



MANOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

**A PROPOSAL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS
AND JOIN THE LEARNING IN HARMONY TRUST**

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

January 2019

The proposal

The proposal is that Manor Primary School convert to academy status and join the Learning in Harmony Trust.

The challenges facing our school

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

1. 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 Headteachers, teachers and teaching staff. In the past London Borough of Newham has provided excellent support for its schools. But it now has less funding and resources, which it must target at the weakest schools. This means we receive much less support for school improvement. Manor is recognised as a good school but if it is to continue to maintain and enhance its performance it needs external support. Newham Council has recognised the need to provide more support for schools but plans for this support are at an early stage and are likely to be of significantly less depth than can be offered through joining Learning in Harmony.

2. 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.

3. Coping with financial pressures

We know that the children, staff, parents and carers view Manor Primary School as a school where they are part of a community that cares for and supports each other.

However, pupil funding is not keeping up with cost increases, which means each year we must find more savings from an ever-tighter budget. We are concerned that these cutbacks will reduce the breadth of learning that we can offer our pupils.

Governing Board investigation of the proposal

The governing board, has over the last two years, been considering carefully the impact on the Newham family of schools the government policy that schools should become academies in the context of the challenges described above. Governors have assessed the risks and benefits of remaining a community, Local Authority-maintained school, and the advantages to the school of membership of an appropriate multi-academy trust.

This was initiated in January 2017 in response to a request from the London Borough of Newham Council Progress Board that the governing board form a working group to develop a strategic view of the school's future, particularly, in the areas of partnership and academisation. In July 2017 the Chair of Governors and

Headteacher visited several local multi academy trusts (MATs), reporting back to governors in November 2017.

In December 2017 the governing board agreed a short-list of three MATs to be investigated. During the spring term 2018 presentations by two of those MATs were received and further meetings and exploratory visits to their member schools organised. During the summer term 2018 the CEO of each of the two MATs were invited to talk to staff. In July 2018 the governing board identified Learning in Harmony Trust (LiHT) as their preferred partner.

Throughout the 2018 autumn term a range of staff had the opportunity to participate in LiHT Training and Leadership events including an Inset day. In parallel, the governing board carried out further detailed due diligence on trust membership.

In December 2018 the governing board resolved to carry out formal consultation, as required by the Academies Act 2010, into the proposal for Manor Primary School to convert to academy status and join the Learning in Harmony Trust. The governing board also resolved that the final decision to proceed with the proposal would be taken after consultation and having considered the outcome of that consultation.

The benefits of Learning in Harmony Trust membership

The governing board believe that membership of Learning in Harmony Trust will enable the school to strengthen the quality of education it provides for all our children, to better support and develop staff and to run the school more efficiently and easily.

Amongst the significant benefits to the school that the governors have identified are:

- Opportunities to broaden and deepen the curriculum by working with a group of schools who operate in varied circumstances, with differing expertise, knowledge and resources.
- Opportunities to extend the range of learning in and outside the classroom through the trust's combined expertise and resources e.g. music, drama, sport and educational visits.
- Opportunities to improve the provision for children with additional needs, making use of the established networking of Special Educational Needs specialists lead by the outstanding practice at JFK Special School and Teaching School.
- Opportunities to enhance the professional development of all staff, joining the range of successful programmes that LiHT Schools have access to.
- Further opportunities to share and develop excellent practice in teaching and learning, making use of the latest available research and working together to learn from the best.
- Immediate access to a range of strategies and approaches that help to retain and attract the most capable staff.
- Increased mutual accountability, challenge and support for Governors and School Leaders

- Additional reassurance that all school systems and buildings are safe and compliant for staff, parents and the wider school community.
- Financial efficiencies through coordinated resource planning and joint commissioning and provision of services.

Learning in Harmony Trust vision and values

The name of the Trust encapsulates the key principles that are shared by member schools. The vision for LiHT is to work collaboratively to ensure that each school can maximise their potential through continuous challenge and support. Yet, as the Trust vision makes clear, each school can maintain their own unique ethos, culture and sense of community. It is not one size fits all.

"In the Learning in Harmony Trust we believe that doing things in harmony means a commitment to working collaboratively and effectively using everyone's strengths to meet a common aim. We do not follow a school-in-a-box model, and instead work collaboratively at all levels within and across each school to maximise potential through continuous challenge and support."

The Trust has 4 core values:

ENABLING SUCCESS

- Strong relationships built on a foundation of trust and honesty, coupled with high aspirations for all our learners, enable us to strive for excellence.
- Support and challenge are at the heart of what we do and we have a relentless focus on the best possible outcomes for all our learners.

