



GLADSTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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19th January, 2016

ACADEMY CONVERSION / MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

THE SOCIETAS TRUST

Dear Parents/Carers,

Gladstone Primary School is currently a Local Authority Maintained school. Since July 2014 our Governing Body has been thinking about and discussing the benefits of conversion to Academy status and we believe that now is the right time to convert the school's status, as well as being necessary in order to safeguard the identity and ethos of the school. As a result Governors have chosen to become part of the Societas Trust as the Headteachers and staff at these schools have been working together over a number of years. The benefits identified include:

- Valuable opportunities to develop collaborative learning opportunities for the children e.g. we already have plans for an exciting joint concert at the Victoria Hall in April and a Mini-Olympics at Northwood Stadium in June (more details to follow soon!).
- Improved standards for children for all schools within the partnership;
- Operational efficiencies through economies of scale as a group of six schools
- Additional professional development opportunities for staff;
- Strengthened relationships between communities that serve diverse communities.

As an Academy our funding would change slightly as it would come directly from the DfE rather than the Local Authority. We would join over 5000 other schools that have successfully converted and be in a better position to manage the school in the way that we want and the way we need to in order to continue providing a high quality education for your child. Equally as important to consider is the real risk of not converting and being ultimately forced to join another Multi Academy Trust (MAT) which may not share our values and ethos.



The term ‘Societas’ means ‘a union for a common purpose; fellowship; partnership and society’ and the key driver is that all schools are equal partners, working together in partnership, not in competition. Each school will keep:

- Its own unique identity.
- Its own Governing Body.
- Autonomy on how the individual school’s money is spent for its own children.
- Autonomy over its curriculum.
- Its own leadership (no Executive Headteacher or Lead School).

The other schools in the Societas Trust will be Ash Green Primary, Trentham, Ellison Primary, Wolstanton, Goldenhill Primary, Tunstall, Summerbank Primary, Tunstall and Sutherland Primary Academy, Blurton.

The proposed structure of the MAT’s Governance has been agreed by the Department for Education. This structure will enable all schools to equal voting rights in all decision made and will wish to delegate as much of the decision-making as is sensible and efficient to individual schools governing bodies. Members will oversee the MAT and ensure that Directors are carrying out their duties. They would probably meet formally three times a year. These people are independent of all schools and provide a wide range of skills from education, legal and business backgrounds. The next level below the board of directors is the ‘The Executive’ of the Trust will consist of the Chief Executive Officer, Education Director and the Headteachers from all schools. This group has made recommendations related to the operational and strategic working of the Academy Trust to the board of directors. The Local Governing Body for each school will still continue to include parent representation much as it does now. Most decisions will be made at this level.

Part of the Academy conversion process is for us to consult with you as parents. We want to hear your suggestions and opinions. Please visit the school’s website at www.gladstoneprimary.stoke.sch.uk where you will find an ‘Academy Conversion Consultation Paper’ and a ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ document. Please read these and if you have any questions e-mail us at office@gladstoneprimary.org.uk. If you would like a hard copy of these two documents please call in at the School Office and copies will be printed for you. This consultation closes at noon on the 19th of February, 2016.

Thank you, as ever, for your continuing support,

Yours sincerely,



Elaine Preston
Headteacher



Christine Bartley
Chair of Governors

