

Proposal to become an academy with the Greenshaw Learning Trust



The Governing Body of The Brakenhale School has decided that the school should become an academy and join the Greenshaw Learning Trust.

Having considered how to secure the best future for the school, the Governing Body concluded that the Greenshaw Learning Trust is the ideal partner to help continue Brakenhale's journey of improvement and provide further opportunities for the school's pupils and staff.

An academy is a state-funded school that is required to follow the same regulations and serve its community in the same way as other state-funded schools, and is funded on the same basis, directly by the Department for Education. An academy cannot charge fees or make a profit.

An academy is overseen and supported by an academy trust - a charitable company established with the sole purpose of providing public education through its academy schools. Academy trustees have a legal duty to operate in the interests of the schools in the trust. An academy is not under the control of the local authority.

The Greenshaw Learning Trust is an established academy trust with two secondary schools and a primary school in south west London, and approval to open a new secondary school in the next few years. Its capacity to support schools and help them improve has been endorsed by the Department for Education.

The Governing Body welcomes the views of stakeholders on the proposal to become an academy and join the Greenshaw Learning Trust, as set out in this leaflet and on the school website.

Why make this change?

The Governing Body believes the Greenshaw Learning Trust is the ideal partner to help continue The Brakenhale School's journey of improvement and provide further opportunities for the school's pupils and staff. The Trust and the other schools in it have similar objectives and values to Brakenhale, and can provide the support the school needs to help it improve further.

Brakenhale will benefit from the close collaboration between a family of like-minded schools as part of the Trust, sharing good practice and realising economies of scale.

Schools are increasingly forming more structured groupings to work together and secure the support and services they require. At the same time, the support that local authorities are able to provide to schools has significantly diminished. The Government says it wants all schools to become academies as part of a group of schools.

By making this move now Brakenhale can choose the schools it works with and take greater control over how it is run and how it develops in future.

The school will continue to be run as it is now by its leadership team and governing body, but they will have greater control over how the allocated budget is used and more choice over things like the curriculum and the support services the school uses.

What would stay the same?

As an academy, The Brakenhale School's character will not change: it will continue to look, feel and be the way it is now. The school's name won't change - it won't include the word 'academy'.

It will continue to provide high quality education for local children of all abilities, operating at the heart of the local community, working with other schools and community groups.

It will continue to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that seeks to give all students the best start in their lives. The school will, as now, be subject to Ofsted monitoring and inspections.

Brakenhale will continue to collaborate with other local schools, for example to coordinate term dates, and with the local authority over provision for special educational needs and place planning.

There will be no changes to the school's admissions criteria – the same pupils will come to Brakenhale as would come if it were not an academy.

As an academy Brakenhale will receive the same level of per-pupil funding as it would as a maintained school, but in addition will receive some additional money that is currently retained by the Local Authority.

The land and buildings used by the school will continue to be available to it and will transfer to the Trust on a long lease.

What would change?

As an academy The Brakenhale School will have greater control over how it is run and more choice over how it spends the money allocated to it and which services it obtained from whom.

As part of the Greenshaw Learning Trust the school will be able to secure better value for money and free up money to use for the school's own priorities. This will help to offset the pressure on school budgets, preserve the curriculum and services for its students and safeguard jobs.

How would it affect staff?

The Greenshaw Learning Trust becomes the employer of the staff, not the local authority. All current staff will transfer to the Trust under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) regulations, retaining current pay and conditions. Teachers will remain in the Teachers' Pension Scheme and support staff will remain in the Local Government Pension Scheme as they are now; the employers' contributions will be maintained by the academy.

Information, views and comments

We would like to hear your views and have the opportunity to answer your questions about the proposal that The Brakenhale School should become an academy and join the Greenshaw Learning Trust.

A series of consultation meetings are being held on Thursday 14th January at the school:

For parents and carers *	2.00 pm to 3.00 pm
For all staff of The Brakenhale School	3.15 pm to 4.15 pm
For parents and carers *	6.00 pm to 7.00 pm

* 'Parents and carers' includes parents and carers of students hoping to join Brakenhale in September 2016.

You can give also your views or ask your questions:

- By completing the form on our website at www.brakenhale.co.uk
- By email to headteacher@brakenhale.co.uk
- By writing to: Jane Coley, Headteacher, The Brakenhale School, Rectory Lane, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 7BA.
- By posting a response form in the 'postbox' in the school foyer.

Please let us have your views before 9th February 2016.

There is more information on the school website at www.brakenhale.co.uk

To find out more about the Greenshaw Learning Trust, go to www.greenshawlearningtrust.org.uk

The change to academy status with the Greenshaw Learning Trust is a matter for the Governing Body – it does not require the approval of the local authority. It has the support of the Trust and will require the approval of the Regional Schools Commissioner, acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education (representations may be made to the Education Funding Agency, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT). If the process proceeds to plan Brakenhale will become an academy and join the Greenshaw Learning Trust in March 2016.