



**HEADTEACHER:**  
Ms A. Russell



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Dear Parents/ Carers

### **Proposal to become an Academy and join the CAM Academy Trust by Spring 2018**

The school governors have been looking to the future and considering how we can best meet the learning needs of our children going forward. We have looked in depth at different models and solutions, with the overriding desire to build upon the quality of education we provide and to guarantee the sustainability and viability of the school and its role in the community at large.

Of necessity, we have had to evaluate the changing economic and political situation at both a local and a national level. Whilst the political pressure to academise has reduced of late, we have concluded that this is still the current direction of travel. We believe that it is better to shape our own destiny, whilst we have the opportunity to do so, rather than wait and perhaps settle for a solution which is not of our own making later on.

Our school has worked over the years with a range of different schools to help broaden our children's understanding, develop staff knowledge and review and challenge our practices. This school to school interaction has strengthened our knowledge of what we need as a school moving forward and provided us with a better understanding of the ongoing opportunities we need, to enhance progression for the children of Everton Heath Primary School (EHPS).

We also recognised that the role of Local Authorities (LA) in supporting schools is diminishing and that it is Government policy to encourage effective schools to become academies and work in partnership in Multi Academy Trusts (MATs).

In addition, our funding which is already very tight is likely to get even tighter over the next few years and we have had to take this into serious consideration. Currently, as a maintained school, our "Funding Formula" is decided by the LA and over time we have seen this reduce in real terms and have struggled to attract larger LA investment to our school in support of our plans and developments.

Over the last 2 years we researched both national and local organisations and came to the conclusion that only "one" had the experience and expertise we identified with, that being The CAM (Cambridge Area Multi) Academy Trust. This organisation also has a proven track record of delivering and maintaining Ofsted "Outstanding" results across their schools whilst also having expertise in working with and developing rural schools. It has a stated strategy to attract "local" primary schools to its fold.

The Governing Body of EHPS proactively contacted the CAM Academy Trust and by the summer of 2017 we had started discussions with the Trustees on the possibility of EHPS joining the Trust.



In the subsequent months both parties conducted a due diligence review which I can confirm was positive and supportive.

The Trustees of the CAM Academy Trust and the Governing Body of EHPS, this term, then formally considered and agreed to pursue the academisation of EHPS and it's membership of The Trust with a target date of Spring 2018.

We believe that by academising and joining the CAM Academy Trust it will benefit the school and children by being able to:

- extend learning opportunities and activities for pupils
- enrich the curriculum through partnership working and shared resources
- enable the development of excellent practice in teaching and learning
- enhance the continued professional development of teaching and support staff
- secure cost and resource efficiency through joint commissioning of services

### **Consultation**

This letter, is therefore, the start of the formal consultation period with staff, parents, carers, pupils and the local community. The consultation period will run between **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018.**

The Governing Body will then produce a report on the Academy consultation before making a final decision on whether to proceed with the proposal. If the Governing Bodies agree to proceed, the plan is for the school to become an Academy and join the CAM Academy Trust during Spring Term 2018.

If you have any feedback on the proposal that you would like to share with the Governing Bodies, then please do complete the attached survey form and return to the school by **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018.**

Kind regards,

**Nabeel Mardi**

**Chair of Governors**  
**Everton Heath Primary School**



## EVERTON HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Consultation Information regarding the proposal to join the CAM Academy Trust

#### CAM Academy Trust

##### **Background:**

The Cam Academy Trust evolved out of the Comberton Academy Trust which was initially formed in 2011 with Comberton Village College as the founder Academy, a school that has been officially graded Outstanding since 2003 (having been inspected several times from 2003 onwards). In 2013 Melbourn Village College and Cambourne Village College became part of the Trust. In 2016 Gamlingay First School was the first Primary School to join the Trust, and a further secondary school, St Peter's School Huntingdon, joined. This year Hartford Infant School, Hartford Junior School and Jeavons Wood Primary all joined the Trust. The Trust role now is to ensure excellence for all in each of their academies.

##### **Key Values of the Cam Academy Trust:**

At the heart of The Trust lie five core principles. These drive everything that it does:

- **The excellence principle.**
  - Education must be of the very highest standard.
- **The comprehensive principle.**
  - Education must be for all types and abilities of pupils.
- **The community principle.**
  - Every Academy must be at the heart of its local community and serve it well.
- **The partnership principle.**
  - Each Academy must seek to work positively in partnership with others for mutual benefit.
- **The international principle.**
  - The curriculum inside and outside the classroom must have a clear international dimension.