ACTING WITH INTEGRITY

- We believe in doing things the right way. We are not a top down organisation and effective collaboration is at the heart of what we do.
- Our schools are not identical, each has its own unique strengths. This approach enables us to continue our learning journey in a harmonious and rewarding way.

A NURTURING COMMUNITY

- We strongly believe that learners flourish when they are well looked after. This starts with our staff, because happy staff perform at their best.
- We also know that it is vital for us to nurture and grow the whole child, regardless of their background, to provide all with an opportunity to succeed.

ENCOURAGING INNOVATION

- We ensure that our actions are always underpinned by the best available research and we provide a safe environment that encourages our staff to continue to learn and take risks in their practice in our quest for excellence.
- Our approach to professional development is bespoke and enabling and there are many opportunities to learn from other schools within and outside of the trust.

Trust governance, leadership and management

The Learning in Harmony Trust (LiHT) is governed by a single Board of Trustees recruited based on their skills, experience and knowledge relevant to overseeing an organisation of 4,500+ students, 950+ staff and around £30m of public funding. The CEO and Accounting Officer of the Learning in Harmony Trust is Mr Gary Wilkie, who in this role has specific responsibility for overseeing the Trust's legal, financial, governance and HR functions. Gary is a National Leader of Education that has successfully supported a number of improving and under-performing local schools.

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

Manor, like the other schools in the Trust, would continue to have a Local Governing Board, with representation for parents, staff and the wider school community. The school governors and Headteacher would continue to decide how Manor Primary School is run, in compliance with the trust's scheme of delegated authority.

Manor Headteacher Ms McGee would be part of a leadership group with the other headteachers, 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 Funding Agency and independently audited accounts are published. The Learning in Harmony Trust would become the employer of Manor's staff.

LiHT member schools

The Learning in Harmony Trust consists entirely of schools that have agreed to convert to academy status to work together for the benefit of their pupils. There are currently five Newham schools and three Southend schools in the Trust. The member schools are:

- Sheringham Primary School
- JFK Special School
- Upton Cross Primary School
- Hartley Primary School
- Drew Primary School
- Blenheim Primary School
- Greenways Primary School
- Temple Sutton Primary School

Further details about member schools can be found in appendix A on page 7 of this document

To find out more about the Learning in Harmony Trust please visit www.lihtrust.uk

School management and operation after conversion and joining the Learning in Harmony Trust

At Manor, our children 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 current school with the same responsibilities and terms and conditions as now. There would be opportunities for some staff to take on wider responsibilities across schools 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 Trust.

Next steps

The aim is for Manor Primary School to convert to an academy and join the Learning in Harmony Trust on July 1st, 2019.

As a first step, we would like to consult with parents, carers and staff. This consultation will run from Monday January 28th to Friday March 1st, a period of four academic weeks. The consultation will include meetings when parents, carers and staff will be able to hear more about the proposal and ask questions. There will also be a survey of parents, carers and staff on their views on the proposal, which will give governors a quantitative perspective.

Audience	Time & Date
Parents & Carers	230pm and 6.00pm on Monday, February 11 th 2019 You can choose which session to attend
Staff	3.45pm on Wednesday, February 6 th 2019

In March 2019 the Governing Board will then consider a report on the consultation and if satisfied with the outcome, will proceed with the proposal.

After that, there would be a number of legal, regulatory and operational tasks to be completed by July 1st, 2019 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 the school will be kept fully informed.

APPENDIX A: Key Information about Learning in Harmony member schools

Name of School	Sheringham	JFK	Upton Cross	Hartley	Blenheim	Greenways	Drew	Temple Sutton
Type of School	Primary	Special School	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary + Children's Centre
Sites and Location	Single site in Manor Park, Newham	Two sites, in Stratford and Beckton, Newham	Two sites in Plaistow, Newham	Single site in East Ham, Newham	Single site, in Leigh-on-Sea	Single site, in Southend East	Single Site, near City Airport, Newham	Single site, in Southend
Age Range	4-11	4-19	3-11	3-11	3-11	4-11	4-11	0-11
Pupils Numbers	643 pupils in Years R-6	110 pupils in Years R-14	887 pupils (rising) in Years R-6 81 Nursery places	801 pupils in Years R-6 78 children	598 pupils in Years R-6 40 Nursery	943 pupils in Years R-6	379 pupils in Years R-6 41 Nursery places	735 pupils in Years R-6 119 Nursery places
PAN	90	N/A	150	120	90	150	60	120
Headteacher	Kath Sewell	Julie Newman & Shaun Dodds	Nick Turvey	Leilah McClay	Darren Woollard	Ashley Eastwood	Emma Peltier	Tim Barrett
Most recent Ofsted	Outstanding (2012)	Outstanding (2017)	Outstanding (2013)	Requires Improvement (2015)	Good (2013)	Good (2016)	Good (2012)	Good (2015)