

1st March 2018

Dear Parents and carers

We wish to inform you that on 2nd February 2018, the Governors of Talbot Specialist School decided that the school should consult on becoming an Academy as part of Wellspring Multi Academy Trust.

What is a Multi Academy Trust?

- A Multi Academy Trust (or "MAT") is a collection of one or more schools which have become academies.
- MATs are inspected by Ofsted.
- The MAT receives funding directly from the government and is not part of the local authority.
- The academies within a MAT support each other and other schools.

Why is Talbot considering becoming an academy?

The Governing Body have considered the advantages and disadvantages of becoming an Academy and joining Wellspring MAT or staying as we are. There have been significant changes in the education sector: School funding has been cut and more cuts will take place in the future, changes at the local authority mean that it provides less support to schools and, the government wants all schools to become academies by 2020. The Governors believe that joining Wellspring MAT will help Talbot to continue to provide the best education possible to our students and to offer support to children with special educational needs who attend other schools.

Why now?

Talbot is a high performing school, so we can choose when to become an Academy and whether to form our own MAT or join another. If we wait too long, we may have less choice for example, about which MAT to join.

Governors have considered various options, but were keen that any MAT we joined:

- Shared our ethos and moral purpose
- Strengthened inclusive practice and support for families
- Strengthened and broadened our curriculum opportunities
- Protected our governance so the Local Governing Body continued to have decision-making powers
- Gave our Governors representation on the Board of Trustees
- Included local special, mainstream, nursery, primary and secondary partners
- Fostered school to school support and improvement
- Embraced the local community
- Resulted in minimum changes to Talbot's current provision
- Offered opportunities for stronger staff career development and expertise
- Retained the current staff conditions of service
- Maintained financial and education standards in time of austerity

- Allowed us to maximise our skills and expertise in special educational needs for the benefit of all children

Next Steps:

- Governors are consulting with staff, pupils, families, stakeholders and the wider community, before making a final decision.
- The consultation will include meetings, Question and Answer sessions and further information.
- **The consultation period will last from Thursday 1st March 2018 to Thursday 19th April, 2018.**
- A consultation meeting will be held for parents / carers at Talbot Specialist School on Wednesday 21st March 4:30 – 6:30 pm
- Information is published on our website : www.talbotlearningcommunity.org.uk
- Any questions or comments can be sent into school marked “For the Attention of Mr C Fogg” or by email to : enquiries@talbot.sheffield.sch.uk

Please do not hesitate to contact either myself Marion Hutchinson, Chair of Governors or Judith Smith, Headteacher, by phone 0114 250 7394, or by email enquiries@talbot.sheffield.sch.co.uk

Yours sincerely

Marion Hutchinson
Chair of Governors