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## **S10 Consultation FAQs**

### **Ewell Grove Primary and Nursery School Academy Conversion to Lumen Learning Trust**

#### **1) What does this proposal mean?**

Ewell Grove Primary and Nursery School is currently maintained by Surrey County Council who then delegate funding directly to the school. The Lumen Learning Trust (LLT) will receive funding directly from the Department for Education for their family of schools. Lumen Learning provides all of the schools within the Trust with high level strategic leadership and management.

#### **2) When will the conversion take place?**

We are aiming for the 1st November 2024, although this is subject to change.

#### **3) Why has the Governing Board decided the school should join an Academy Trust?**

The current context for education is referred to as a 'school led system' and central to this is the structure of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). Although there have been various iterations of MATs over time, the very best work collectively, as a family of schools, to commit wholeheartedly to collaborations that bring about good for all.

It is a fact that resources available to the education sector are getting smaller, and demands and expectations made upon them larger. Working within a MAT will support Ewell Grove to work collaboratively within a structure of a family of schools.

#### **4) Why Lumen Learning Trust?**

Ewell Grove's foundations are deeply rooted in the Early Years principles which depends on each child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments; these encourage a child's engagement whilst recognising their strengths. All children have the agency and curiosity to learn, interacting with the people around them and the world around them in different ways and this needs to be recognised. The Governing Board agreed the MAT we join must hold the uniqueness of Early Years and Primary Education at the core of its business and heart of its decisions.

Lumen Learning Trust puts the children's needs at the heart of its provision. They are also committed to enabling children to become successful lifelong learners and happy fulfilled adults who can make positive choices about their future. LLT is also committed to supporting and collaborating with other schools in the development of learning and leadership to create a stimulating and rewarding environment for the whole community.

#### **5) Will there be any change to the admissions policy?**

In line with schools already in the Trust, we do not anticipate significant changes to admission arrangements. We would consult separately in line with the Admissions Code, should we decide to make any changes in the future.

**6) How would pupils with special educational needs (SEND) be catered for and can you give an assurance that current levels of SEND support will be maintained?**

Surrey County Council maintain responsibility for providing the additional funding and support which pupils with SEND are entitled to. We are not seeking to change the way pupils with SEND are currently supported at Ewell Grove, however being part of a MAT will provide opportunities to collaborate and share good practice with other schools. National funding changes may lead to a review in the future.

**7) What will the school's relationship with neighbouring schools be?**

Ewell Grove will continue to be part of the local community of schools in the Epsom and Ewell area. Ewell Grove has, and will always be, a school rooted in its community; this will include local schools who we will maintain a collaborative working relationship with. Ewell Grove will also benefit from being part of Lumen Learning Trust with the associated capacity that the Trust brings.

**8) What effect will the school's conversion have on the curriculum?**

The school will continue to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, teaching the skills and attributes needed to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others, while developing knowledge and the characteristics of learning to achieve their dreams. Ewell Grove will continue to deliver the curriculum through programmes such as Read Write Inc., Plazoom and Opening Worlds. The school values the expectations of the National Curriculum and will continue to follow it closely to support all pupils to achieve their best.

**9) What are the benefits for my child if the school converts to a MAT?**

Being part of a MAT will bring the opportunity to work in collaboration with a family of schools with shared values, sharing expertise and good practice.

**10) Will the leadership of the school change?**

Ewell Grove will continue to be led by Miss Rising as the Headteacher. She will be responsible for the day to day leadership and management of the school. Miss Rising will be line-managed by the Trust Executive Principal. Ewell Grove's Governing Board will continue to exist and will be referred to as the school's Local Governance Board, which is an advisory body that supports the Executive Principal in monitoring the performance of the school. The Trust's board of directors hold overall responsibility for Standards, Finance, Staff and other key aspects e.g. Health and Safety.

**11) Will teacher representatives be included on the governing board? If not, how will teachers' views be represented?**

Each school in the Trust has its own Local Governance Board (LGB) and staff are part of the membership.

**12) How will parents' views be represented?**

Parent representatives are elected to the LGB.

**13) Will the school uniform change when we convert to an academy?**

Ewell Grove closely identifies with its logo and branding and there are no plans to change the uniform.

**14) Will the school's name change if we convert to an academy?**

No

**15) Will the schools continue to work with the Local Authority?**

The school will continue to collaborate with the local authority when required.

***Updates from questions received during w/c 16th September 2024, including the Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Friday 20th September***

**16) How many Trusts did the Governing Board consider when making the decision about which MAT to join?**

The Governing Board looked at Primary MATs only, and looked at all those operating locally. They drew on their network of contacts for advice. While the Governing Board had some reservations about the other potential options, they felt Lumen Learning Trust was the best fit for Ewell Grove.

**17) Ewell Grove is a good school. What does Lumen Learning Trust have planned to take the school to 'Outstanding'?**

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> September, one-word judgements are no longer an aspect of the Ofsted framework, therefore no overall judgement of Outstanding will be awarded to any school in current or future Ofsted frameworks. That said, Lumen will work with the leadership team to refine and strengthen practice as identified through the School Development Plan, which is drawn together by the Headteacher and her Leadership Team.

Once the school has joined the Lumen Learning Trust, the Executive Principal and her team will work with Miss Rising and the school's SLT to understand the integral detail of the school's current strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and determine what adaptations to the current provision might be welcomed to enhance the school's offer to pupils and staff. More information will be provided to parents in the spring and summer term.

