



# FOREST LODGE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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*'A unique family working together to be the best'*

Headteacher – Mrs C Caldwell

Deputy Headteacher – Mrs U Malik

18<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

We write to inform you that following agreement by the Governors, our school is now actively pursuing conversion to Academy status, having concluded that conversion would be a positive move for our school. If successful, we would aim to become an Academy by January 2018.

We would like to provide you with as much information as possible, so that you may better understand the importance of the school taking this opportunity to secure the future of education for all pupils within our community.

The announcement by the government that all schools should move towards becoming a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) by 2020 led to senior leaders researching various MAT models and structures. As local authority provision shrinks due to funding cutbacks we felt it was important to consider the benefits of becoming an academy and what this could offer the school and community it serves.

### What are academies?

Academies are publicly funded schools, which are not controlled by the Local Authority and therefore have additional independence in a number of important areas. This greater independence brings increased responsibilities and opportunities to build upon our current success and ensure that we continue to improve our service to families in our local community. You can view further detail on academies at the Department for Education website at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies>



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 **University of Leicester**



### Why Convert to Academy status?

All staff will be able to undertake professional development opportunities within the Trust which will enhance good practice. At present we access this in Leicester but being part of an academy, we will be able to gain insight into proven methods and developments that are having impact from other parts of the country. We will encourage pupil and staff collaboration within the trust which should enable us to continue on our journey to outstanding at a faster rate.

At present the Local Authority retain a significant percentage of our budget to provide centralised services. As an academy, we would be able to determine for ourselves which, if any, of those services we want the Local Authority to provide. Many of the traditional services provided by the Local Authority are being withdrawn as a result of enduring funding pressures and this situation is only likely to worsen. However, MATs have already developed services which the school would benefit from, particularly in the central education team. This will assist the school post conversion.

### What is / who are L.E.A.D. Academy Trust?

We are looking to join L.E.A.D. Academy Trust (L.E.A.D.) which is a Multi Academy Trust consisting of 21 schools at present across the East Midlands region (Nottingham, Sheffield, Derby, Leicester). Another 6 schools will join L.E.A.D from January. (Lincolnshire)

L.E.A.D. Academy Trust (L.E.A.D.) is a registered charity and operates a Multi Academy Trust providing the education to over 8,600 children. The impact made on schools who have joined the MAT include the following Ofsted judgements; Two schools have improved from Special Measures to Good, two schools have improved from Requires Improvement to Good, one school has improved from Satisfactory to Good, one school has improved from Good to Outstanding, three schools have maintained Good and one school has received Outstanding for a second time.

As such the Trust has a strong reputation around working alongside schools and improving their educational outcomes, whilst retaining each schools unique environment and culture.

You can view further detail on the Trust at:

<http://www.leadacademytrust.co.uk/>



## Why join L.E.A.D. Academy Trust?

There are many reasons for joining L.E.A.D. Academy Trust - the main ones are outlined below:

- There is a strong network of school improvement opportunities, including:
  - Executive leadership support programmes, access to National Leaders of Education (NLEs), Local Leaders of Education (LLEs) and Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs);
  - Support from highly qualified leaders who have taken schools to Outstanding and are Ofsted trained.
- Making the most of funding prudent financial management and creating opportunities:
  - Have access to a multi skilled business support functions;
  - Have access to capital funding which can be used to improve a long-term asset such as equipment or buildings;
  - Economies of scale. Being part of a larger group means that our money can go further.
- Recruiting the best teachers and support staff as the school keeps improving the quality of education on offer:
  - To enhance career development opportunities for staff, and therefore retaining the services of our best teachers through giving opportunities and bespoke training;
  - To use the Teaching School Alliance to recruit, train and retain the best teachers for future staffing to continually improve the quality of education further in school;
  - Have direct access to nationally accredited leadership programmes for middle leaders and senior leaders;
  - Access to support staff training;
  - Access to the Trust's directory of other professionals.

## What might change?

The Trust's accountability is direct to the Department for Education rather than the Local Authority. There would be some additional financial performance management reporting to satisfy the requirements of Companies House and the Charities Commission. This burden will be managed on our behalf by L.E.A.D.

On a day to day basis children and parents would see no difference other than signage which is standardised across the MAT.



After conversion to Academy status our school would be named as Forest Lodge Academy. As a school we would still continue to keep our own individual identity, characteristics, ethos and vision 'A unique family working together to be the best' ensuring that we do our best at all times for our children families and local community. The governing body will remain in place as a Local Governing Body.

### Uniforms

Uniform colours will remain the same, but from January and new starters in September 2018 the uniform suppliers will change the branding to Forest Lodge Academy and the L.E.A.D logo. This will gradually appear around school as uniform is updated.

### What happens next?

We are now entering a consultation period running from 18<sup>th</sup> September to 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017. During this period, we will be consulting with parents/carers, students, staff, unions, the Local Authority, the local community and local schools.

We will be holding an Open Evening at school on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at 5.00 pm to provide more information and the opportunity for you to ask questions. Should you have any comments or further queries then please e-mail us by the end of the consultation period at:

[academyconsultation@forestlodge.leicester.sch.uk](mailto:academyconsultation@forestlodge.leicester.sch.uk)

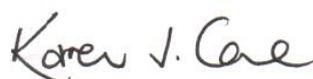
We will publish and regularly update our Frequently Asked Questions page (which can be found on the school website under the Academy conversion consultation tab), with any queries that might emerge during the consultation phase.

This is an extremely exciting opportunity for all at Forest Lodge, and L.E.A.D trust schools and we would welcome your engagement as we progress on our journey.

Yours sincerely



Mrs C. Caldwell  
Headteacher



Mrs Karen Cane  
Chair of Governors

