

19 February 2018



Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Consultation with regard to The Spires College becoming an academy and joining the Learning Academy Partnership

You are probably already aware that the Government (DfE) and National Schools Commissioner are firm in their intention that all schools in the country become academies within a multi-academy trust (MAT). As a College, we have been looking at ways to secure, sustain and further recent success by converting to an academy as part of a MAT that reflects our vision and values for The Spires College. The political and financial pressure to achieve this aim is also very real and is being felt by all schools and colleges across the country.

As leaders and governors of The Spires College, we have been scrutinising the local and national picture with regard to multi-academy trusts in order to consider the best option for the college. It is important to us that any decision we make has the wellbeing and success of all of our students at its heart.

For this reason, we feel that the Learning Academy Partnership (LAP) is the right partner for the college. It is true that Multi-Academy Trusts provide financial savings and efficiencies for institutions. However it is important to us that becoming a part of a MAT does much more than this. One of the guiding principles of the Learning Academy Partnership is '**Children First** – in every action we take and decision that we make' and, because it chimes so closely with our own values, it was this that first led us to consider LAP as a potential Trust. We have spent time looking at how the Learning Academy Partnership function as a trust and so have seen those principles in action. This close union of vision and values therefore suggests to us that this would be a natural partnership. We believe that joining the Learning Academy Partnership will provide great opportunities for collaboration and help us secure a highly effective education for children of Torbay all the way from 0-19.

At present, the Learning Academy Partnership is a primary phase MAT and we will all need to work closely together to develop an innovative, 'all-through' Trust that is as committed to gaining the very best outcomes for 18 year olds as it is for ensuring an outstanding start to education for the two year old nursery children. By working together, we can ensure that learning links between primary and secondary phases are strong and that work with families can continue through a child's life into adulthood.

We are determined that becoming an academy and joining a trust will not slow down the ongoing improvement journey of the College, indeed it should help and support this process. Neither will this mean changes to the leadership or staff of the college. Uniform, school name, timings of the school day, etc. will all remain unchanged; this will not disrupt learning in any way.

We are therefore writing to inform you that the Governing Body of The Spires College and the Trust Board of the Learning Academy Partnership are in discussion with a view to The Spires College joining the LAP. The Governing Body believes that the best route for the future of our school, is for our school to join the Learning Academy Partnership family of schools www.lapsw.co.uk and convert to an academy.

This letter forms the start of the formal consultation process. We want to involve our stakeholders throughout the discussions: your views are very important to us and we want to facilitate you being able to raise comments and questions regarding the proposed conversion to academy status within the LAP.

The consultation will run from 19 February until 21 March 2018. Written responses or emails can be addressed for the attention of Tracy French, the Clerk to Governors, and sent in to school or emailed to tfrench@thespirescollege.com.

The Governing Body will then consider a report on the academy consultation before making a final decision on the proposal.

We would like to invite you to a consultation meeting at 5.30pm on Wednesday 14 March at The Spires College. Members of the Governing Body will be available, along with Alex Newton, Principal and Lynn Atkinson, CEO of the Learning Academy Partnership.

We look forward to seeing you and hopefully will be able to answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely



Alex Newton
Principal



Kevin Hill
Chair of Governors