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Inspired to learn, motivated to achieve.

5th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Consultation - Conversion to Academy Status

Since September 2020, the Governing Body and I have been exploring the opportunity for Great Dunham Primary to convert to an Academy. This has involved careful reflection on the benefits for our school, its staff, children, families and supporting community. We have completed initial due diligence exercises including discussions and exchanges, to ensure that we can confirm strong alignment with what we believe in within our school.

The option of academisation has been open to all schools for some considerable time and following review of our findings, we believe it is now the right moment for us to take this step. No doubt, as a member of the local community you are aware that many schools have already converted to be an academy.

The Governing Body has concluded that there is greater advantage to be gained by joining an established Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Furthermore, Great Dunham Primary School is committed to being part of this local community and is keen to work in partnership with other local schools. Consequently, we are proposing that Great Dunham Primary School joins a local all-through MAT called Unity Education Trust (UET).

We believe the UET family of schools, and the values and the partnership approach it offers, is in keeping with our own ethos and ways of working. A founding principle of the UET MAT is that all schools retain and celebrate their own unique identity. As you will know it is very important to the Governing Body and myself as Headteacher that the Great Dunham vision, values and ethos are kept in perpetuity. Furthermore, we are committed and can see great advantages to be gained from working with a Trust that is committed to Norfolk children and one which is centrally based in the Dereham area and supports local schools in their community. More information can be seen about this Trust via their website www.unityeducationtrust.uk. In order to join a MAT, it is proposed that Great Dunham will make an application to the Regional Schools Commissioner Head Teacher Board to convert and change its status from a Maintained School to become an Academy. It is not intended to exercise certain freedoms offered to Academies such as altering the timing or pattern of school holidays, nor there any substantial change regarding the admission arrangement for our school or any change to established terms and conditions for employees. The joining with other schools as part of a MAT allows us to continue our pursuit of providing an outstanding education for our pupils, whilst It will also allow us greater financial freedom which will enable us to benefit from economies of scale, such as in purchasing services.

As part of the decision-making process, our Governing Body is committed to undertaking full consultation with the local community, as well as other stakeholders and will take your views into account before any final decision is taken. The purpose of this letter / website statement is to highlight the proposal that Great

Dunham Primary School converts to become an Academy and to signpost to you where you can find additional information and explain how you can take part in the consultation.

In addition to this letter / website statement you will find a frequently asked question sheet, which explains the practical and legal changes associated with a conversion. The formal consultation process begins today (Monday 8th February) and will conclude on Friday 26th February 2021. If you would like to contribute comments please contact us via our consultation email consultation@greatdunham.norfolk.sch.uk. We are very pleased to share this new development with you and we are keen to hear your thoughts and opinions as part of the consultation process.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Sharon Nour

Headteacher

Mrs Kim Whitlock

Chair of Governors