

27th February 2023

Key themes

- The Eastern Learning Alliance consists of four secondary schools, three with sixth forms, a special school and a primary school, with a specialist maths sixth form in pre-opening.
- All our schools are judged to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.
- The trust is working with the outgoing trust to ensure a smooth transition.
- ELA are currently working with the school and will continue to do so over the coming months.
- The trust look forward to working collaboratively with the current principal to continue the improvement work she has started at the school.

FAQs

How will the changes affect the options process for years 9 into 10?

- ELA know that recruiting strong subject specialists is key to a strong GCSE offer – this is currently the case within all trust schools. Ensuring a focus on recruitment and retention of key staff is crucial to ensuring the options process is robust, will not change again, and ultimately that the learners are on the best pathway. The school will be working on this immediately, with ELA's support, and communication will be sent home in the coming weeks.
- The process being delayed will not affect the experience of current year 9 in any way: courses will start in September as planned.

What will the trust do to keep the current staff?

- Retention across the current trust staff is high and recent surveys show a high level of staff satisfaction.
- The CEO is scheduling 1:1 meetings for all staff to give them an opportunity to voice views.
- Having a close network of schools working together provides support and reassurance for staff.
- ELA have a very strong staff benefits, wellbeing and training offer which will be extended to all LECA staff straight away.

How will the new trust be different?

- The recent trajectory of other schools within the trust demonstrates the impact of ELA's support: all schools are doing very well, with those taken on in challenging circumstances improving rapidly.
- Heads from all schools work closely together and provide support for one other, as do SENcos; heads of department; safeguarding leads etc.
- The trust is working with the school to familiarise itself with the systems and processes and to ascertain where work is needed: this process is crucial to identifying key areas for improvement.

What is the transfer process?

- The Department for Education have now made the decision that ELA are the preferred sponsor. This was based on extensive consideration of the trust's impact in other schools locally, and our capacity for improving LECA.
- The trust is currently undertaking a comprehensive due diligence process, alongside offering immediate school support to LECA, with a view to a September 2023 deadline for full handover.
- The trust has experience of working with a campus model incorporating special schools and sports centres.

When will the trust meet the students?

Stakeholder Engagement: LECA Eastern Learning Alliance transfer

- The trust has a schedule to meet staff and visit the site and will then meet students. Key members of staff will join the LECA SLT imminently and will be introduced to staff.

Is there any change planned to the uniform?

- No.

Is there a change to the curriculum?

- The schools across the trust share a curriculum, resources and curriculum development. This allows consistency of high quality provision, sharing of subject expertise and teaching, and a focus on collaborative work in the best interests of students.

Will this school be the focus for the next 12 months?

- All schools in the trust are currently in a strong position, with some having had very positive recent inspections and others continuing to be renowned local providers.
- All schools in the trust receive ongoing input, both formal and informal, regardless of how they are performing. LECA will receive sustained input from a wide range of trust leaders and subject teachers on an ongoing basis.

Will the trust be opening a sixth form at LECA?

- There are several sixth form providers in the area, with the trust having provision locally: there is no intention to open a sixth form at LECA, however students will benefit from trust based sixth form opportunities being extended to them, alongside the wider local offer.

Why is there a move to 100 minute lessons?

- 100 minute lessons have been in use at the trust for a number of years and are provably beneficial for all students. The key is for the full 100 minutes to be used well: so it is engaging, fragmented, and contains a number of tasks and activities. This allows students to settle, learn and fully complete an extended piece of work. 100 minute lessons also reduce learning lost to additional movement time around the site, minimising disruption.
- Staff across the trust receive regular, high quality training and CPD focussed on teaching excellent 100 minute lessons.

How will you be able to recruit to posts?

- As a trust we have strong links with teach hubs and training providers, and have managed to attract several candidates. The maths school has been a strong draw to the trust, as has the wider staff offer. This enables the trust to appoint to several schools if there is a suitable match. We also have strong links with a recruitment agency using overseas teachers.

Why does the trust want to take LECA on?

- Two key reasons: a moral purpose – to provide the best possible education for young people locally, and the knowledge that we have the experience, expertise and capacity to make the necessary improvement.
- Geographically LECA makes lots of sense to us too: Downham and Witchford colleagues are very close by.

Is there a model for parent engagement?

- There is no one fixed model each school will have their own system. However, all schools have local governing bodies and a PTA. There is also engagement from local businesses.

Stakeholder Engagement: LECA Eastern Learning Alliance transfer

- Communication includes parent newsletters/blogs, ELA parent experience days and annual surveys – LECA parents will be included in this cycle.
- There will be more stakeholder engagement meetings at LECA throughout the year during this process.

What are your top issues from your time within the school?

- Staffing: the school is only as good as the staff within the school.
- Communication: open communication is a crucial part of the process and we welcome feedback.
- Systems: ensuring robust systems are in place for safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Will there be any funding for extra-curricular activities and enhancements?

- There are a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and school trips within all the schools.