



Consultation on the Proposal for Cedars Primary School, to Join the Grand Union Partnership

Consultation Document for Staff, Parents, Carers, Local Authority Partners and the Wider Community

Consultation Period: Monday 12th October – Friday 13th November

Proposed Conversion Date: April 2027 or September 2027 depending on due diligence

Proposed Trust: Grand Union Partnership

Introduction

The Governing Body of Cedars Primary School, are re- consulting on a proposal for the school to convert to academy status and join the Grand Union Partnership Multi-Academy Trust (MAT).

Though a decision had been made by the governing body previously the DFE have asked that we re-consult as new parents and staff will have joined the school. The purpose of this consultation is to provide information about the proposal again and to invite the views of all stakeholders before the Governing Bodies confirm a final decision.

We recognise that schools are at the heart of their communities and that any significant change should be approached openly, transparently and thoughtfully. We therefore welcome feedback from staff, parents and carers, local authorities, partner organisations, local residents and the wider community.

About the School

Cedars Primary School is a successful primary school with a strong reputation for serving its community and supporting children to thrive.

The Governing Body are proud of what has been achieved and are committed to ensuring that the school continues to flourish in an increasingly challenging educational landscape.

Like schools across the country, it faces significant challenges including:

- Recruitment and retention of staff

- Increasing demands associated with SEND and inclusion
- Financial pressures
- Maintaining and improving educational outcomes
- Managing increasing expectations from government and regulatory bodies

The Governing Body believe that joining a strong local trust may provide greater long-term sustainability and opportunities for pupils and staff.

About the Grand Union Partnership

The Grand Union Partnership is a primary specialist multi-academy trust serving Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, West Northamptonshire and surrounding communities.

The Trust's vision is:

"To grow our community of primary schools across Milton Keynes and the surrounding area, working together to enable more children to access engaging, broad-based learning experiences that lay a strong foundation for their wellbeing and future success."

The Trust currently works with Old Stratford Primary School, Tickford Park Primary School, Jubilee Wood Primary School, New Bradwell Primary School and Deanshanger Primary School. It has a well-established model based on collaboration, professional development and school improvement. The Trust was formed in 2017 and has grown steadily whilst maintaining a strong focus on supporting the distinct identity of individual schools.

Trustees have previously approved the progression of due diligence work relating to Cedars Primary School, as potential future members of the Trust. This will continue as we go through the application process.

Why Is the School Considering Joining the Grand Union Partnership?

The Governing Body have spent considerable time exploring a range of options for the future.

Following discussion and partnership working with the Grand Union Partnership, over the last two years, Governors believe that joining the Trust could bring significant benefits.

These potential benefits include:

Educational Improvement

Schools within the Trust collaborate regularly to:

- Share effective practice
- Develop curriculum expertise
- Moderate assessment
- Access specialist support
- Develop teaching and learning

Staff Development

Joining the Trust would provide access to:

- Trust-wide professional development
- Leadership development opportunities
- Subject networks
- Coaching and mentoring
- Collaboration with colleagues across multiple schools

Trust documents identify extensive cross-school collaboration between leaders, teachers and support staff as a key strength

Improved Capacity

Being part of a larger organisation can provide access to:

- School improvement expertise
- Human resource support
- Financial management support
- Governance expertise
- Premises and estates support
- Specialist SEND expertise

The Trust has invested significantly in central support services and school improvement capacity in recent years ready to take on further schools.

Strong Local Partnership

The Grand Union Partnership is a local trust with a primary school focus.

Its schools serve communities like those of Cedars, helping to ensure that support and challenge are relevant to the needs of children, families and staff.

What Would Stay the Same?

If the proposal proceeds, many aspects of school life would remain unchanged.

These include:

School Identity

Each school would retain:

- Its name
- Its ethos and values
- Its uniform
- Its traditions
- Its place within the local community

Staff

Staff would transfer to the Trust under TUPE regulations, preserving their existing employment rights.

Admissions

Admissions arrangements would continue to follow the relevant School Admissions Code requirements.

The schools would remain inclusive schools serving their local communities.

Children

Children would continue to attend the same school, be taught by their teachers and access the same curriculum entitlement.

There would be no disruption to pupils' education resulting from the change of legal status.

What Would Change?

If the proposal proceeds:

- The schools would become an academy
- The Grand Union Partnership would become the legal employer of staff.

- The Trust would become responsible for the schools' funding and governance arrangements.
- Local governance arrangements would operate within the Trust's governance structure.

The schools would benefit from access to wider expertise, shared services and collaborative opportunities across the Trust.

How Would Governance Work?

The Trust Board would hold overall legal responsibility for the Trust and its academies.

Local governance arrangements would continue to enable stakeholders to have a voice in the schools and communities they serve.

The Trust consistently states that school identity and community engagement are important elements of its operating model.

Financial Considerations

Academies receive their funding directly from the Department for Education.

Joining the Trust would allow the school to benefit from:

- Shared procurement
- Financial expertise
- Shared services
- Collaborative planning
- Greater resilience in responding to financial pressures

The Governing Bodies believe that this may strengthen long-term sustainability and help the school's direct resources towards teaching and learning.

Impact on Children with SEND

The Governing Bodies recognise the importance of ensuring that children with SEND continue to receive high-quality support.

The Grand Union Partnership has developed a strong reputation for inclusive practice and specialist SEND provision which are expanding into the future. Trust

documentation highlights the importance of inclusion, specialist SEND expertise and effective collaboration between schools.

We anticipate that joining the Trust would provide opportunities to access additional expertise, resources and professional support that would further strengthen provision.

Potential Benefits for Families

Parents and carers may benefit from:

- Stronger school-to-school collaboration in the Newport area
- Greater access to specialist support
- Improved educational opportunities for children
- Increased sustainability of school services
- Enhanced opportunities for enrichment activities across schools

Children will also benefit from wider opportunities through collaboration with other schools within the Trust, including sporting, cultural and educational activities.

Potential Benefits for Staff

Staff may benefit from:

- Greater career progression opportunities
- Access to wider professional networks
- Enhanced training and development
- Support from specialist central teams
- Opportunities to work collaboratively across schools

The Trust already operates networks for Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, SENDCOs, DSLs, Governors and Subject Leaders.

Have Any Decisions Been Made?

The governing body in the past consultations, approved joining the Grand Union Partnership.

The DFE has asked that we go through a consultation process again as there has been some time between the decision being made by the governing board and the application taking place.

All comments and data from the first consultation will be added to what may come in through this consultation for the governing boards to re-visit their decision.

The purpose of this consultation is to re-listen to stakeholders before any final decision is taken.

The Governing Bodies will carefully consider all feedback received before deciding whether to proceed with a re-application to join the Grand Union Partnership.

How Can You Give Your Views?

We welcome comments, questions and feedback from:

- Parents and carers
- Staff
- Local residents
- Community groups
- Local authority colleagues
- Partner organisations
- Other stakeholders

Feedback can be submitted through:

- Consultation meeting: Monday 9th November 3.30-4.30pm at the school.
- Written responses: Please send to the individual school office
- Email submissions: Through the school office marked as consultation feedback.

Details of consultation events and response methods will be available on the schools' website and shared directly with stakeholders.

Conclusion

The Governing Bodies of Cedars Primary School, believe this proposal has the potential to strengthen the long-term future of the school whilst preserving the characteristics that makes Cedars unique.

The priority remains unchanged: providing the best possible education, support and opportunities for every child.

We encourage all stakeholders to participate in the consultation and share their views before any final decision is made.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal and contribute to the consultation process.