



Dear Parents and Carers,

Proposal to become an academy and join Red Kite Learning Trust

I am writing to share a proposal from the Governing Body. The Governing Body of Saltergate Federation is proposing that our schools become academies in partnership with the Red Kite Learning Trust. Our Governing Body welcomes your questions and comments about this proposal to help inform its final decision. This period of consultation and dialogue will commence on Thursday 29 February and end at the close of the day on Wednesday 14 March.

What is an Academy?

An academy is a state school, funded directly by central government, and joining an academy is known as 'academisation.' When schools such as ours become an academy, they gain some additional freedoms and responsibilities. Whilst historically, some schools have been forced to join academies to address low standards of learning and teaching, Saltergate by contrast, is a Federation of two good schools and this proposal is driven not by the Local Authority or government but by the Governing Body's considered belief that students, teachers and support staff will benefit from collaboration with carefully selected schools which share our values and vision. Further details can be found in our 'Frequently Asked Questions' [here](#).

Successful Collaboration

Since December, our schools have been collaborating with other schools within the Red Kite Alliance. As part of this collaboration, we are benefitting from subject leaders sharing good practice and members of the Senior Leadership Team developing strategies to improve the progress of vulnerable groups and most recently, sharing ideas with staff in similar roles to enhance their own CPD. In turn, this is enabling our own staff to develop their teaching and leadership, which ultimately aids the successful development for many of our students. It will also empower them to encourage and motivate other members of staff within the school. Throughout this period, we have begun to benefit from this collaboration with Red Kite Alliance, whilst retaining our individual distinctiveness within the community, which remains of paramount importance to our schools. To start this consultation process, we would briefly summarise the reasons why we believe further collaboration will serve our students and staff so well.

Why now?

The Federation of our Infant and Junior schools has enabled collaborative and effective working throughout all year groups and has been beneficial to children and staff. We believe that the next step for Saltergate is to embrace further opportunities for collaboration. Joining the Red Kite Learning Trust would give us the support that we need to move Saltergate forward and to be the best that we can be.

Why join a Multi-Academy Trust?

We believe that collaboration with the schools within Red Kite Learning Trust will further improve outcomes for students and staff. It will do this through drawing on a wide bank of expertise; creating further economies of scale and sharing resources to give our schools an even stronger, more resilient structure. This will in turn ensure that every student's learning opportunities are maximised and that every member of staff has encouragement to grow professionally.

Why Red Kite Learning Trust and not another Trust?

We are happy to say that the Red Kite Learning Trust shares our vision and our values completely. It feels like a natural partner for Saltergate because of its commitment to the belief that every student is deserving of a nurturing and empowering education. Like us, it aims to bring about positive social change by equipping students for a rapidly changing world. By joining Red Kite Learning Trust, we would not be 'taken over' instead we would become an integral part of a 'family of schools' and our precious and distinctive vision and values will continue to be celebrated. We already have a strong relationship with Rossett School and are keen to collaborate with other schools. The scale of Red Kite Learning Trust brings a wealth of opportunities for Saltergate, with 9 of its 14 schools being primaries.

Does this mean that Saltergate will lose out if it is no longer run by the Local Authority?

There is a national move towards academy status for all schools and as a result some Local Authorities are vastly reducing and withdrawing support for education, meaning that the system of education in this country is increasingly school-led. As a consequence, we believe that schools in North Yorkshire are becoming increasingly isolated, often with little support, a greater sense of competition and a disproportionately large amount of time spent by leaders on tasks which would have previously been undertaken by the Local Authority. This all culminates in less time to focus on excellent teaching and learning. Academisation seeks to address this imbalance, re-establishing student outcomes as the top priority of partnered schools.

Summary

In summary, the Governing Body believes that both the students and teachers will benefit from collaboration with Red Kite Learning Trust through shared vision and values, further strengthening the opportunities for our staff, all centred around maximising the outcomes of our children through educational excellence.

What form will our consultation take?

Our parents, staff and the extended community are being consulted as part of this process and we have put into place the following to enable this consultation to be as comprehensive as we can make it. We want to listen to your views and to discuss any outstanding questions you may have. As a result we intend to offer the following opportunity to meet with the Chair of Governors, Kirsty Bull, the Headteacher, Jo Hall, and the CEO of Red Kite Learning Trust, Richard Sheriff, to discuss your questions. This meeting will be held on **Monday 4 March at 5pm** at Saltergate Schools in the **KS1 hall**.

In addition, we invite you to send questions in advance of this meeting, using this email address consultation@saltergateschools.co.uk. We will try to address these questions during the meeting and will add information to the website for those who are unable to attend.

Please visit the dedicated area of the [Saltergate website](#) where information will be added as appropriate. The consultation will close at the end of the day on 14 March 2024.

What happens next?

Our Full Governing Body will consider all feedback received prior to making a final decision about becoming an academy and partnering with Red Kite Learning Trust. Should the proposal proceed, it is anticipated that Saltergate would convert to academy status on or after 1 July 2024. Should the proposal not proceed, Saltergate will remain a maintained school. For more information about our proposed conversion please visit the dedicated section of our website.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KBull', is positioned below the text 'Kind Regards,'.

Kirsty Bull
Chair of Governors, Saltergate Schools