



The Acorns Primary
& Nursery School
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Executive Headteacher
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Thursday 23rd September 2021

Hello, and thank you for taking the time to read this update.

I am writing to provide you with an update on plans that your Governors and Senior Leaders have been discussing in relation to Academisation. At the outset, let me summarise what an Academy is:

What is an Academy?

At present the local authority, CWAC, receives money from the central government for all their schools.

- Part of this money is then given to each individual school based on pupil numbers
- Some is kept back for standard functions and building maintenance.
- So, it is unlikely that we will ever receive the full amount of money that central government provides to the local authority
- On top of this, we also now have to buy back services from the local authority, such as payroll, HR, legal etc. as they no longer have sufficient funds to cover this cost

Regarding Academies, a few snippets taken from www.gov.uk

- Academies receive funding directly from the government
- They have more control over how they do things
- They are still inspected by Ofsted and have the same admission rules as state school
- Academies are run by Academy Trusts – which are not-for-profit companies

So, whilst the Academy receives all the monies, much like the local authority, they will also have all the resources and support in place, without the need for each school to individually buy back.

Whilst Academies have been in existence for several years, until recently we have not appreciated the full benefits that they would bring to The Acorns. However, as more and more schools move to an Academy Trust, the support and services available through the local authority will soon reach a tipping point in regard to cost and availability.

As such, and in line with the current drive from the Department of Education, we wanted to take proactive steps:

“I want to see us break away from our current ‘pick and mix’ structure of a school system and move towards a single model, one that is built on a foundation of strong multi-academy trusts, and I’m actively looking at how we can make that happen.” Education Secretary, April 2021

What we don’t want is for the school to be in a position where we are reacting to a mandated change or a resource/cost impediment. We would rather take a proactive approach, choosing an Academy Trust that fits into the ethos of The Acorns, at a time that suits us best.

As such, over the past few months Mrs Broom and the team have spent time investigating different Multi-Academy Trusts across the region.

- They looked at 5 different Academy Trusts
- They met with each Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and spent time finding out how their schools work, their educational ethos and how The Acorns would benefit from joining them
- Mrs Broom and her team presented the findings to Governors for our consideration

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- From that, it was clear that there was a front runner, Rowan Learning Trust (RLT)
- We invited their CEO, Phil Rimmer, to talk to Governors so we could also gain insight into the trust and ethos
- We also asked him to talk to teaching staff so we could gain their feedback too

At the end of this and considering all the personal and professional feedback, we took the decision to formally submit an application to join the Rowan Learning Trust.

There are several steps we will now go through to finally decide if RLT is truly the right fit for The Acorns, the first step being Due Diligence.

- Due diligence allows us to complete a more detailed review of RLT
- Asking them deeper and more insightful questions
- Involving governors and staff in one-to-one conversation with their Finance, HR, premises and Educational Teams
- With the overall aim of ensuring that the trust can enhance and improve The Acorns educational, social and wellbeing offering

This process is two-way, with RLT completing the same process to ensure that The Acorns is a school that they have the capacity to support and develop, but also a school which provides benefits for the trust.

This process will be taking place during September and October, and once complete I will update you on the next steps in the process.

As Governors we are simply custodians of your school, acting with the best interests of your children. We listen to all stakeholders, taking on-board feedback and views.

With that in mind, should you have any questions or queries, then please do not hesitate to drop me a line at this email address: queries@acornswitleyfed.cheshire.sch.uk

Best regards,

Kevin Unsworth

Chair of Governors