

Langar C of E Primary School

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Head Teacher
Mrs E J Brown

Dear Parents,

The outcome of our OFSTED inspection in July 2022 meant the school was ordered by the DFE to join a Multi Academy Trust. Those of you at the post OFSTED meeting with the LA and Diocese will have heard that the choice for who to join was taken out of our hands and some of normal processes, such as consultations with staff and stakeholders bypassed. We had another OFSTED inspection in March 2023, in which the work we had done following the last inspection, as well as the good practice that was well-established, was recognised and praised. That inspection graded us as good. However, this does not stop the academisation process that was already underway by then.

We are now ready to inform you of events that have taken place since then and to update you on our progress towards academy conversion.

We received our Academy Orders in October 2022. As a Church of England School there were five possible MATs we could become a part of. The five MATs belong to the Salt and Light Partnership which demonstrates a commitment to uphold Christian values in the work that they do. We already knew quite a lot about these MATS as we had been wondering about, and exploring the benefits of academisation due to the draft White Paper that committed to all schools becoming academies. We were, therefore already familiar with Aspire MAT when we found out that they were to be our sponsor.

FACTS ABOUT ACADEMIES

What is an academy?

- Primary schools are able to convert to academies under the Academies Act 2010.
- An academy is an independent non-fee paying state school which is funded by and accountable to government, rather than being under Local Authority control.
- Academies are charitable companies, limited by guarantee.
- Academies are run by Academy Trusts which own/lease the premises and assets and employ the staff.

How do academies differ from maintained schools?

Like all schools, academies are required to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, provide an education for pupils of all abilities and educate pupils who are drawn from a local area. However, academies do have greater additional freedoms than maintained schools and these are intended to help the school to innovate and continue to raise standards.

These include:

- Greater control of the school budget
- Freedom around the delivery of the curriculum
- The ability to set their own pay and conditions for staff
- The ability to change the length of terms and school days

Who are ASPIRE?

[Home | Aspire Multi-Academy Trust \(aspire-mat.co.uk\)](http://aspire-mat.co.uk)

The Aspire MAT was founded in February 2014 with two academies East Bridgford St. Peters C of E Academy and Archbishop Cranmer C of E Academy (Aslockton). It expanded to five academies in 2017 to include Gunthorpe C of E Primary School, Kirkby Woodhouse Primary School, Sir John Sherbrooke Junior School (Calverton) Since then two new academies have joined the MAT Oak Tree Nursery & School in Mansfield (sponsored academy in 2018) and Winthorpe Primary School (in 2020)

The Aspire Multi-Academy Trust offers a distinctive model for primary schools wanting to be part of a progressive and innovative MAT with an exciting and expanding future. The main features on offer include:

- A MAT focussed on primary schools
- A partnership of equals, sharing a common vision and Christian ethos, and sharing the responsibility for driving the development of the MAT.
- A MAT that demands the best educational and overall learning experience for the children in its academies, which are held to account to achieve a 'beyond expectation' outcome.
- A leadership team led by an experienced Chief Executive Officer.

The CEO is Kate Watson. Kate is an experienced Headteacher who is passionate about school improvement. She has worked as an Executive Head and a consultant Headteacher in both church and non-church schools across Nottinghamshire. As Chief Executive Officer of the Aspire MAT. Kate has considerable experience in senior school leader training and implementing school improvement programmes. She has previously been headteacher at two Aspire academies. Kate is driven by the guiding principle that children must remain at the heart of every decision made by our leaders at all levels.

How will joining Aspire affect Langar C of E Primary School?

Although a formal arrangement was not in place, we felt the benefit of the support and guidance that Aspire will bring as soon as we were aligned with them. One example of this was when we were setting up CPOMS, the online safeguarding and reporting platform. The MAT sent their social worker, Lauren Hague from Oak Tree Mansfield to support us with this. She ensured it was set up correctly and then led a staff meeting to train staff how to use it. Following this she came in and carried out an audit to check it was effectively used and gave feedback for how to further develop the use. This system, and our use of it, was highly praised by OFSTED in March who were impressed how quickly it was established.

For parents, children and the community there will be little change felt when we become an academy. We are all committed to seeing our school flourish, ensuring that all pupils have a safe, happy and fulfilled education which provides every young person with the very best that we can offer.

There are no plans to change the uniform or deviate from the conditions of employment for staff. Similarly, there are no plans to adopt a holiday pattern that is different to that of the rest of the local schools. The Academy Trust will only make these changes if it is in the best interest of the whole school community and it if helps improve what the school can offer to the pupils now and in the future. A few academies have made changes to the school days, shortening lunch breaks and then finishing earlier on a Friday. These changes are made if relevant to those school communities and only after in-depth consultation with that community. It is not the intention of the Academy Trust to make any changes to our School, unless the parental and staff consultation suggests this is something that requires further consideration. As a school converts to academy status it is possible to propose a change to the name of the school. Our current expectation is that the school name following academy conversion will be 'Langar Church of England Primary School'.

However, for staff, especially in the office, there will be some change.

Finance

Mr Bell will be extremely busy in the run up to the conversion as a new finance system needs to be set up and established. In maintained schools, the Local Authority provides the school's budget. The Local Authority will retain a proportion of the school's budget to fund some services centrally. Maintained schools also purchase some services from the Local Authority such as payroll services, financial management systems and buildings maintenance. Schools then choose how to spend the rest of their budget. The vast majority of a school's budget is usually spent on staffing and essential services, such as utilities. In contrast, academies receive their entire budget directly from central government from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) without any 'top slice' being taken by a Local Authority. An Academy is then free to choose independently how to purchase services. Academies can still opt to buy some services from the Local Authority if they choose to. Academies are therefore responsible for securing best-value in the procurement of a wide-range of supplies and services.

Academies are not allowed to run a deficit budget without having in place a remedial action plan which will eliminate the deficit. Any Academy which opens with a transferred deficit will need to agree, at the earliest opportunity, with the Education Funding Agency (EFA), a plan to repay the deficit in instalments from the annual budget. In the same way that schools which find themselves in financial difficulty have to agree a recovery plan with their Local Authority, Academies that develop a deficit after opening will have to agree a recovery plan with the EFA. Our school does not have a financial deficit nor is it in financial difficulty.

A Welcome from the CEO of Aspire

We are really looking forward to working more closely with Langar C of E Primary school, and are excited by the opportunities such a friendly, vibrant and forward-looking school will bring to our Multi-academy Trust. In return, we offer a variety of services including; school improvement support, quality assurance systems and a friendly, supportive team of headteachers, central support staff and Trustees.

All academies within Aspire are viewed as equals; we are a Trust where professional partnerships and working collaboratively are actively encouraged. We also understand that it is important for our schools to maintain their own identity and community focus. Our Take Care Values and ethos already align well with Langar's and we are confident that our proven school improvement plan, alongside our strong focus on empowering our partner academies to drive their own improvement journey will ensure that Langar continues to go from strength to strength for the children in its care.

Kate Watson

CEO Aspire Multi-Academy Trust

We will keep you updated as the academisation progresses and hope you can see that the benefits of joining Aspire are many.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Mrs Brown', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mrs Brown

