



Hinckley Parks Primary School:

Rationale for joining OWLS Academy Trust – Oadby Wigston and Leicestershire Schools Academy Trust.

Context: the Local Authority and government agenda

The profile of schooling in Leicestershire has changed dramatically over the past 5 years. The previous (labour) Government introduced the academisation agenda, the current Government has legislated to increase the variety of schools in an effort to create more choice in a better and more diverse school system. The Local Authority no longer has the resources to provide a school improvement service for all schools or to support the professional development of staff, but concentrates its reduced resources on meeting its statutory duties. As a result, schools must increase their capacity to train staff, develop the quality of teaching and learning, analyse their own data and hold themselves and each other to account. Head teachers must source their own professional services and financial management. Their responsibilities and those of school Governors are greater than ever.

The services offered by the council and their workforce have already been drastically cut and schools' budgets will be reduced over the next few years

Core values frame the work of the OWLS Academy Trust - trust, honesty, empathy, social responsibility, transparency and openness. These are values shared by Hinckley Parks Primary School. There is an explicit recognition and expectation of everyone's valuable contribution; the teaching and learning of pupils has Restorative Practice at the core. There is a relentless focus on achievement, not just attainment; the trust utilises and builds on existing strengths and potential to improve the outcomes of all our pupils. The Trust currently has four schools all currently graded outstanding or Good (Glenmere, Langmoor and Little Hill primary schools – Outstanding and Fernvale Good with Outstanding Features.) and benefits from being a strategic partner with in a local the teaching school alliance. (Launde Primary School lead Teaching school and part of the OLP – Oadby Learning Partnership.) The model is to surround with the best – to share the best working practices, to learn from the best practice, to train with the highest quality trainers and to support and share practise.

Ofsted framework:

Successive changes to the Ofsted framework result in greater demands being put on schools than ever before. Schools are required to evidence the learning and progress of every single pupil in the school, not just cohorts or specific groups. This means that all school leaders and managers are constantly looking for more effective ways of working so that their teachers manage the pressure well. The leadership and management of schools is judged on how effectively schools work with and support other schools. Good and outstanding schools must produce evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of that support. OWLS Academy Trust is run by its members and trustees for the benefit of the pupils in those schools. The members of the OWLS has a balance of independent members with a broad and balanced skills set to advise and support the trust. (See diagram below)



This includes a NLE, two NSS, and experienced staff. The collaborative Teaching School which drives forward school improvement in the OLP and the surrounding area by focussing on:

- initial teacher training
- continuing professional development
- succession planning and talent management
- school to school support
- specialist leaders of education
- research and development

Financial security:

Being part of the OWLS Academy Trust offers greater financial security and flexibility in organisation and structure. OWLS school CFO and business managers work closely together, support each other and are supported by the accountancy firm employed by the OWLS trust. This provides greater efficiencies and value for money when purchasing goods and services.

Collaboration:

Collaboration is the key to effective working – we must establish ways of close working so that staff at all levels can support each other to work more effectively. OWLS shares expertise, resources and best practice across the member schools in order to raise standards and develop innovative teaching and learning.

Governance:

OWLS offers support and development to strengthen Local Governing bodies. It has the capacity to ensure that Governors are given appropriate specialist advice when necessary. The members will remain the same for the purpose of Hinckley Parks Primary School joining the trust, with a developing drive for independent Members across the trust with a broad and balanced skills set being established over time. The trustees will be increased from 9 to 10 (with 2 Key staff one with HR background and one with Financial background.) allowing a place for the Chair of Hinckley Parks on the Trustees board. This will be revised if more schools join the trust incorporating a head teacher's board and independent trustees.

Staff development and succession planning:

There are problems of recruitment in the teaching profession, especially a shortage of high quality leadership and middle leadership candidates. Through OWLS trust, Hinckley Parks staff will experience a wider range of teaching and learning pedagogies and have access to high quality training and career opportunities. The approach OWLS trust uses is inspiring and supportive and promotes high expectations of all. OWLS trust is a strong, dynamic and highly successful group of schools which can attract high quality applicants to staffing posts. The trust is linked and works closely with the Local Teaching School to support staff CPD.

We believe that joining OWLS trust would be very beneficial to our pupils and our staff because through its programme of support and challenge, it will ensure that we continue to improve.



Key reasons for joining OWLS trust:

- OWLS is a very strong model of successful values-driven organisation
- Hinckley Parks would be closely linked to a group of successful schools and a teaching school
- OWLS is a stronger, and more effective school improvement partner than our current network and through being a Multi Academy Trust, it makes the agreement between members mutually binding.
- Opportunities to purchase centrally to make economies of scale
- Increased staffing resources and flexibility
- Expectation of all staff to engage in professional development continuously
- Through excellent support and professional development opportunities, OWLS trust help develop our staff more effectively than we could on our own, or within our current network
- Support with recruitment, and succession planning

What does Hinckley Parks contribute to OWLS trust?

