

4th May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Consideration of Conversion to Multi Academy Trust Status

We are writing to inform you that the Trustees have for some time been considering the potential of a partnership with a Multi Academy Trust. It is eight years since we made the successful transition to a 'Single Academy Trust' and whilst much improvement has taken place during the intervening period the Trustees have been considering the options for our future development. Over the last four years we have gathered much information and had a number of meetings with potential partners to allow us the opportunity to assess how we can improve the educational offering to the children attending Waseley both now and in the future. At the Board meeting on 2nd April, Trustees voted to engage with the Central RSA Academies Trust (CRSAAT) as a potential future partner.

It is important to emphasise that this does not commit us irrevocably to joining the Central RSA Academies Trust but it does mean we have embarked on a process of due diligence where both parties will ask for and present factual information about their respective organisations to ensure no surprises if we decide to go ahead. Assuming there are no issues arising from the due diligence the plan is to set an objective of joining formally with effect from 1st January 2021. However it is important to keep in mind that if at any time up to the point when we sign an agreement to join (estimated to be October this year), we can opt out of joining to pursue other options.

Who are the Central RSA Academies Trust?

The RSA's (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) mission is to create the conditions for the enlightened thinking and collaborative action needed to address today's most pressing social challenges. At the heart of the RSA is an international community of 30,000 likeminded people, a Fellowship, with the shared values of creativity, inclusivity and responsibility.

The Central RSA Academies Trust is part of this Community and working together aims to create learning that is inspirational for all; igniting imagination and enabling creativity and curiosity which result in the highest achievement for the children in the schools. People are valued and given the opportunity to develop the skills and networks for success and fulfilment. Everything is possible, aspirations are high and outcomes are impressive.

The Trust was founded in September 2012, when Arrow Vale Community High School became a Sponsored Academy. Currently it has eight Academies in the West Midlands with 3800 pupils and employs some 600 staff. The Academies are a mix of Primary, Middle and Secondary schools which operate independently but share the same values and mission. For further information please refer to <https://www.centralrsaacademies.co.uk>

What are the benefits of joining a Multi Academy Trust?

The Trustees have taken great care to explore all reasonable options to ensure that the students of Waseley Hills are placed in the strongest position for the future. We believe the best way of securing and improving standards in the future is by joining a Multi Academy Trust. However, we are also concerned to retain our ethos, philosophy and community involvement, and based on our research we believe the RSA Academies Trust would be an excellent fit in terms of our culture and values.

Top of our priorities is the educational opportunities for the children attending Waseley and we believe the sharing of resources and the support both from the RSA and their contacts and links to industry and commerce will add value to the things we already offer. As part of a Teaching School Alliance, the Trust is at the forefront of educational development and train teachers across many subjects. This allows a steady input of exceptional talent and will assist in future recruitment needs.

Unlike some Multi Academy Trusts the RSA does not have 'Lead schools' and we will be an equal partner benefitting from a collaborative approach in school development. There are enhanced opportunities for staff development and to extend experience within a similar environment. We believe this will assist in staff retention and be attractive to those seeking to progress their careers in a creative and supportive environment.

There is also the inevitable issue of funding to consider and whilst we have done a fantastic job of stretching our funds in recent years there is a limit to what we can do. Being part of a larger organisation will allow us to benefit from what the RSA refer to as 'Capacity through Scale'.

Not least of the benefits to be gained is the continuation of our focus on the development of skills and attributes to ensure that students are prepared for a full and happy life, both in their chosen careers and their personal and social life. We share a belief that schools are best placed to tailor these specifically to the local community they serve, and the Trust supports the development of a wide range of joint events and curricular approaches to ensure the vital skills and attributes children will need and benefit from in adult life are well developed.

The Trustees' priority is to enable the school to continue to provide an excellent education for our students, retaining our unique qualities and strengths while protecting the school's role at the heart of our community.

Do we need to consult on our proposals?

Whilst there is no requirement for either the MAT or the individual school to consult generally with stakeholders on this issue, the Trustees of Waseley believe it is sensible and good practice to inform parents, staff and other key stakeholders about the proposals. The current restrictions on movement due to the COVID 19 regulations will necessitate a change in how we approach that consultation but we are determined to do so and will be following up this introductory letter with a FAQ document later in the week. Meanwhile we have set up an email address for your comments and questions: - RSAMAT@waseleyhills.worcs.sch.uk.

We believe the COVID restrictions will have been lifted before we reach a critical point in the decision making process and as soon as is reasonably possible will hold an open meeting for you to hear first-hand the benefits RSA Academies Trust are delivering to their children and to answer the questions you will undoubtedly have. In addition, we will seek ways to keep you informed of progress and publish information to assist understanding about the process and implications. Trustees wish to be totally transparent about this process and no final decision will be taken until we have had the opportunity to consult fully with our stakeholders.

Trustees will ultimately decide based on what is believed to be in the best interests of our children, staff and the wider community. All views will be considered before that decision is made.

We hope you will find the time to read and respond to the information provided and look forward to seeing you at the stakeholders meeting when it is safe to convene.



Alan Roll, Head Teacher



Eric Hogg, Chair of Board of Trustees