



17<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

## **Re: Proposed Change of Status of Polesden Lacey Infant School to Academy Status**

The governing body of Polesden Lacey Infant School is considering whether it would be beneficial for our school to become an academy as part of LEO Academy Trust. We highly value your input and would like to explain how you can share your thoughts with us.

### **Will the School definitely become an academy?**

We have applied to convert to academy status and are working towards a conversion date of April 1, 2025. However, the school is not obligated to become an academy until the Funding Agreement (the contract between the academy trust and the Department for Education) is signed. It is important that parents, carers, staff, and pupils have the opportunity to provide feedback on this proposal. We will be meeting with staff and keeping pupils informed throughout the process.

Your comments and feedback are important to us and will be carefully considered by the governing body before making a final decision. We want to assure you that the governing body will only vote to proceed if they believe that becoming an academy is in the best interests of our school community, taking into account all legal and practical considerations.

### **What is an Academy?**

An academy is a state-funded independent school. It operates independently of the local authority and receives funding directly from the central government.

We propose to become an academy within the LEO Academy Trust, joining a group of academies that includes Brookfield Primary Academy, Cheam Common Infants Academy, Cheam Common Junior Academy, Cheam Fields Academy, Cheam Park Farm Primary Academy, Shawley Community Academy, Manor Park Primary Academy, Hurst Park Primary and West Ashted Primary School.

## **What are the benefits of being an Academy?**

We believe there are many benefits to becoming an academy:

- Increased independence: Academies have more freedom in how they operate.
- Increased funding: Academies receive funding directly from the central government, meaning more funds are available for our school.
- Curriculum flexibility: Academies have more freedom to tailor the curriculum to best suit our pupils' needs.
- Potential for improved staff pay and conditions: Academies can set their own pay and conditions for staff, potentially offering better compensation and benefits.
- Opportunity for innovation: As independent entities, academies have more freedom to pursue innovative projects and initiatives.

## **Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?**

LEO Academy Trust would be directly responsible for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety, and property maintenance. However, the increased funding provided to academies helps to cover these costs, and LEO Academy Trust already has experience managing these responsibilities for its existing academies.

## **Will the conversion affect the staff?**

If the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by the local authority will automatically transfer to the Trust, keeping their current pay and conditions. While the academy would have more freedom to make changes to pay and conditions in the future, the governing body does not intend to do so in the foreseeable future. Any changes would involve consultation with staff representatives.

## **Will the school change?**

We do not anticipate any major changes to Polesden Lacey Infant School other than those aimed at further improvement. For our pupils, day-to-day school life is unlikely to change significantly. We will keep the name Polesden Lacey but the school will be called Polesden Lacey Infant Academy.

Some important aspects of our school will remain the same:

- Our uniform and logos will not change.
- The curriculum, extracurricular activities, school day, pastoral support and guidance, and general organisation of the school will not be affected.
- The teaching and resources currently provided to Polesden Lacey Infant School will continue.

## **How can I find out more?**

If you would like to discuss this further in person, governors and representatives of The Leo Trust will be available on Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup> (at the times listed ) in the school hall.

8:30 am - 10:00 am

2:00 pm - 3:30 pm:

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm:

You are welcome to submit questions in advance of the meeting via this Google Form - <https://forms.gle/9J6W3qtdXqG9TWSs6> or email [consultation@polesdenlaceyinfant.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:consultation@polesdenlaceyinfant.surrey.sch.uk)

We welcome any questions or feedback during the consultation period, which runs from Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September to Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024. Please engage in the process to ensure your views are heard.

The governing body will meet on 15<sup>th</sup> October to review all feedback and decide whether to proceed with the process.

This letter is also available on the school website.

Sincerely,

*M. Rogers*

Mark Rogers,  
Chair of Governors

*Rebecca Mole*

Rebecca Mole  
Headteacher