

Bandon Hill Primary School Consultation Frequently Asked Questions

Why become an academy?

Over the last two years the Bandon Hill Primary School Governing Body has thoroughly investigated the route to becoming an academy in the current context. The governors have been considering the subject for eight years.

Becoming an academy will provide the school with wider opportunities than if it remained as a Local Authority school. The school has budget challenges and the Local Authority does not have the capacity to support the school to improve the situation. The current setup of Bandon Hill as one school across three sites does not fully meet the communities' needs and has financial implications. The capacity to support school improvement, and the services offered by the Local Authority have been reduced with alternatives being too expensive and not offering value for money.

The Governing Body has looked at five different trusts and considered the following criteria:

- Ethos and Vision
- Financial security
- Autonomy
- Identity

Why Greenshaw Learning Trust?

The Governing Body has chosen the Greenshaw Learning Trust (GLT) as it has the ability to support the school's current needs. The senior leadership of the Greenshaw Learning Trust and Bandon Hill Primary School have worked together for three years and there is a clear alignment in ethos and values. The Trust has shown success in supporting and improving schools and feels it can benefit from Bandon Hill Primary School's expertise and skills. The Greenshaw Learning Trust has a well-established 'shared service' and is confident it can support the school's current financial situation.

The Greenshaw Learning Trust – introduction by Will Smith, CEO

The Greenshaw Learning Trust is building a 'family' of like-minded schools that collaborate to provide mutual support, share their good practice and learn from each other, whilst retaining and developing their own distinctive character.

The Greenshaw Learning Trust was established as a multi-academy trust in 2014. In the changing world of education, we were keen to broaden our influence, but were also aware that we did not have all the answers and welcomed more formal partnerships with other schools to help us to continue to improve.

The Greenshaw Learning Trust is an established and successful multi-academy trust with eight primary and twelve secondary schools in South London, Surrey, Berkshire, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire and Plymouth. The Trust has acquired schools of varying standards and all have shown significant improvement since they joined the Trust.

At the Greenshaw Learning Trust, we do not believe there is one definitive road to success. We cherish the differences between each of our schools and want all of them to continue their improvement journey. It is not just about results; it is about helping people, and schools, to flourish and be remarkable. And within our community and our culture of always learning together, we go beyond what is achievable alone.

The definition of our 'Trust' is everyone in the organisation: our pupils, teachers, support staff, governors and the shared services. The Trust is not a separate entity that rules hierarchically from the peripheries. All our schools and shared services are part of the fabric that makes the Trust what it is.

The school is doing well, so why change?

Becoming an academy will provide the school with further opportunities to allow it to continue its improvement journey and becomes financially secure. Within the Greenshaw Learning Trust the school will be in a strong network to enable better CPD opportunities for staff and to collaborate with other schools, sharing best practice. Bandon Hill operates over three sites, but is legally one school. If the school were to become an academy, there is an option for it to separate into two or three schools which will have funding benefits and will also enable the curriculum to be adapted to the different communities. The separation of schools will need careful consideration and a separate consultation would be held to discuss potential options.

How does the Greenshaw Learning Trust collaborate?

The Greenshaw Learning Trust thrives from collaboration at every level and encourages a culture of sharing ideas and learning from one another. The Directors of Education meet headteachers regularly and identify needs and put support in place and the Shared Services work closely with schools to support them.

The GLT schools work collaboratively and have subject networks where teaching staff share good practice. Staff share their knowledge by visiting other schools, meeting virtually and having access to shared resources. The Trust provides a wide network where people can connect and share best practice. Bandon Hill Primary School already has good relationships with GLT's local schools: Green Wrythe Primary School, Victor Seymour Infants' School and Tweeddale Primary School.

Does the Greenshaw Learning Trust recognise and promote the individuality of schools?

Whilst GLT schools have a broad geographical spread, the Trust considers itself a local trust. All the GLT schools have a governing body with local representatives. The GLT Board of Trustees believes that the headteachers and governing bodies are the best people to run its schools and delegates responsibilities for budgets and decisions on uniform, curriculum etc. There are certain functions that are common across the Trust including the finance and HR systems.

The Greenshaw Learning Trust values the power of individuals and organisations working together in collaboration whilst retaining their individuality, and recognises that we can always improve. The Trust drives outcomes by providing expert support and looking at the best practices available. Alongside school leadership, the Trust Shared Services reviews the schools' strengths and weaknesses and develops a plan to ensure that every child works in an inclusive and supportive environment, with high quality teaching.

Will the curriculum / external support change?

The Greenshaw Learning Trust's policy states schools must offer a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils and the details of an individual school's curriculum are the decision of the governing body and school leadership team.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide funding for children with special educational needs and the funding will remain the same. The headteacher is responsible for the school budget and therefore if specific services are currently commissioned, this can continue.

What are the changes for staff?

The Greenshaw Learning Trust will become the employer of the schools' staff - all current staff will transfer to the Trust under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) regulations, retaining current pay and conditions. Initial due diligence has been carried out and redundancies or staff changes are not expected.

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 Greenshaw Learning Trust. The employment status of staff remains continuous. If the schools join the Greenshaw Learning Trust, a TUPE consultation will be held, where staff can ask further questions.

Joining an established and successful group of schools will help attract, develop and retain good staff. Staff will not be required to relocate to other schools within the Trust. However, opportunities are shared to enable individuals to progress if they wish to.

Staff development is a key priority and this is offered through CPD and ensuring staff are able to focus on refining teaching practices, rather than spending significant time on marking and collecting data.

The Greenshaw Learning Trust holds national union recognition agreements and meets regularly with national union representatives.

Will the school leadership change?

Laura Rogers and the senior leadership team will continue in their current positions on the conversion date.

What is the Governance structure?

The Greenshaw Learning Trust Board of Trustees is the responsible body for all the Greenshaw Learning Trust's schools. The Board of Trustees delegates many responsibilities to school governing bodies and headteachers. The governing bodies are composed of community, trust, staff and parent governors and are supported by the Trust's clerking service. The governing bodies have responsibility for monitoring outcomes, safeguarding, performance management reviews, budget monitoring and agreeing significant changes.

The Trust provides training to support and develop governors. All existing governors will be invited to apply to be part of the governing body within the Greenshaw Learning Trust.

The Trust Senior Leadership Team provides line management for headteachers.

How will the school be funded?

The funding per pupil reflects local arrangement. The school will still receive pupil premium funding in common with all schools nationally. If Bandon Hill Primary School becomes an academy and joins the Greenshaw Learning Trust, funding would come directly to the school. Bandon Hill Primary School would benefit from additional efficiencies and economies of scale available to the larger multi-academy trusts, e.g. energy.

Does the Ofsted routine inspections change?

Whilst the school remains as one school the Ofsted routine inspections will not change. If following a further consultation, the school decides to separate, each school will have a new registration number and the inspection schedule will be revised.

Is the decision to become an academy and join the Greenshaw Learning Trust reversible?

Once a school becomes an academy it cannot be reversed.

What are the next steps?

The consultation on the proposal for Bandon Hill Primary School to become an academy and join the Greenshaw Learning Trust remains open until Friday 26 March 2021 and further feedback/questions are welcomed. The local governing body will meet to review the consultation findings and due diligence will be carried out before deciding whether to proceed.