

A LETTER FROM PAUL HEERY, EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL OF THE WHITE HILLS PARK TRUST

The White Hills Park Trust has extended an invitation to Round Hill Primary School to join the Trust. We believe that by working together within the same organization, we can combine our strengths, capacity and resources to the benefit of children and young people in all of our schools. We appreciate the time you have taken to hear why we consider that there is a powerful case for the provision of seamless high-quality education from 3-19 within the same trust.

Primary education is very dear to me. The majority of my career has been spent in primary education, including over ten years as a primary Head Teacher in two schools, and five years as a senior Local Authority primary adviser. Alongside my current role, I am also a Lead Inspector for Ofsted, and spend time inspecting primary schools and meeting primary pupils and teachers. It has always been clear to me that the closer the relationships between primary and secondary schools, the greater the benefits for our children and that the artificial divide that exists between primary and secondary practice can be bridged successfully.

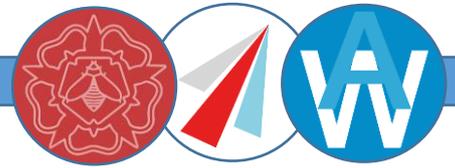
Round Hill School is also very important to me personally. It was the school that my three children attended during their primary years, and I will always be grateful for the grounding that it gave them. The relationship that the school has had with Alderman White in particular has been strong and led to many wonderful opportunities, including memorable events in the field of music, drama, dance, sport and languages. The opportunity to build on this rich tradition is one of our key motivations for recommending this move.

The Academy sector has grown hugely in the last few years, to the point where a majority of pupils in this country are now educated in academies. However, not all academies, or all academy trusts are the same. We pride ourselves that we are a trust with the highest ethical standards, that recognizes our responsibility to the wider school system. We are committed to a model of schools with a strong sense of individual identity, within our local area, sharing expertise and resources to the benefit of all.

We thank you for taking the time to find out more about this offer. As parents, you will naturally be keen to make sure that the provision that your children receive is as good as it can possibly be, and I know there will be questions that you would like to pose and clarifications that you will seek. Ultimately, I am convinced of the good faith of everyone in this process – we want our schools and our local area to be a beacon of innovative high-quality practice, playing a vital role in the development of happy, committed, successful young adults. Working together within the White Hills Park Trust can bring this vision closer.

Dr Paul Heery, Executive Principal, White Hills Park Trust





WHAT IS THE WHITE HILLS PARK TRUST?

We are a small Multi-Academy Trust, formed in 2012 when the schools in the White Hills Park Federation became academies. We comprise Alderman White School, Alderman White Language College, Bramcote College, and Bramcote College 6th Form. All of our schools are judged good by Ofsted and we have a well-managed and balanced budget and a track record of school improvement. We have a rich tradition of provision beyond the curriculum, with national sporting success, outstanding music and drama performances, and a wide range of educational trips and visits, including regular international exchange visits to Germany and China.

What is our vision?

We are a group of schools united in our mission to provide the very best opportunities for children and young people, with shared values, shared commitment to our locality and shared commitment to excellent outcomes. We believe that by working closely together, we can provide a seamless provision for children and young people from 3-18. We are founded on a strong set of values, including an ethos of inclusion for all pupils, ethical leadership and management, and a commitment to working in partnership with others in the interests of all.

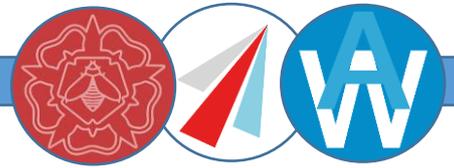
What is an Academy?

Academy schools are state-funded schools in England which are directly funded by the Department for Education and independent of local authority control. Although academies are bound by the legal framework that governs schools, there are a number of areas in which academies have greater freedom to set their own policies based on local need and priority. Over half the students in England are now educated in academies. Academies follow the same qualifications framework and are inspected by Ofsted in exactly the same way as maintained schools.

What is a Multi-Academy Trust?

