

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**RE: Academy Conversion Consultation**

Dear Parent/Carers of Ecclesall Primary School children,

We wrote to you recently to give you an update on our governing body's considerations regarding joining a Multi Academy Trust. The Governing Board has been considering and discussing future plans in a changing and increasingly challenging educational landscape.

We have been through an initial 'due diligence' process and this letter is to inform you that Governors at Ecclesall Primary School will now begin a consultation process with all stakeholders regarding joining Peak Edge Academy Trust. This follows a significant period of research by our Governors.

In a previous letter and at a Parents meeting on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024, we have outlined why we think that joining a multi academy trust is the right next step for Ecclesall now.

Today's letter is an opportunity to share why Ecclesall Governors and leaders believe that Peak Edge is the correct Trust for us to join. By joining Peak Edge, we will be securing the school's position in a changing educational landscape. We will also participate in systems and networks which will put our leaders and teachers in a better position to focus on improving children's educational outcomes and school experience.

All parents are invited to an information and consultation meeting at Ecclesall Primary School on **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January at 4.45pm**. (There are further details below). You can also submit feedback or questions in writing.

**Why do Governors believe Peak Edge is the right Trust for Ecclesall Primary School?**

- Peak Edge Academy Trust is based in Sheffield, working with schools who are all within at least 30 minutes of another Peak Edge school and often less. The school leaders are known to each other and the schools are all in a good position to share their strengths and experiences facing similar challenges.
- Peak Edge Academy Trust is made up of primary schools. Our Governing Body has identified that working in close partnership with other schools with a focused expertise around primary school practice, teaching approaches, curriculum decisions, community relations, areas for improvement etc is the right choice for Ecclesall.
- Peak Edge Trust has ten primary schools in it now and this may increase to c 15/16 schools. This means it is big enough to remain independent and financially secure, but small enough for schools to be known and to work in meaningful partnership. The existing schools in Peak Edge Trust are Abbey Lane Primary School, Bradfield Dungworth Primary School, Dobcroft

Infant School, Grenoside Community Primary School, Loxley Primary School, Nook Lane Junior School, Oughtibridge Primary School, Stannington Infant School, Stocksbridge Nursery Infant School and Wharncliffe Side Primary School. A small number of other schools, close to Ecclesall, are also in the process of consultation with their stakeholders regarding joining Peak Edge.

- Peak Edge was established in 2019, clustered around an original group of primary schools in the West of Sheffield. The original values of that group have sustained since then and are evident in the Trust's ongoing everyday practice. These values are Trust, Collaboration, Ambition, Responsibility and Innovation and align well with the Ecclesall priorities and practices.
- The schools in Peak Edge retain their own Governing Bodies (known as a Local Governing Board in academies). Each LGB has the same number of committees and retains strategic oversight for their school, much as they do now.
- The schools in Peak Edge Trust retain their individual identities and community-focus. This was a priority for our Governors when making the decision to join a MAT.
- Every school in Peak Edge has its own Headteacher and each school decides its own leadership and staffing structure. The Headteachers in Peak Edge work closely together and participate in a Headteacher Board which plays a significant role in strategic direction of the Trust. This makes it different from many other Trusts.
- The central team in Peak Edge is comparatively small, meaning that more of each schools' budget can be spent on staffing and resources for their pupils.
- Joining Peak Edge would not mean a change to our uniform, our school name, our logo or our senior leadership team.

As a school firmly rooted in our community, we intend to remain outward focussed, maintaining our partnerships while developing new approaches to working together. You can find out more about Peak Edge by looking at their website: <https://peakedge.org.uk/>

Our consultation period will run for six weeks, from **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January to Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025**. To support parents & carers in developing their knowledge and understanding of what is involved in becoming an academy we sent out a FAQs document. This will be regularly updated and put on our EPS website for your information.

We will also send out a **Google form in January 2025** which we strongly encourage you to complete and return to us by **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025** in order that your opinions are considered in the consultation process.

To further support your participation in the consultation we invite you to attend a meeting where you will be able to discuss Academy status with Governors and the Headteacher. This will also be an opportunity to ask any questions of the Trust's CEO, Mr Jim Dugmore. The meeting will start at **4.45pm on Tuesday 21st January 2025**.

We have already begun to discuss academy status with staff in school, and will also include pupils and members of the wider community in the consultation process. In order that we gather as broad and deep a range of opinions as possible, we urge you to participate by attending the meeting, completing the Google form or if you prefer a more informal chat, then feel free to catch us in the playground or around the school if you wish.

We look forward to speaking with you soon and to receiving your comments.

Kind regards,

Kevin Corke  
Chair of Governors

Emma Hardy  
Headteacher