



To: Parents/Carers of children at Tottington High School

19<sup>th</sup> April 2018

## Academy Conversion

Dear Parent/Carer,

Over the past year or so, the Governing Body and Senior Leadership team have been exploring ways to further improve our provision. Last month the Governing Body of our school voted unanimously to pursue the process to convert us to academy status. The Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team have been discussing possible academy conversion for a while as we look to support our children towards more improved outcomes. We are in a borough where no secondary school to this point has voluntarily converted. Nationally, over 70% of secondary schools are already academies with more converting every term. In the NW this figure is around 55% and rising. This has been a topic of conversation between Bury Headteachers for a while now and the next few years will no doubt see other local schools convert. As a 'good' school we are in a position to choose to convert to an academy on our own terms. Some local schools have been judged 'inadequate' and have and will be forced to convert to academy status. We want to make an informed choice before we may experience external pressure to do so. As Governors, we must consider the option to convert as part of our duty to safeguarding and improving the quality of education we can provide for our pupils

We know that we need to build capacity and gain support to enable us to improve outcomes for students. The Governing Body has investigated this process, carefully looking at what it involves for us as a school and have come to the conclusion that this will be a positive step for us in further improving the outcomes for our children. If we go ahead with the conversion we will be joining the Shaw Education Multi Academy Trust. <http://www.shaw-education.org.uk/>

Within a multi-academy trust (MAT) all schools are governed by one academy trust. Each school retains its own governing body. The schools' governing bodies operate subject to the control of the trust which has ultimate responsibility for the running of the individual academies. The trust is accountable and responsible for the performance of the each of the academies and may delegate its decision-making powers to the governing bodies of the individual academies. One of the great advantages of a MAT is that schools can achieve strong collaboration and drive up standards by providing a consistent strategy and vision across schools working together.

Before continuing, please bear in mind that conversion **has not** taken place and will not do so until a period of consultation takes place with relevant stakeholders which of course includes parents and carers. If after that period of consultation the Governors of the school wish to reassess their decision they can of course do so. If conversion does go ahead, it will be somewhere between July and September 2018.

This letter is to briefly outline the reasons for the decision of the Governing Body, in addition to some points above, and to give you details of the consultation session which will take place at school. There are many reasons why the Governing Body has decided to pursue conversion.

These include:

- Funding will come directly from central government, not through the local authority. This will give us greater freedom to spend our money where we think it will most benefit our children.

- We will be able to provide greater opportunities for professional development for teachers, governors and school leaders.
- We will have the opportunity to bid for capital money to further improve our school environment.
- Economies of scale mean that, together with other Trust members, we can negotiate contracts and services that represent better value for money.
- Greater freedom with the curriculum means that we can tailor our teaching provision to meet needs, i.e. in theory we do not have to follow all aspects of the National Curriculum.
- There is a lack of resources available currently from local sources for specifically school improvement.

Reasons for joining the Shaw Education Trust:

- Most importantly, the ethos, mission and value system of The Shaw Education Trust are very much akin to those of the Governing Body of Tottington High School.
- The Trust is committed to developing local partnerships within Bury and across the North West, and is developing a range of mechanisms to support transformational education for young people.
- The Trust has the capacity and experience to support school improvement within Tottington High School. We will have access to specific subject support that is proven to improve outcomes for children.
- They have a comprehensive training and development programme and a strong, very experienced, supernumerary core team.
- There is significant evidence of impact locally and further afield, and the Shaw Education Trust provides a local geographical footprint and network.

The period of consultation will be from 2<sup>nd</sup> May until 11<sup>th</sup> May. The Governing Body welcome any comments from parents/carers during this time. Parents/carers can either write to Chair of Governors at school or email via the school email address. An information session will take place at school on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May from 5.30pm. Present on the evening will be the Governing Body, the school's senior leadership team, and representatives from the Shaw Education Trust. Any parent/carer who is unable to attend the meeting and would like to comment on the proposed conversion can write or email into school but letters must be in school by end of school day on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May. Please address letters/emails to Neville Kenyon, Chair of Governors.

If you would like to do some further reading, the best source of information on academies is the Government's own website: <https://www.gov.uk/become-an-academy-information-for-schools>

Yours sincerely



Neville Kenyon  
Chair of Governors



Mr B Duffy  
Headteacher