



# GREENHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

www.greenhillprimary.co.uk

Mile Lane  
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Lancashire  
BL8 2JH

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Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

We are writing to inform you that the governors of Greenhill Primary School have met to consider the merits of converting Greenhill Primary School to an academy. We have been discussing working alongside a local academy trust and would welcome your views as parents and carers as part of the consultation process.

We are at the early stages of a process, with many steps along the way. One of the initial stages is consultation with yourselves. Until the final agreement is signed, both sides are able to step away at any point.

The topic of academies is one which Greenhill's governing body has been exploring for some time. We have been actively gathering information through meetings with schools which have gone through the conversion process, attendance at training events, meetings with existing Multi-Academy Trusts (MAT) and discussions in various school and governor forums.

Many schools nationally are now academies and a significant number of schools within Bury have already converted to academy status.

We believe that some of the benefits of joining a MAT include:

- To work together to improve teaching and learning and continue to maintain a high-quality curriculum in each school.
- To deepen our collaboration to secure the best outcomes for Greenhill and all the children in the trust's schools.
- To enable the school leadership teams to focus more on teaching and learning and whole school improvement by reducing the administrative burden on individual schools on issues such as policy development and statutory compliance.
- To enhance school improvement within the partnership by working together at a strategic level.
- To pool resources, services and support to ensure the best outcomes for all.
- To improve recruitment, retention, Continuing Professional Development and succession planning for our staff.
- To achieve economies of scale and to improve value for money in terms of financial procurement.
- To have an input and voice to enable us to shape our destiny within a changing school system.



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In order to make a recommendation on a specific direction to take, the governing body considered a number of different options:

1. Remaining under Local Authority control
2. Starting a new Multi Academy Trust, either as the lead school in our own right or as an equal partner with one or more other schools.
3. Joining an existing Multi Academy Trust.

The governors have considered the pros and cons of each of the above options. The key points to highlight are:

- Due to funding levels, Local Authorities are increasingly struggling to support schools effectively. In order to ensure that our school can continue to be successful and deliver excellent outcomes for its pupils, we strongly believe that we need to access support that the Local Authority no longer offer.
- Starting our own MAT, either as a lead school in our own right or jointly with other schools, is another option. However, this would be a challenging journey, and one which could be very disruptive whilst we set up, launch the MAT and learn how to run it. If we start our own MAT there will be an expectation that we will support and improve schools that require improvement.
- In considering whether to join an existing MAT, our governing body were adamant that this option would only be recommended if we could be confident that the unique characteristics of our school would be retained as a result of this move. We felt that any potential MAT would have to be small, with a strong local presence and focused on primary provision. The MAT would also have to offer strong support for further development of Greenhill, excellent opportunities to enable our staff to grow and develop, and significant autonomy to continue to manage and run the school as we have done so successfully in the recent past.

Our governors met in in November, and passed a resolution to move forwards with the initial stages of the process of conversion to academy status and to consider the option of joining Forward as One Multi Academy Trust as a potential MAT partner.

We feel that at this moment in time, this route is the most effective way to support the quality of provision and outcomes for our children at Greenhill. Forward as One MAT are well known for innovation in teaching and for providing staff with development opportunities that are not available within our local authority context.

Forward as One Multi Academy Trust is a Bolton based trust, comprising six schools in total. The trust's lead school is St Paul's CE Primary School in Bolton. This school was rated "Outstanding" by Ofsted in its most recent inspection, there are five other primary schools in the trust, all of which are located in the Greater Manchester area. The trust has a strong track record of school improvement, staff development and innovative practice.

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Governors and senior staff from Greenhill have met colleagues from Forward as One, and it is clear that the trust's ethos and vision are closely aligned with our own. We are also reassured that Forward as One's leaders clearly recognise the unique and special features of Greenhill, and are committed to protecting these aspects of our school, as well as helping us to develop and improve even further in the future.

More information about Forward as One Multi Academy Trust is available on the trust's website :

<http://www.forwardasone.uk/>

The consultation period for parents and carers will open on Wednesday 8th January 2020 and close on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. A consultation meeting for parents will be arranged in the school during January 2020, this date will be confirmed in early January. The meeting will be attended by governors from Greenhill and representatives from the Forward as One Multi Academy Trust.

During this time you can send any views or comments on the proposal to the Chair of Governors via the school office or on email via greenhill@bury.gov.uk

*M Morris*

Chair of Governors

*S Crosier*

Headteacher