- A growing and developing large primary school
- A strong, collaborative, values-driven team of pupils, parents, governors and staff
- Enthusiastic, dynamic, hardworking, and skilled teachers and support staff with good experience.
- A successful track record in building a strong, inclusive community with a confident pupil voice (Ofsted rated Good)

Reasons for becoming an academy

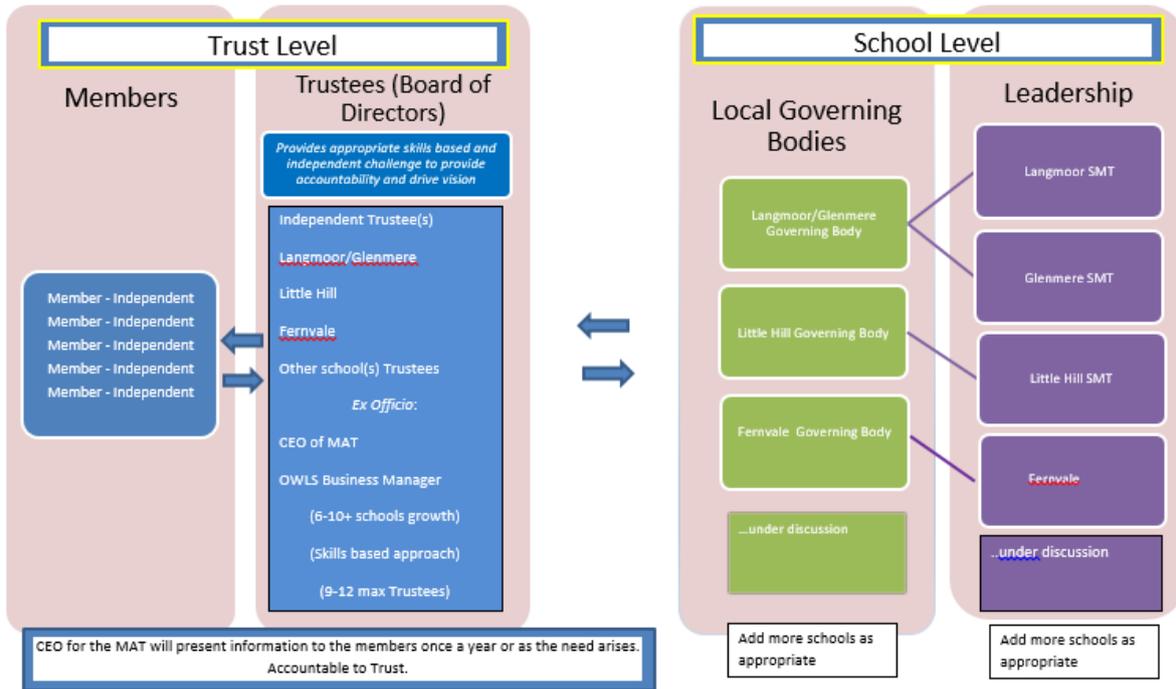
The Governing Body has carried out extensive research and have agreed to embark upon a consultation process, as we feel that conversion to an Academy is the way forward for Hinckley Parks Primary School for the following reasons:

- We are a good school and in an ever changing climate we want to protect what we have achieved, in the face of strong external competition.
- We do not want to change our name or ethos and our visions and values will remain the same, but we will be more in control of our own destiny.
- We feel joining an academy Trust and becoming an academy will give us greater ability to shape our own future and aid school improvement.
- We feel that local authority support is diminishing and we are not receiving best value from the service we are paying for.
- The position of the local authority will get rapidly worse as more schools opt to become academies.
- We will not be offering our pupils/students and parents the best possible education if we maintain the status quo and remain within local authority control.



- We are not in a deficit and anticipate we will be financially secure and better off under the academy structure, as we currently pay a % of our overall budget to the local authority.
- Any financial benefits gained will be invested in the pupils/students education and helping to make Hinckley Parks an 'outstanding' school.

OWLS MAT Governance Structure (Future Vision, Feb 2017)



Vision:

Oadby Wigston & Leicestershire Schools (OWLS) Academy Trust is committed to the core values of excellence, equity and effectiveness...

Promoting high levels of engagement, aspiration, achievement and enterprise across two schools.

Principles:

1. The overriding principle is the success and wellbeing of the children educated within the Trust schools.
2. There is an expectation of professional challenge, support and development between member schools.
3. Trust between members is essential for the success of the collaboration.





4. Trust is engendered by: confidentiality, openness and professionalism. The Head Teacher and teacher standards provide a framework for this professionalism.
5. The Trust members will take account of data protection policies in all work they do.
6. The Trust members abide by the principles of best value and the long term benefit and gain of all the member schools. The budget will support the priorities based on the action plan. The Trust will not hold great sums of money but it will be spent to benefit the children in the schools at that time.
7. Our work is focused on raising standards of provision in all areas of the Ofsted criteria and securing school improvements. Collaboratively we aim to respond quickly and effectively supporting and working with the local committees, developing national priorities and local initiatives. Needs are identified across the Trust and responded to effectively both by the whole group and sub-groups

Documentation:

- Trust agreement – articles
- Terms of Reference
- Planning



“On a cold winter’s day, a group of porcupines huddled together to stay warm and keep from freezing. But, soon they felt one another’s quills and moved apart. When the need for warmth brought them closer together again, their quills again forced them apart. They were driven back and forth at the mercy of their discomforts until they found the distance from one another that provided both a maximum of warmth and a minimum of pain.”

Arthur Schopenhauer

From: *Buonfino, A., and Mulgan, G. (2006) Porcupines in Winter, London: The Young Foundation*