

# Leathersellers' Federation of Schools



20 March 2015

Dear Colleagues,

## Consultation on a proposed change of Prendergast School, Prendergast Vale School and Prendergast Ladywell School to Academy Status

The Governing Board of the Leathersellers' Federation of Schools is currently considering whether Prendergast School, Prendergast Ladywell School and Prendergast Vale School should become academies. The proposal is for the schools to become converter academies under a Multi Academy Trust. The decision to change status rests with the Federation's Governing Board, however the Governors are committed to consider the views of all interested parties and we explain below how you may make your views known.

Prendergast School is currently a Voluntary Aided School. Prendergast Vale School and Prendergast Ladywell School are currently Foundation Schools. All staff are employed by the Governing Board of the Leathersellers' Federation of Schools. There would be three key differences if we convert to Academy status:

- The schools will cease to be maintained by the Local Authority but will, instead, be funded and maintained directly by the Department for Education (DfE). The funding of the schools will be through an Academy Agreement with the Department for Education, and the amount of funding we will receive will increase slightly through the payment of additional Education Support Grant (ESG).
- A charitable Academy Trust will be set up to hold ownership of the schools' land and buildings, and to receive funding from the DfE. The Board of Trustees will oversee the running of all three schools within the MAT. In addition there will be a local governing body of each school, which will include staff representatives, elected parents and members of the school community. In making decisions on the composition of the Academy Trust and each school's local governing body, the governors are determined to give parents and staff appropriate representation after conversion. It is currently proposed that two elected parent governors, as well as two elected staff and two appointed community governors sit on each local governing body. The Board of Trustees will also take into account parent, staff and local community representation when making its appointments of Co-opted Directors to the Trust Board.
- The school and Federation staff will become employed by the Trust. The Governing Board of the Leathersellers' Federation of Schools prides itself on having excellent relationships with the staff of all three schools. The employment rights of all members of staff will be protected by TUPE, Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations, which came into force in 2006. This means that these employment rights will transfer to the Trust under the same terms and conditions of employment. Pension rights and continuity of service record will be preserved. If the proposal to move to academy status is approved by Governors, then a full TUPE consultation process will be undertaken with staff and unions.

The Governing Board is committed to exercising the increased autonomy which Academy status brings, within the framework of fair funding and fair admissions. Academy status is intended to promote innovation and secure greater educational success by giving school leaders more freedom to decide how best to meet the learning needs of their pupils. These arrangements increase accountability to parents and wider community. Governors are committed to providing outstanding education to the local community in Lewisham. We believe academy status will help us to achieve this vision.

We regard the following as some of the potential advantages of a change of status:

- Greater autonomy to determine our own priorities and actions.
- Direct control over all school funding (including our share of that currently held by the LA for centralised services) and decisions on how it is spent in the best interests of the school.
- More flexibility in designing and investing in a curriculum which best meets the needs and interests of all Prendergast students.
- Greater accountability and representation in the governance of each school

Executive Headteacher: **David Sheppard, MA**

c/o Prendergast School, Adelaide Avenue, London SE4 1LE

T: 020 8690 3710 F: 020 8690 3155 E: [admin@prendergast-school.com](mailto:admin@prendergast-school.com) W: [www.leathersellers-federation.com](http://www.leathersellers-federation.com)

- The ability to recruit and retain the highest quality of staff at a level that ensures outstanding teaching and support.
- Maintain existing, and create new, partnerships that support our students' progress.

We believe Prendergast School, Prendergast Vale School and Prendergast Ladywell School are held in high regard by parents and the local community and we remain committed to serving the local community. If we decide to become an Academy, we will carry on being our own admissions authority and we will retain our published admissions criteria. We will act in accordance with the Government's Code of Practice for admissions and continue to consult on our admissions policy in accordance with the Admissions Code.

We believe that we have the experience and expertise to use the additional autonomies of Academy status to continue the development of the schools and to further raise standards. It is very clear that the Government sees greater autonomy for schools as the next stage in the development of the education service and wants schools to be more proactive in developing their individual strengths in response to the needs of the local community. There is an expectation from government that schools will take a lead in raising attainment and removing barriers to learning. The additional freedoms open to us as an Academy and our commitment to co-operation with other agencies will, we believe, be an important component in our school's development of these initiatives.

Some important matters would not change if we were to become an Academy:

- We will continue to be named Prendergast School, Prendergast Vale School and Prendergast Ladywell School and our uniform and logos will not change.
- The curriculum, extra-curricular programme, school day, pastoral support and guidance and general organisation of the school will not be affected.
- Collaborative working, the teaching and the resources currently provided to our partner primary schools and other schools in the area will all continue.

This letter is part of our consultation process which commences on **Monday 23 March 2015** and ends on **Monday 18 May 2015**. Responses must be received by the end of consultation date of 18 May 2015. The next step will be a meeting of the Federation's Governing Board after 25<sup>th</sup> May 2015 to consider all responses and make a decision as to whether we continue with the process.

We welcome any comments you may wish to make in writing:

The Clerk to the Governors  
c/o Prendergast School  
Adelaide Avenue  
London, SE4 1LE

**or by email to:** [consultation@leathersellers-federation.com](mailto:consultation@leathersellers-federation.com). Please mark your email 'Academy Conversion Question'.

If you would like to make representations in person, Governors will be available at Prendergast School on Monday 13 April, Prendergast Ladywell School on Tuesday 14 April and Prendergast Vale School on Thursday 16 April. These meetings will take place at 7pm.

The schools we have included in this consultation process will receive three copies of this letter for the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and the Chair of the Parents' Association. Headteachers are also asked to inform their parents and staff at their school of the contents of this letter or direct them to the school and federation websites.

Yours sincerely



Christopher Barrow  
**Chair of Governors**

Executive Headteacher: **David Sheppard, MA**

c/o Prendergast School, Adelaide Avenue, London SE4 1LE

T: 020 8690 3710 F: 020 8690 3155 E: [admin@prendergast-school.com](mailto:admin@prendergast-school.com) W: [www.leathersellers-federation.com](http://www.leathersellers-federation.com)