



Hartford Manor Community Primary School & Nursery

The Rationale for Reviewing the Status of Hartford Manor Community Primary School

Background

Our Governing Body's purpose at Hartford Manor Community Primary School is to provide strategic direction, support and challenge so that we achieve the best outcomes for all our children.

As part of the way we work as a Governing Body, we are continually looking to assess what is best for our school in light of changes in Government policy and educational standards. Back in 2011/2012 we undertook a review to consider what might be the most suitable status¹ for our school. Our work at the time concluded that we should continue to work alongside our Local Authority (CWAC) as a community primary school.

We feel we made the right decision at that time as we have seen the school flourish and result in significant changes since 2012. Our school has:

- Had four years of strong outcomes for children leaving Hartford Manor.
- Developed learning networks with other schools.
- Had positive pupil growth driven by the school's enhanced reputation.
- Supported leadership and teaching in other schools.
- Been inspected by OFSTED and was graded Good with Outstanding features in 2013.
- Had a state of the art new-build extension to provide the best possible learning environment for our children.

However, we feel we cannot rest on our laurels and so we have determined that we should look again at what type of school will best serve our children into the future.

¹ School Status, i.e. looking at various types of school and how they're run, e.g.:

- Community schools (like ours), maintained and controlled by the local council and not influenced by business or religious groups.
- Foundation schools and voluntary schools, which have more freedom to change the way they do things than community schools.
- Academies, run by a governing body, independent from the local council - they can follow a different curriculum.



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Why Now?

We have decided to look again at how our school should be governed and managed and there are a number of internal factors and external drivers that have influenced our decision, for example:

Internal

- We want to ensure we can enable and provide enhanced learning opportunities for our children and our staff.
- We have had four years of consistently good and outstanding outcomes for our children. Our current OFSTED grading (Good with Outstanding Features (2/1) means we have the maximum number of potential school status options available for us to choose (rather than being directed to adopt a particular course of action).
- Our school redevelopment project is due to be finalised this academic year.
- High quality governance and management of the school will keep the needs of the children and staff at the heart of the decision making process.

External

- We are very conscious that the Government is actively promoting schools to reassess their status (for example, there has been a lot of media coverage about compelling schools to become academies)
- We are equally alert to the possibility through the teaching professions that school improvement budgets for Local Authorities in 2017-2018 may be challenged.
- The Government expects to change the funding formula for schools after 2018 – it is not yet clear what these changes could mean.
- We are also watching an increasing number of primary schools nationally and locally make the move away from Local Authority control toward a changed status.

It is on this basis that we wish to take a leadership role and be in a strong position to make an informed, evidence based decision by July 2017 on what best suits our school.



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What Next?

As a Governing Body, we strive to be open and transparent in our work. To progress our review of the school's status we are setting in place a small team comprising governors, teachers, parents and the senior management team to undertake a formal review of the current situation and assess those options that meets the School's strategic objectives, planned outcomes and reflects our values.

We will:

- Ensure transparency in our decision-making.
- Establish a "screening" framework that we will use when assessing options and to enable clarity on decision-making.
- Undertake an evidence-based comparison between options, to identify our preferred option.
- Ensure that we are consistent and rigorous.
- Engage and consult with parents, teachers, key partners and those who have an interest in our school - we all have a stake in the outcome.

We will provide updates along the way but we intend to determine what we consider is the most suitable status for the School by July 2017.

How can you get involved?

- Follow updates in our school newsletters.
- Parent Governors will be available at the planned Autumn and Spring consultation evenings.
- There will also be opportunities for parents to share their views through online surveys.
- All staff can liaise with the teacher representative throughout the process.