

21st February 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

### **PROPOSAL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS WITHIN THE UNITY ACADEMY TRUST**

I refer to my letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017 advising parents/carers at Gravel Hill Primary School that the Governors have decided unanimously to apply to the Department for Education for consent to convert to academy status within the Unity Academy Trust.

We invited parents to hear more about these plans at meetings held at school on 8<sup>th</sup> February and 9<sup>th</sup> February 2017 respectively. Many thanks to those parents who attended the meetings. This letter is intended to ensure that all parents are aware of this proposal and what it means for our school and to encourage you to let us know what you think or to ask questions.

The Unity Academy Trust is a multi-academy trust established in Bexley by Upland Primary School last October. Governors believe that by joining Upland in this new academy trust we will be able not only to develop the opportunities that are provided for children in our school, but also to seek economies of scale that will help us to manage increasingly tight budgets. Above all we think that working with another school that shares our values, and the importance we attach to supporting each and every child, will help us to improve even further the quality of teaching and learning we can offer.

Academy status is becoming more common. All the secondary schools in Bexley and many primary schools are now academies. We are choosing to make this proposal as a positive way forward for our school which will enable us to continue to improve the opportunities we provide for your children. Making this change now means that we can choose how we want our school to develop.

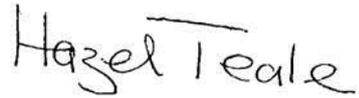
You and your children will see little practical difference if we become an academy. The name of the school will stay the same, the uniform will not change and we will not change term dates or the school's admissions policies. Many of the benefits will be in the way in which we can work behind the scenes with colleagues at Upland Primary School.

We hope that you will continue to give the Governors and the staff your support. If you have any questions or comments please email the School Office at [admin@gravelhillbexley.sch.uk](mailto:admin@gravelhillbexley.sch.uk). If you would like another opportunity to come and talk to Miss Neale, some governors and representatives of the Unity Academy Trust please advise us and we will make the appropriate arrangements.

Please use the same email address to send any comments about the proposal, or write to Hazel Teale, Chair of Governors, at the school.

All comments and questions should be received by 24th March please. We will inform you of the outcome in the school newsletter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hazel Teale". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the "H" and a long, sweeping underline.

Mrs H Teale  
Chair of Governors

# The Unity Academy Trust



**“Work, Learn, Achieve in Unity”**

## **Our vision**

The vision of Unity Academy Trust is to provide children with the skills they need to become learners for life; enabling them to develop academically, physically, socially, mentally and creatively through an inspiring curriculum, so that they become well rounded individuals ready for the world beyond primary school.

This will be achieved by ensuring that all children are developed within caring and safe environments.

## **Our Aims**

Unity Academy Trust’s main aims are:

- Build a community of schools in order to provide quality education for all.
- Work in collaborative partnership with all of the communities.
- Ensure that all children and adults are safe, healthy and protected.
- Improve and develop the quality of teaching across the community of schools.
- Improve and develop the quality of leadership across the community of schools.
- Improve and develop the curriculum and make it relevant for all children.
- Be creative and take appropriate risks.
- Promote high standards of behaviour and attendance.
- Promote mutual respect through a shared understanding of equality and diversity.
- Provide quality CPD (continued professional development) for all staff across the community of schools.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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

Academies are state maintained schools free to all children. They are run separately from the local authority, and have an agreement with the Government which provides funding directly to the Academy Trust. They follow the same rules as all other state-funded schools over admissions, pupils with Special Educational Needs and exclusions. They are inspected by Ofsted.

### **What is a Multi Academy Trust?**

A Multi Academy Trust is a company established to be responsible for a number of Academies. Each Academy remains a separate school, with its own Local Governing Body, but the governors are responsible to a board of directors established for the Trust as a whole. This model is becoming more common, particularly as more primary schools seek academy status and the Government has encouraged primary schools to choose this route.

### **So why make the change?**

Academy status gives us some more freedom to make decisions about how we can best continue to move the school forwards and how best we can use the funding we receive to improve opportunities for our pupils. But our vision for the school does not change – we continue to be focused on achievement and on teaching and learning.

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

More information on Academy status and on multi academy trusts is available on the Department for Education website [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk).

If you have any questions or comments please email the school office at [admin@gravelhillbexley.sch.uk](mailto:admin@gravelhillbexley.sch.uk). If you would like another opportunity to come and talk to Miss Neale, some governors and representatives of the Unity Academy Trust please let us know.

### **How can I make my views known?**

Please use the same email address to send any comments about the proposal, or write to Hazel Teale, Chair of Governors, at the school.

All comments and questions should be received by 24th March please. We will inform you of the outcome in the school newsletter.