

ROUND HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

A PROPOSAL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS AND JOIN EQUALS TRUST

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

March 2023



The Proposal

The proposal is that Round Hill Primary School converts to academy status and joins the Equals Trust.

The challenges facing our school

The governing body has considered very carefully the best future strategy for our school. Like all schools in England we are dealing with several challenges:

Sustaining and raising school performance and pupil outcomes

Schools face much greater external scrutiny of their performance and pupil outcomes. This places increased pressure on Head teachers, teachers and teaching staff. In the past Nottinghamshire County Council has provided excellent support for its schools. But, through no fault of its own, it now has less funding and resources, which it has to target at the weakest schools. This means we receive much less support for school improvement.

Retaining the best staff team

At the heart of every good school is a strong team of leaders, teachers, teaching staff and support staff who work together to help and develop every child, so they flourish. As a school, we receive a diminishing amount of Local Authority support and the opportunities for professional development, career progression and mutual support and challenge are reduced. We need to retain, develop and recruit the very best staff team to achieve the best outcomes for the children. We also need to help staff achieve a better work/life balance.

Coping with financial pressures

We know that the children, staff, parents and carers view Round Hill Primary School as a school where children, staff and parents/carers are part of a community that cares for and supports each other. However, pupil funding is not keeping up with the range of cost increases, which means each year we have to find more savings from an ever-tighter budget. We are concerned that these cutbacks will strip back the breadth of learning beyond the core curriculum that we can offer our pupils.

Governing Body investigation of the proposal

The governing body has, over the last four to five years, been monitoring closely the government's school's policy and its impact in our local area. Across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City the proportion of primary schools that have become academies is now over half and a number of schools in our local area have converted to academies recently.

During summer 2022 the governing body investigated a number of different multi academy trusts, including meetings with their senior leaders and staff. In September 2022 the governing body identified Equals Trust as the preferred partner for two key reasons. First, the vision and values of Equals Trust align very well with those of Round Hill and second, as a large primary-only multi academy trust, it could offer relevant expertise, support and resources to our school.

The governing body then carried out detailed due diligence of the trust during the autumn term 2022. The governing body agreed in January 2023 that the preferred option was for Round Hill to join Equals Trust and passed a formal resolution to do so. At the same time Equals Trust approved our membership.

Governors and school leaders are confident that, by joining Equals Trust, Round Hill will continue to flourish and benefit from greater collaboration and joint working with the other member schools.

The Benefits

Round Hill has already seen the benefits first hand of working in partnership with other schools. By converting to academy status and joining the Trust, we would be able to develop further links with a number of good and outstanding primary schools, and facilitate further collaboration and joint working between Head teachers, senior leaders, staff and governors.

As part of Equals Trust we will be able to:

- Share and develop excellent practice in teaching and learning.
- Broaden and deepen the curriculum offered by each school.
- Enhance the professional development of teaching and support staff.
- Increase the range of learning and enrichment activities for students and pupils.
- Enhance our provision for students with additional needs.
- Help retain and attract the most capable staff.
- Increase mutual accountability, challenge and support for Governors and Head teachers.
- Secure financial efficiencies through coordinated resource planning and joint commissioning of services.
- Respond to changes in Government policy proactively and efficiently.

Equals Trust vision and values

Equals Trust is a local primary multi-academy trust based on the fundamental principle of equality. The trust was founded in September 2016 with the aim of allowing member schools to maintain their ethos and unique identities within a tight local network, with strong mutual accountability, shared support services and a strong collaborative approach to staff development and school improvement.

Equals trust work collaboratively together with a clear purpose and direction, where:

- Teaching and learning are at the centre of all we do.
- Children enjoy, and are engaged in, a curriculum that challenges and excites them.
- To develop responsible citizens who value diversity.
- To ensure a culture of high expectations amongst all our children.
- Children value themselves and each other, developing the self-confidence and resilience to face future challenges.
- The contributions made by all stakeholders are valued.
- To work effectively in school partnerships to enhance our provision by:
- Extending the learning opportunities and activities for pupils.
- Enriching the curriculum through partnership working and shared resources.
- Enabling the greater sharing of excellent teaching and learning.
- Enhancing the professional development of teaching and support staff.
- Building mutual support and accountability for Headteachers and Governors.
- Securing cost and resource efficiencies through joint commissioning.

Equals Trust member schools

Equals Trust currently has twelve (12) member primary schools. Round Hill will be the next school if it chooses to join.

The member schools are:

- Burton Joyce Primary School
- Cropwell Bishop Primary School
- Crossdale Primary School, Keyworth
- Flintham Primary School

- Heymann Primary and Nursery School, West Bridgford
- Keyworth Primary and Nursery School, Keyworth
- Robert Miles Junior School, Bingham
- Tollerton Primary School, Tollerton
- Willow Farm Primary School, Gedling
- Brookside Primary School, East Leake
- Richard Bonington Primary School
- Abbey Road Primary School

The Trust is responsible for the education of over 3,400 pupils, employs 543 staff and receives around £10m in public funding.

Full details of the member schools are shown in appendix A.

Equals Trust governance, leadership and management

Equals Trust is governed by a single board of trustees. They have a range of important knowledge, skills and expertise including, education, public service, strategy, finance, property, and compliance. The chair of trustees is Peter Foale.

