

Dear Parent/Carer

You may have seen in the media that the Department for Education has a clear view that single academy trusts, such as ours, should look for opportunities to join strong multi academy trusts. Due to the strong set of results and recent Ofsted report, there is no significant pressure from the Department for Education for the academy to join a multi academy trust, but it is something that I have been exploring over the last few months with the Trust Board.

There are significant benefits to the academy joining a local multi academy trust, which in turn will benefit your child's education. These include:

- Providing staff with the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from other schools within the trust, to ensure the best provision for all students.
- There is push for all schools to join a multi academy trust, if the academy joins now in a position of strength due to its recent success, we can ensure the trust we join matches our own culture and ethos.
- An opportunity for staff to stay at the academy and develop professionally through 'trust wide' opportunities. This would ensure the academy continues to retain staff.
- A broader range of extra-curricular opportunities for students provided by the multi academy trust.

When exploring the multi academy trust options, there were clear criteria which the board followed. We did not want to join a large trust where the academy may lose its identity. We wanted to join a trust which had a mixture of primary, secondary and sixth form provision, so that we can collaborate in all areas of the curriculum. We wanted to join a trust which was nearby to aid genuine collaboration. Finally, we wanted to join a trust that allowed us to keep a level of autonomy, so leaders of the academy could continue the improvements made over recent years. This autonomy would stretch to decisions such as keeping the current uniform, name of the academy and structure of the academy day. Parents and students will see very little difference, if any, in how the academy is run on a day to day basis, but I strongly believe that the move will support the academy to improve even further.

Having explored a number of options, the academy Trust Board have taken the decision to explore joining 'The Challenge Academy Trust', which is mainly based in Warrington. At this point, no final decision has been made and there is significant work to be done around due diligence and consultation. I just wanted to ensure that I was open and transparent with all parents/carers and staff.

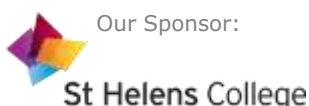
The next steps involve the academy applying to the Regional Schools Commissioner for approval. If approved, I will again write to parents/carers to give details of the next steps involved. To be clear, the application is not final and this is just the starting point with regards to consultation and due diligence.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



Mr P Willerton  
Principal



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