##### **Summary of focus of the CAM Academy Trust:**

- Local - The CAM Academy Trust has no desire to become a large national "chain" that operates across a wide area. Its primary focus is on South Cambridgeshire and parts of Huntingdonshire.
- Primary and Secondary Schools: Working in partnership in a strong and cohesive group to provide excellent education. The Trust will continue to develop into a full cross-phase organisation.
- Provision for new development: As new population developments evolve in the South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire area where the Academy Trust operates, it will seek to provide education in these areas.



## **EVERTON HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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#### **How did EHPS Governors come to this decision?**

The purpose of successive governments' academies programme is to give every school the opportunity to decide whether to continue under the umbrella of the Local Authority (LA), or whether to become an Academy (an independent state-funded school). As a school, we had an obligation to consider whether or not we should convert to an Academy and we were mindful of the Government's then view that all schools should become academies over time.

The governors of EHPS carefully considered the options, and following extensive research and discussions, concluded that converting to academy status and joining the "right" MAT would significantly benefit the school.

In considering the various possibilities open to our school, the governors have kept the following at the forefront of our thinking:

1. What is in the best interests of the children in our school, both now and looking ahead to those who will attend in the years to come?
2. How can we best preserve the school's distinctive ethos and continue to adhere to our vision statement?
3. Will we retain a significant role in running our school at a local level?

#### **Why join an established Multi Academy Trust (MAT) ?**

By joining an *established* MAT it would mean that they could support the school in the process of becoming an Academy, without the need for the school to establish a separate charitable trust and a limited liability company. The school would still maintain a local governing body, but it would be accountable to the Trustees of the MAT rather than the LA, who in turn would be directly accountable to the Secretary of State for Education.

The Cam Academy Trust and in turn their Trustees will be the single legal entity responsible for the development and management of the school and become accountable to deliver the highest educational standards.

Under the proposal:

- EHPS would remain focused on delivering excellent teaching and learning within its local rural community.
- EHPS would continue to have a local Headteacher who would benefit from more support with the running of the school organisation and further professional opportunities to enhance the teaching and learning within the school.



- EHPS would continue to have its own local governing body to address specific school challenges.
- Schools within the MAT would work together on projects to improve education and learning in all schools.
- The Trustees of the MAT will ultimately be responsible and provide oversight of the performance of each school and ensure effective investment across the organisation.



## **EVERTON HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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#### **What is an Academy?**

An Academy is an independent, non-fee paying state school, which is funded by, and accountable to, the Department for Education (DfE), rather than being under LA control. Academies are charitable companies, limited by guarantee. Academies are run by Academy Trusts, which own / lease the premises and assets and employ the staff of the school. Primary schools are able to convert to academies under the Academies Act 2010.

#### **How do Academies differ from LA controlled schools?**

Like all schools, Academies are required to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, provide an education for pupils of all abilities and educate pupils who are drawn from a local area. However, Academies do have greater additional freedoms compared to LA controlled schools and these are intended to help the school to be innovative and continue to raise standards. This means that governing bodies and head teachers have more control over curriculum delivery and the way the school is organised and managed.

#### **How are Academies funded?**

In LA controlled schools, the LA provides the school's budget and retains a proportion of this budget to fund some central functions. Maintained schools also purchase some services from the LA such as payroll services, financial management systems and buildings maintenance. Additional services are also purchased from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties e.g. Accounting, School Improvement etc... Schools then choose how to spend the rest of their budget. The vast majority of a school's budget is usually spent on staffing and essential services, such as utilities.

In contrast, Academies receive their entire budget directly from central government's *Education Funding Agency (EFA)* without any 'top slice' being taken by the LA. Within the CAM Multi Academy Trust the school will be charged 4% of their school budget for all of these services that they will be providing. As a larger body Academies secure best-value in the procurement of a wide-range of supplies and services on behalf of their schools, bringing economy of scale.

