

# Rationale for Academisation and joining the Pele Trust

The Governing Body have been discussing the virtues of Academisation for some time during which time there has been detailed discussion about the purpose, the possible models and the benefits or pitfalls of conversion leading to detailed consideration of the possible future directions for George Stephenson High School.

Despite the withdrawal of the Schools White Paper, DfE representatives have made it clear that the desire for all schools to become academies is still very much alive, but whilst there is motivation to be ahead of the curve, it is the compelling case for joining a strong multi academy trust that has led to this consultation. The opportunities for school improvement in the first instance alongside the additional benefit of central service function are significantly beyond what we can achieve as a single maintained school.

The Pele Trust is designed for growth, but there is no sense it is looking to aggressively expand; it is a more gradual process where like-minded schools will converge for the benefit of children across the Trust as well as in their own locality. Analysis of the Scheme of Delegation clearly demonstrates that George Stephenson would retain its identity and independence, whilst benefiting from close working relationships.

The structure and ethos of the PELE Trust means that we will very much remain a North Tyneside school. We would still benefit from close working relationships with other schools, the North Tyneside Learning Trust and the Local Authority as it is essential to safeguarding young people across North Tyneside, whilst also securing the best opportunities for them.

The formal structure of the Trust and the likely diverse nature of the schools within it will undoubtedly support improvement at George Stephenson due to the significant increase in capacity, experience and leadership collaboration.

In summary the benefits of Academisation and joining the PELE Trust are:

- School improvement
- Staff networks
- Leadership support
- Professional dialogue grounded in common values in the best interest of students
- Enhanced opportunities for students and staff
- Efficiencies in services
- Access to significant capital funding streams
- Financial stability and retention of current reserves

More detailed information on these benefits can be found below.

By joining the Trust in the early stages of its growth, we also have the opportunity to shape direction, in particular around hub structures and high school joint improvement strategies.

# Benefits of joining a strong multi academy trust

## 1. Educational progress and outcomes

1. Schools will benefit from increased internal accountability; there is support and challenge for each other to ensure high quality outcomes for all pupils
2. Research indicates that school to school collaboration is an effective tool for improving educational standards
3. Curriculum and leadership networks designed to share practice and improve the quality of education in all trust schools
4. Cross phase working to support transition from primary to secondary school, including common core policies, e.g. attendance (this exists in current Ponteland pyramid and we would seek to replicate in North Tyneside if primary schools approach the Trust)
5. The opportunity to moderate and standardise assessments between schools
6. Increased curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, e.g. greater opportunity and reduced costs for residential due to scale
7. Teaching and support staff will benefit from a more diverse approach to their ongoing professional learning including access to CPD, research and regular reciprocal school visits to ensure that practice is high quality and evidence based.

## 2. School organization

1. The North Tyneside hub will lead to very close working relationships between schools within communities providing a platform for stability and improvement in the best interests of our community
2. The Trust structures ensure long term stability and continuity, even if a Headteacher leaves post
3. The diverse nature of the schools in the Trust demonstrated the inclusivity and desire of the board to provide high quality education for children across the region
4. Specialist support can be delivered via the central services team or from specialists within Trust schools

## 3. Financial

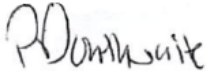
1. A central team manages key areas such as finance, HR and data; this means that Headteachers will be able to have a greater focus on improving the quality of education and driving up standards
2. Joint procurement and purchasing opportunities will enable a more financially resilient budget at a time of increasing cost pressures on school budgets
3. Improved recruitment of high quality staff as they will be attracted to working within a strong MAT with a track record of success
4. Improved retention of high quality staff within the MAT, with opportunities for promotion and succession planning
5. Benefits from economies of scale
6. Access to capital funding

## 4. To retain our own unique ethos within a family of schools

1. Schools joining the Trust will share similar values and a vision for the future of education
2. The scheme of delegation and values of the Trust ensures that each school's identity is celebrated and retained, whilst benefiting from the advantages of joint working
3. Demographic diversity will be a strength of the Trust as schools can learn from one another's experience in varying contexts.

## **5. To take control of our own destiny**

1. The Trust Board, CEO and Executive Team will continually reflect on how to maximise the advantages of working together
2. We recognise that the role of the Local Authority is diminishing significantly and therefore by being more self-sufficient, Trust schools will be well placed to face the challenges within the education landscape.
3. We reduce the risk of being left in a position in the future where we feel we need to join a MAT without the opportunity to shape the direction at the earliest stages of growth, thereby putting at risk the ability to retain our identity and the strength of our provision for our students.



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