



# Easthampstead Park Community School

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Dear Staff

The Governors would like to thank the school community for your participation in the formal consultation held from 19 April 2022 to 23 May 2022, regarding the proposal for Easthampstead Park Community School to convert to an academy within the [Kings Group Academies trust](#).

As you know we have conducted a wide consultation involving parents, carers, staff and students. Our school is a community school and we are committed to working with parents, carers and the wider community. We think it is important that everyone could ask questions, explore the proposal in more detail with us and be involved in the consultation. We took note of the feedback from staff, including the staff Governor and staff who have experienced working with Kings as part of the associate membership agreement and who have met with lead Kings staff a number of times.

The response to the survey was overwhelming with a vast number of questions raised. Details of the questions and the responses are available on the school website:

<https://www.epschool.org/parents/academy-consultation/>.

The full report of the consultation outcome has been finalised and published on the school's website:

<https://www.epschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/EX21-05.01-Consultation-Final-Report.pdf>

I am therefore writing to inform you that the Governing Body of Easthampstead Park Community School, met on Monday 20 June 2022, Governors reviewed the survey, responses and the final report. All of your views were considered before a decision was made.

Governors voted and formally took the decision, based on the findings, that the school will convert to an academy and join Kings Group Academies Trust on or after the 1 September 2022, however please be aware the date will be determined by how long the process of conversion takes, working alongside the Local Authority who currently operate the school.

As staff we will ensure you are regularly updated on processes aligned to the conversion process and that your employment rights are maintained. Governors will continue to work with the Local Authority and Kings to progress the academisation and we will ask the Headteacher to make sure you are kept fully informed.

We will let you know when the process has been finalised. Thank you once again for your ongoing support. We recognise our staff are exceptional and that the school is in an excellent position to reap the benefits of joining a MAT, in a further move forward in shaping the future of our school.

Yours faithfully

**Mrs R Rastall**  
**Chair of Governors**

(on behalf of the Governors of Easthampstead Park Community School)

**Mr M Hooper**  
**Vice Chair of Governors**



Headteacher: Mrs Liz Cook MA, BA (Hons)

## **Academies: Some key facts**

**Curriculum:** Academies are required to have a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of later life. The curriculum must include English, Maths, Science; Religious Education; and Relationships education and health education. Academies are required to take part in the same pupil assessment arrangements and to report on the achievement and attainment of pupils in the same way as all other state-funded schools.

**Inspection:** Academies continue to be subject to Ofsted inspections.

**Staffing** The regulations that place requirements on maintained schools do not directly apply to academies. General employment law applies to academies in the same way as to other organisations. Teachers must be suitably qualified.

The Academy Trust has responsibility for setting pay and conditions. We will employ all staff on national terms and conditions so there is no change for staff. All teachers employed at an academy have access to the Teachers Pensions Scheme and all other employees at an academy have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme

**Funding** The academy trust will receive General Annual Grant from the Secretary of State calculated as the equivalent to that which would be received by a maintained school taking account of the number of pupils at the academy. Capital funding is also available, channelled through the Academy Trust. Every academy trust must abide by the requirements of and have regard to the guidance in the Academies Financial Handbook.

**SEND** Academies should be fully inclusive local schools and in common with all other schools have a clear legal duty to do their best to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

**Admissions** Academies are required to provide education for pupils wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which the academy is situated. Academies must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than available places. Academies are required to provide education for pupils of different abilities (i.e. they may not select pupils by ability).

Frequently asked questions and answers

## **What are the benefits of being an Academy (and in a MAT)?**

### **What is an academy?**

Academies are state-funded schools but they are independent of local authorities meaning they are not run by councils. They can decide on their own curriculums, term dates, school hours, and much more.

They're still funded by the government but they get to decide how they spend their money, from how much they pay teachers to how much they spend on classroom equipment.

Over half of pupils in England are already educated in academies and there are three types:

- Converters – formerly council-run schools that chose to become academies;
- Sponsored – previously underperforming council-run schools in need of support, and/or judged 'Inadequate' by Ofsted, where the law requires them to become academies; or
- Free schools – brand new schools established to meet a need for good school places in the area.

### **What are multi-academy trusts?**

Multi-academy trusts are charities that have responsibility for running a number of academies. They cannot, as charities, be run for financial profit and any surplus monies must be reinvested in the trust.

By working in partnership with each other, the schools within a trust can share staff, curriculum expertise, and effective teaching practices, and work together to deliver the best outcomes for pupils.

While other types of school partnerships can be effective, the key difference with academy trusts is that there is shared accountability for standards across the trust; all schools within the trust support each other and the trust is accountable for them all.

**Why is the government's focus now on supporting schools to join strong trusts?**

Joining a multi-academy trust remains a positive choice for schools. They enable the strongest leaders to take responsibility for supporting more schools, develop great teachers, and allow schools to focus on what really matters – teaching, learning, and a curriculum that is based on what works.

Multi-academy trusts have the capacity to provide high-quality training and evidence-based curriculum support for already great teachers, freeing them to focus on what they do best – teaching.

**If they have all this freedom, how are they accountable?**

This freedom does not mean academies are not regulated. The department's National and Regional Schools Commissioners and their teams, together with the Education and Skills Funding Agency, provide robust educational and financial oversight of all academy trusts.

Individual academies are still subject to Ofsted inspections and ratings in exactly the same way as council-run schools.

In fact, academies are subject to greater accountability than council-run schools because of increased financial regulation.