#### **What financial 'buffer' would exist if the Local Authority no longer supports the school?**

Academies are not allowed to run a deficit budget without having in place a remedial action plan to eliminate any deficit. Any Academy that opens with a transferred deficit, will need to agree a plan with the EFA, at the earliest opportunity, to repay the deficit in instalments from the annual budget. In the same way that LA controlled schools may find themselves in financial difficulty would have to agree a recovery plan with their LA, academies that develop a deficit after opening would also have to agree a recovery plan with the EFA.

#### **How long does it take for a school to become an Academy?**

Most schools can convert to Academy status in about five months, after achieving the initial DfE approval to proceed.



### **Do schools need to consult before converting?**

Yes. All schools are required to carry out a consultation, but it is up to each school to decide whom and how to consult. There is no legally specified length of time for the consultation and schools have flexibility in how it is conducted. We are currently consulting with parents, staff, local schools and the local community. We will also conduct information sessions for pupils.

### **How are we consulting with stakeholders?**

A consultation meeting is being held on **Tuesday 16th January at 5:30pm** at the school to answer any questions. The Governing Body will then take a vote on Academy status at their following meeting and will inform all stakeholders of the decision made.

If parents, staff and the community have additional questions to ask, please email ([cog.governors@evertonheath.org.uk](mailto:cog.governors@evertonheath.org.uk)) or deliver them to the school.

### **What does the conversion process involve?**

The governing body and the trustees of the Cam Multi Academy Trust have undertaken a due diligence process and both bodies have agreed to move forward in the process. Now we are required to undertake the following legal steps:

- Consult on becoming an Academy and decide formally on joining the MAT
- Obtain the Secretary of State's initial consent by securing an 'Academy Order'
- Agree a supplementary funding agreement with the DfE
- Ensure that the school site is made available to the Academy Trust via leases and/or supplemental agreements
- Ensure that financial systems are in place to manage funding
- Transfer, renew or procure new contracts, service level agreements and licences and purchase insurance as appropriate
- Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) all contract arrangements for staff. This is a formal legal consultation process that is separate from the consultation with all stakeholders. This would not start until after the vote by the Governing Body to apply for Academy status.

### **Does the school have to change its name or uniform?**

No. The name of the school does not have to change and the uniform requirements do not have to change either. The updating of the current school logo, which began last year, will continue to be phased into our documentation and uniform over time as already planned.

### **Will the school be able to set its own curriculum?**

Academies are able to offer a more flexible curriculum, but they are required to provide a 'balanced and broadly-based curriculum'. The teaching of English, Maths and Science would remain central to the curriculum. The teachers and governors will work with the CAM Trust to implement the curriculum to best meet the needs of its pupils using the freedom available.



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#### **What would happen to SEN provision?**

We would continue to provide the same support for all pupils with special educational needs and indeed the funding for this element continues to be provided by the LA. The LA retains its responsibility for statutory duties and obligations. Procedures remain in place when a school converts to Academy status.

#### **Will academies be free from Ofsted inspections?**

No. Academies remain fully under Ofsted's inspection arrangements.

#### **What happens to all of the staff?**

All staff will be entitled to transfer, under TUPE regulations, to the Academy with the same terms and conditions as at present.

#### **Can Academies alter the pay and conditions of employees?**

When a school converts to a new Academy, employees are entitled to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions. There is a legal process to go through, called TUPE, but staff maintain existing pay, conditions and length of service. Alterations can only be made in the same way as they would have been made under the LA. For example, changes to pay and annual leave are negotiated with employees' representatives. This position will continue until the contract of employment is varied with the agreement of the employee.

#### **How will union membership (NUT, NASUWT, Unison, etc.) work?**

Union recognition would remain as it currently stands. All employees are entitled to be part of a union.

#### **Do we have enough support staff to cope with the change of status?**

As we are proposing to join the CAM Academy Trust, many of the additional tasks associated with conversion and Academy status are met by the Trust. It is not anticipated that further support staff would be required.

#### **Would we be able to buy services such as HR and Payroll more cheaply if the school was not buying from the local authority?**

The CAM Academy Trust procures services on behalf of all schools within the MAT and will be able to negotiate better deals than the school can do currently.

#### **How do the staff feel about conversion to become a member of The CAM Multi Academy Trust?**

Staff have been fully involved in the discussion regarding conversion. Meetings for staff, with representatives from CAM Academy Trust will be held in order to answer questions both about the process and being part of The Trust. The views of the staff are held in the highest



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regard by the governors and school leaders. Ensuring that all viewpoints are listened to and all concerns are addressed is a critical part of the conversion process.