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) operates more than one academy school. There are many different models operating, some of which are large national or regional organisations, operating a large number of schools with a highly centralised administration and a strong corporate identity and policies. Our model is very different – we are committed to remaining a small, local MAT comprising autonomous schools with their own Local Governing Body.





WHY DO WE THINK JOINING THE WHITE HILLS PARK TRUST WILL BENEFIT ROUND HILL SCHOOL?

Use and availability of finance and resources

Working as part of a Multi-Academy Trust can give considerable financial benefits. Academies have the opportunity to shop around and negotiate bespoke deals for services and equipment and we can directly employ staff, depending on the needs of our schools. At a time when school budgets are tight, we recognize the importance of making sure that every penny counts.

We have estimated that Round Hill would benefit from joining our Trust by a minimum of £50,000 per year – this money would be retained by the school and can be used for additional staff, equipment and resources, or whatever the school governors and leaders think is the current priority. Precise figures will be calculated during the 'due diligence' process, before any final decision by Governors. We maintain a small Trust-level team, and operate with transparency and financial prudence.

Capacity for school leaders

Head Teachers and leadership teams, particularly in primary schools, have a bewildering amount of tasks to carry out. Many of these take them away from the most important aspect of the job – making sure that the experience of children in the classroom is as good as it can possibly be. The Trust takes a lead on administration and management functions such as Human Resources, Financial Management, recruitment, IT, reprographics, Health and Safety and so on, to ensure they are delivered efficiently and free up school leaders so they can focus on teaching and learning.

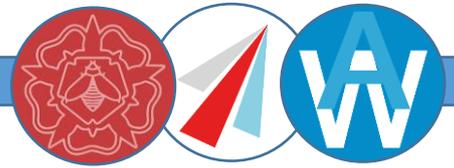
Access to high-quality professional development for teachers and support staff

The White Hills Park Trust place a high value on the development of our staff, and we support and run training packages for staff at all stages of their career. For example, we run a detailed programme for newly qualified teachers who come together for bespoke high-quality training and support throughout the year. We are part of a wider network of Trusts delivering professional development courses, which Round Hill staff would be able to access free of charge, and these partnerships would enable Round Hill staff to work closely with primary colleagues in other schools.

Curriculum opportunities

We want to build on the existing links in music, sport and the arts, and establish a programme that gives every child the opportunity to take part in high-quality curriculum experiences. We know that an unforgettable learning experience such as a foreign trip, playing in an orchestra or using specialist equipment in a science lab can be the key that unlocks achievement and so we will provide these for our primary pupils.

Research says that transition to secondary school is one of the key points where progress stalls. We aim to have a seamless bridge between our schools, so that teachers in Key Stage 3 can learn from high-quality primary practice, and that secondary school specialists can give the benefit of their subject-specific knowledge to primary colleagues.



QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS...

Does Round Hill have to become an Academy?

No, as long as any school is performing well, it cannot be forced to academise, and there are no political plans for this to change. This proposal is not based on the need for the school to become an academy, but on the positive benefits that can be gained for the school and the children.

Will staff terms and conditions change?

No. Staff contracts will transfer over exactly as they are at the moment, with no change to salary, conditions or pensions. The White Hills Park Trust have adopted staff policies, such as pay and appraisal which are completely in line with Nottinghamshire County Council policies currently followed by Round Hill.

Will Round Hill still have its own Governing Body and Head Teacher?

Yes. Schools in the White Hills Park Trust have a Local Governing Body, which takes decisions relating to the operation of the individual school. The Trust Board is responsible for decisions that apply across the Trust, such as the adoption of finance and safeguarding policies. Individual school decisions on staffing, curriculum and so on remain the responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Local Governing Body.

What about other changes? Uniform, school name, times of day etc?

Decisions like these which only affect the individual school remain the responsibility of the Local Governing Body and the Head Teacher. The White Hills Park Trust will not impose any Trust-wide changes of this nature. Over recent years, we have been moving to a situation where there is greater autonomy for individual schools in the Trust, and we expect this process to continue.

We have put together a section of our Trust website www.whptrust.org which gives more details about the offer and the process, and shares accompanying documents. There is also the opportunity to ask questions, to which we will respond within 48 hours. Please visit to see more.