The CEO of Equals Trust is Philip Palmer, formerly Executive Head teacher of Burton Joyce Primary School and Cropwell Bishop Primary Schools. The CEO is accountable to the Trustees for the trust's effective, efficient and compliant operation.

The Trust has overall accountability to the Department for Education (DfE) but each individual school remains subject to individual Ofsted inspection.

Round Hill Primary, like the other schools in the Trust, would continue to have a Local Governing Body, with representation for parents, staff and the wider school community. The Governors and Head teacher would continue to decide how Round Hill is run with the vast majority of decisions still made locally.

Our Head teacher, Adrian Nash, would be part of a leadership group with the other head teachers, that is responsible for developing and implementing Trust plans for school-to-school support and collaboration.

School funding will still be calculated and allocated on a school-by-school basis, with each school contributing to the central costs of running the Trust, which would be kept as low as feasible. The Trust's finances are subject to close scrutiny by the DfE's Education & Skills Funding Agency and independently audited accounts are published. Equals Trust would become the employer of Round Hill staff.

To find out more about Equals Trust please visit <http://equalstrust.org/>

School management and operation after joining the Equals Trust

At Round Hill, our pupils will continue to be taught by the same teachers, in the same classrooms, wearing the same uniform. Over time children may notice changes in the way they learn and be able to access a wider range of opportunities, as we benefit from trust-wide initiatives to enhance teaching, learning and the curriculum.

The school name and identity will remain the same and we will retain control over the admissions policies and processes, which must be compliant with the national admissions code.

All staff would continue to work in our school with the same responsibilities and terms and conditions as now. There would be opportunities for some staff to take on wider responsibilities across the trusts to enable the trust to function effectively and efficiently. Staff would also have access to enhanced professional development. There are no plans to make any posts redundant as a result of joining the Equals Trust.

Next steps

The aim is for Round Hill Primary School to convert to become an academy and join Equals Trust during the summer or early autumn 2023.

As a first step, we would like to consult with parents, carers and staff. This consultation will run from 1st March 2023 and 26th April 2023 and will include meetings where parents, carers and staff will be able to hear more about the proposal and ask questions.

Meetings will be held on:

- Tuesday 21st March 2023 - 2:30-3:30 p.m. in the school hall
- Tuesday 21st March 2023 - 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the school hall

Please email consultation@roundhill.notts.sch.uk to confirm your attendance. A webpage has been created with more information and can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

At the end of the consultation process, the Governing Body will then consider a report on the consultation and if satisfied with the outcome, will proceed with the proposal for the school to convert to academy status.

After that, there would be a number of legal, regulatory and operational tasks to be completed and the transition would be carefully managed to ensure day-to-day running of the school is not affected. Parents, carers, staff, students and the wider community of each school will be kept fully informed.

APPENDIX A: Key information on member schools of Equal Trust

| | Burton Joyce Primary School | Cropwell Bishop Primary School | Crossdale Primary School | Keyworth Primary & Nursery School | Heymann Primary & Nursery School | Robert Miles Junior School | Tollerton Primary School | Willow Farm Primary School | Flintham Primary School | Brookside Primary School) | Richard Bonington Primary School | Abbey Road Primary School |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Location | Burton Joyce | Cropwell Bishop | Keyworth | Keyworth | West Bridgford | Bingham | Tollerton | Gedling | Flintham | East Leake | Arnold | West Bridgford |
| Pupils on roll | 305 | 197 | 191 | 159 | 638 | 251 | 210 | 212 | 91 | 305 | 402 | 431 |
| Published Admissions Number | 45 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 90 | 60 | 30 | 30 | 15 | 30 | 60 | 60 |
| Age Range | 4-11 With on-site nursery provision | 4-11 With on-site nursery provision | 4-11 With on-site nursery provision | 3-11 With on-site nursery provision | 3-11 With on-site nursery provision | 7-11 | 4-11 With on-site nursery provision | 4-11 | 4-11 | 4-11 | 3-11 With on-site nursery provision | 4-11 |
| Classes | Reception-Year 6 | Reception-Year 6 | Reception-Year 6 | Reception-Year 6 | Reception-Year 6 | Year 3-Year 6 | Reception-Year 6 | Reception-Year 6 | Reception-Year 6 | Reception-Year 6 | Reception-Year 6 | Reception to year 6 |
| Headteacher | Jenny Cook* | Jenny Cook* | Peter Cresswell* | Peter Cresswell* | Lynda Noble | Rob Gilbey | Jon Wells | Lindsey Jamson | Janette Dunderdale | Gary Kenny | Linda Barbuti | Ly Toom |
| Chair of Governors | Chris Keast | Chris Keast | Ian Walker | Ian Walker | Kath Salisbury | Justin Ashmore | Annette Beaumont | Jason Bush | Caroline Aldrich | Reesha Armstead | Vikki Burr | Lisa Spedding |
| Most Recent Ofsted | Good (March 2019) | Good (November 2022) | Good (November 2019) | Good (October 2019) | Good (April 2019) | Good (March 2019) | Outstanding (May 2010) | Good (December 2021) | Good (December 2022) | Good (Oct 2018) | Good (January 2017) | Good (June 2018) |

* Executive Headteacher across two schools