#### **What are the admission requirements?**

No changes are currently being proposed to the admissions criteria or catchment area. However, if any changes are proposed to admission arrangements in the future, there would be a full consultation prior to any changes being made. We will continue to publish our admission arrangements on our website well in advance of each academic year.

The LA retains responsibility for co-ordination of admission arrangements for entry into Reception.

#### **How are Academies funded?**

Academies receive the same level of per-pupil funding that they would receive from the LA, plus additions to cover the services that are no longer provided for them by the LA.

#### **Do we have to cover the full cost to convert to an Academy?**

No. The DfE currently pay a flat-rate grant of £25,000 and the conversion is not expected to impact on the school's revenue budget. This grant amount is used to cover all charges and costs related to the conversion.

#### **Who would own the land and buildings?**

The land and buildings remain in their current ownership but are made available to the academy via a 125-year lease and/or a supplemental agreement.

#### **Will we retain the existing financial systems?**

The financial system will be overseen by The Trust at a central level.

#### **How would we get a capital building project carried out?**

The CAM Academy Trust is part of a pooled capital funding scheme, which is awarded an annual allocation from the DfE. This is allocated to schools on the basis of their annual condition surveys. A condition survey will be undertaken as part of the conversion process.

The school will continue to receive an annual allocation for small capital projects as it does currently.

#### **What are the expected changes to the Governing Body?**

The CAM Academy Trust has a central board of trustees. This board is responsible to the Secretary of State for overall standards for each school in The Trust and for maintaining a strategic oversight. A Local Governing Body will continue to be responsible for the day-to-day operational matters.



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#### **Becoming an Academy will require a strong and effective Governing Body. How will we find the governors with the necessary skills, experience and time?**

Being part of The CAM Academy Trust means that the board of directors will have the necessary range of skills required at a strategic level. The Local Governing Body does not take on the additional requirements under the Companies Act and therefore, we feel it will be easier to fill any governor vacancies.

Recruiting and retaining governors with key skills and experience remains a key task for all schools and The CAM Academy Trust are committed to supporting governors in their role.

#### **What will happen to local links and partnerships that we already have?**

These will continue. Joining The CAM Academy Trust does not preclude us from being part of local partnerships, which are for the benefit of the children at the school.

#### **If EHPS joins the CAM Academy Trust, will it be designated an official feeder school and will children after completing Year 6 be automatically registered at either Comberton or Cambourne Village Colleges', as they are part of the Trust?**

When children complete their primary education at Everton Heath Primary School, parents are required to complete a transfer application form for each child and list their schools of preference. The specific Application will depend on the Local Authority that the parent(s) of the child reside within; that would be either Cambridgeshire or Central Bedfordshire. The Location of our school on the border of both Authorities means that parents could live within either Local Authority.

Parents will have several options available to them for secondary education and these include Bassingbourn Village College, Comberton Village College or Sandy Upper which from September 2018 will also offer education from Year 7. All the schools mentioned offer transport to and from Potton and Gamlingay . Sandy Upper is the only school to offer transport to Everton Village as well. In respect to the costs associated with transport to and from schools, please contact your Local Authority to determine what is offered



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**Responding to this consultation**

The Governing Body welcome responses or questions relating to this consultation. Please email these to the Chair of Governors via the school email or through the office.

<http://Cog.governors@evertonheath.org.uk>

All responses must be received before the consultation closing date of **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at 12 noon.**

The Governing Body will, where appropriate, attempt to answer any questions asked and these will be placed in the public forum on the school website to view.

**RESPONSE SLIP**

Name:

Please Select a Category that fits you best:

Parent	Local Resident
Teacher	Support Staff
Other: _____	(Please State)

Do you support Everton Heath Primary School converting to Academy status and joining the CAM Academy Trust? Please tick the appropriate box below:

Yes	No	Don't Know	Maybe
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything you would like to say about this consultation?

Please complete and return by **Monday 15<sup>st</sup> of January 2018** by one of three methods:

- Post in the consultation box in the school reception
- Post it directly to Everton Heath Primary School, 33 Potton Road, Everton, Sandy, SG19 2LE
- Email it to [cog.governors@evertonheath.org.uk](mailto:cog.governors@evertonheath.org.uk)