



Thomas Gray Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

The Governing Body of Thomas Gray Primary School have been carefully considering the best future strategy for the school, so that we can build on our achievement of being an outstanding learning community. We want to continue the improvement in the school's and pupils' performance, to protect the unique ethos, values and character of our school and to keep the freedom to run our school in ways best for our community of pupils, staff, parents and carers.

We are writing to you to let you know that we applied to the Regional Schools Commissioner, seeking agreement for a proposal for Thomas Gray Primary School to convert to an academy within the Northern Schools Trust. We have been granted an academy order which means that the RSC is content for us to proceed with plans to convert.

Before taking the next step in our journey, the Governing Body is interested in understanding your views on this, as we look to shape the future of our school. Our next step is seeking the views of staff, parents, and the communities around the school. Our school is at the heart of the local community and we are committed to working with parents and carers and our wider partners. We think it is important that everyone can ask questions, explore the proposal in more detail with us and be involved in the consultation.

So we are asking you to take the time to read this letter and respond to the consultation. Joining the Northern Schools Trust is a positive way forward for the school to develop in the future and we hope that you will agree. Thomas Gray's and the Northern Schools Trust's vision for what we want to achieve are very closely aligned which is why we have chosen to partner with them.

The benefits that we see are:

- Closer collaborative working between strong schools so that staff can build upon sharing their expertise in order to raise standards for our children even further.
- Securing best value for money on products and services, therefore, achieving greater economies of scale, so that we can spend as much as possible in classrooms and support our curriculum.
- Opportunities for the trust to apply and benefit from grants and bids that schools do not have access to, under local authority control.
- Greater collaborative working with a wide range of schools across other trusts and opportunities for other schools to join, in order to build capacity to deliver a broad and balanced education even further.

We have for some time been testing out the partnership to see if it is a good fit for us both. The feedback we have received is that there are many benefits and that opportunities for children and staff are likely to be greater if we convert.

If we proceed with conversion you and your child are unlikely to see any change in your day-to-day experience of school. Leaders, teachers, and support staff will remain and have their terms and conditions protected as part of the conversion process; the school will continue to have a governing body; all children on roll at the school will continue to attend; times of the school day, term dates will stay the same.

Consultation for conversion to academy status will be conducted in a variety of ways. We have worked to find a solution that will enable consultation to go ahead and to include everyone. The process will be as follows:

1. A letter to all parents opening the consultation period (this letter).
2. You can find the information about the academy consultation on the website in the Parents section.
3. Please email in to head@thomasgrayprimary.co.uk to ask any questions not already included in the FAQ's section on the school website. We will update the website with the questions from this form regularly during the consultation process. Also please feel free to email us to tell us whether you support the proposal.
4. If you would like to hear more about the proposal and how it affects your child, please contact the office at admin@thomasgrayprimary.co.uk or by telephone on 01512886530 to book a place at one of the face to face consultation meetings. The meetings will be held at 9am on 24th January and 4pm on the 24th January. The face to face meetings will also have a Zoom link to enable people to attend.

We have prepared a document with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help answer some of the questions we anticipate you may have. This is available on our website, from the school office and at the face to face meetings.

The formal consultation period opens today 18th January 2024 and will remain open until 7th February 2024 3pm. The responses to the consultation will then be discussed at the governors meeting that evening. The Governing Body will consider all of the feedback and views received during the consultation and will then make the final decision on whether to complete the process.

We look forward to receiving your responses.

We will write to you as parents to inform you of our decision.

Yours faithfully

Mrs R Rimmer

Headteacher

Mrs P Taylor

Chair of Governors