**18) Will there be any changes to the school curriculum?**

No – along with the majority of Multi Academy Trusts, Lumen Learning Trust schools follow the National Curriculum. The way in which it is delivered remains the responsibility of Miss Rising and Ewell Grove's SLT. All schools in the Trust will be sharing knowledge and experience and as always Ewell Grove will continue to adapt to bring new methods into the classroom where they will be of benefit to our pupils.

The Trust will continue to support a focus on an enhanced enrichment programme, for example Sports Coaches, inter-school championships and competitions, and has a shared aspiration to build music provision across the Trust through specialist instrumental teachers and other activities.

**19) Will there be an opportunity post-conversion for the Trust to share plans around School Improvement?**

The responsibility for the School Improvement Plan will remain with Miss Rising and the school leadership team. The Trust will provide advice, support and direction and valuable opportunities to share ideas across the schools.

School Improvement is a constant discussion with the Governing Board and shared with parents in many ways including year group meetings and parent workshops (eg Phonics workshop in October)

There will also be an opportunity for the school staff to participate in trust-wide projects aimed at driving school improvement more broadly; information about these will be shared through the school newsletter.

**20) The other Lumen Learning Trust schools are closer geographically; how will Ewell Grove staff and pupils be included in Trust-wide activities?**

Walton Oak Primary School is the mid-point and will be the location for key meetings and activities. There is a firm commitment from the Trust Leadership to make collaboration between all schools possible and the necessary logistics will be put in place. Staff have access to an online platform which fosters collaboration and information sharing.

An example of how the Trust pulls together is, for example, where the Executive Principal asked two Inclusion Leads from two Trust schools to visit another to review the needs and support pupils in another school with SEND. This visit was convened in a few days, rather than waiting several weeks for external support, helping identify pupil needs and create a plan for their education more quickly.

**21) One of the key strengths of Ewell Grove is the staff - will staff be moved to other schools?**

No - not unless they are happy to move for career progression or other personal or professional reasons. The Trust's ethos is to do what is best for staff, in order that they can do what is best for the children. The Trust has a very strong track record in retaining teachers and would not wish to lose them.

**22) Will teaching staff remain static within year groups?**

No – Ewell Grove staff have never been static and they will continue to be encouraged to move across the three Primary Key Stages.

**23) Will there be any changes to the current after-school provision?**

No changes are planned.

**24) What excites Mrs McCarthy (Executive Principal of LLT) about Ewell Grove joining the Trust, and what are her concerns?**

- Mrs McCarthy is excited about the team of dedicated and expert staff who are joining, the vibrant school community, and knowing more about the interesting ways the school is educating pupils.
- Her concern is doing the right thing by everyone.

**25) What examples are there currently of collaboration between the Lumen Learning Trust schools?**

- There is an AI project underway to understand the impact of AI on education.
- The Trust has entered into a Service Level Agreement with an Education Psychologist which all schools have access to.
- There is an Art and Play Therapy Service Level Agreement for all schools to access.
- 'New to Maths' leads support planning and outcomes
- Smaller projects e.g. a Reception teacher supporting another for a term.
- The Trust Executive Principal is a member of the Schools Alliance for Excellence, supporting new Headteachers.
- The Trust Executive Principal is working with Southfield Park Primary School which requires leadership support.

**26) Are any changes anticipated to FOEG (the PTA) and its relationship with the school?**

There are no changes anticipated. The Trust do not rely on PTA funds; they are ring fenced for school-specific projects only.

PTAs within the Trust benefit from the cross-fertilisation of ideas - PTA chairs from across the school have met to share what fundraising activities work well.

*Updates from questions received during w/c 23rd September 2024, including the Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Wednesday 25th September*

**27) Why would the Governing Board of Ewell Grove surrender control of the school to an academy trust?**

The Governing Board does not view the proposed conversion as 'surrendering control', rather, it believes that this move is in the best interests of the staff, school and local community. In Surrey, less than half the schools are now maintained schools, and, as a consequence, Surrey County Council is no longer able to provide the level of services and support that it did previously to schools.

The school's elected Governing Board has undertaken a wide-ranging due diligence process.

The structure of the Lumen Learning Trust governance means that the elected chair of Ewell Grove Governing Board is a Trustee/Director of the Trust.

**28) Does Lumen Learning Trust have any other primary schools in the pipeline waiting to join the Trust?**

This is commercially sensitive information and the Trust is not able to discuss this at present, however there is no aspiration to become a very large MAT.

**29) Why did the Governing Board not choose to join GLF Schools?**

The Governing Board considered the various formats of MATs. We looked carefully at the vision we have for Ewell Grove as set out on the school Website, Curriculum Policy and the Welcome from the Headteacher. The Early Years principles and the Uniqueness of childhood are fundamental and we considered that a MAT which was Primary Schools only was better placed to maintain and enhance this. We also wanted to be in a small MAT where we could be equal partners. GLF is a large MAT with both Primary and Secondary Schools and so did not fit those criteria.

**30) If there's extra funding, how much and who decides how it is spent?**

At present, the DfE has confirmed school funding for the next academic year, however should any additional funding come forward, this will be allocated to the school in accordance with the DfE allocation and the school will determine how it is spent.