm**. To help you consider any comments you may have we have listed a few simple questions on the back of this letter. Please feel free to respond using this sheet and handing it in at school Reception, or by email to: admin@whinfield.net

We will also be available at two 'drop-in' sessions to be held on Tuesday 14th March at 3.30p.m. and 5.30p.m. The sessions will be at Whinfield Primary School and are an informal opportunity to make comments on the proposal and ask any questions you may have. The Chief Executive of EVAT, Mike Butler, will also be there to answer any questions about the Trust.



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Once the consultation is over, the Governing Body will consider all the responses and use them to inform a final decision about becoming an Academy. If the decision is made to convert, the aim would be for this to happen on 1 September 2023.

Best wishes,

Shirley Welsh
Head Teacher

Claire Thorns
Chair of the Governing Body

QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS - WHINFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL CONSULTATION ABOUT BECOMING AN ACADEMY

1. Should Whinfield Primary School enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education in order to covert to become an Academy? (Yes or No)

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2. Do you have any questions about the School becoming an Academy? Please write them below:

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3. Do you have any questions about the School joining EVAT if it becomes an Academy? Please write them below:

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4. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the proposal for Whinfield Primary School to become an Academy? Please write them below:

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Questions asked and comments received will be collated and a response provided on our website at the end of the consultation. Please hand this form in at Reception or submit via email to admin@whinfield.net by 5pm on Monday 17 April 2023.

Parent or Carer's Name:.....

Pupil Name:.....

