



Rye Academy Trust

Consultation on Transfer:

Rye College and Rye Community Primary School to the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust (Aquinas)

Rye College (the College) converted to an academy in September 2012 and on 1 March 2015 Rye Community Primary School (the Primary) also acquired academy status. Both academies are part of the Rye Academy Trust (Rye AT). A new Chief Executive Officer was appointed in September 2016. He identified concerns regarding educational standards, buildings condition and financial controls within the Rye AT and supported by the Regional Schools Commissioner appointed new Trustees. Although the new appointees began to address the financial, educational and buildings issues, a Financial Notice to Improve (FNTI) was served by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on 6th September 2017. A term of the FNTI is that the Rye AT must arrange for the College and the Primary to join a strong multi-academy trust, which is approved by the DfE by 1 September 2018. This date has been extended to 1 November 2018. In addition, recent Ofsted inspections have judged the College and the Primary as inadequate with serious weaknesses.

Aquinas is a multi-academy trust located in the Bromley area currently consisting of one secondary academy and eight primary academies further details of which can be found at www.aquinastrust.org. Aquinas has a clear strategy with strong governance and is effectively led on a day-to-day basis by its chief executive officer, Kathy Griffiths. Mrs Griffiths is supported in her role by education, finance, HR, estates and legal professionals both as part of the central team and at academy level. Aquinas has a proven academic track record with all its academies improving year-on-year. As such, Aquinas has sponsorship status enabling it to take on academies which have been judged by Ofsted as inadequate. This coupled with its strong financial and regulatory record makes Aquinas a successful multi academy trust and it is recognised as such by the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Aquinas has already developed a professional relationship with Rye AT providing educational support to both the College and the Primary through the provision of leadership secondments and school improvement assistance which has included the following:

- A detailed review of the curriculum;
- A detailed review of staffing with roles and responsibilities clearly defined which will support school improvement;
- Rigorous recruitment to ensure a full staffing complement;
- A review of pupil premium which has led to the development of a clearly funded strategy; Pupils will now have individualised plans to meet their needs and to track progress;
- A review of assessment and pupil data tracking to facilitate pupil progress;
- Assistance in the identification of disadvantaged groups and in closing the gap;
- Staff training, mentoring and support together with robust appraisal and targets;
- Support from Aquinas academies and staff.

In addition to the £2 million secured by Rye AT for essential health and safety work at the College, Aquinas has secured additional capital funding in the region of £2.1 million in order to undertake further improvements to the College buildings. It is anticipated that this extensive project will be completed in the next 18 months.

Given Aquinas' close involvement with the College and the Primary and in order to comply with the FNTI, the trustees of Rye AT have been in negotiations with Aquinas with a view to the College and the Primary joining Aquinas. In principle terms of the transfer have been agreed between the parties and approved by the Regional Schools Commissioner, ESFA and Department for Education. All parties consider that Aquinas is best placed to secure the educational improvement of both academies through support from its central improvement team, school-to-school support and training. Aquinas will also be able to provide effective business support for both academies in terms of finance, HR, compliance, buildings and estates.

Consequently, Aquinas and the Rye AT wish to seek the views of all stakeholders on the proposed transfer. The Consultation process commences on Monday, 10th September, 2018 and ends on Tuesday, 9th October, 2018. The results of the consultation process will be detailed on the websites of Aquinas and Rye AT at the end of the consultation period.

A public meeting to consider the transfer of the academies will be held on Tuesday, 18th September, 2018 between 3.45pm and 4.45pm at the College. In the meantime, we would welcome your views and comments on this proposal and invite you to respond by Tuesday, 9th October, 2018:

- In writing to:- Consultation re Transfer of Rye College and Rye Community Primary School, Aquinas, Magpie Hall Lane, Bromley BR2 8HZ; or
- By email to:- info@aquinatrust.org inserting Consultation re Transfer of Rye College and Rye Community Primary School.

Please provide details of your name and contact details to assist us in collating the responses. Whilst all responses will be acknowledged, it will not be possible to correspond with individual respondents.