



Prudhoe West
First School
growing future stars



WISE
ACADEMIES
We Inspire Success and Excellence

**Prudhoe West
First School
Information for
parents & others
CONSULTATION**



Introduction

This booklet is intended to provide information for parents and the community. We hope this will answer some of the questions that you may have about the proposed partnership between Prudhoe West First School and WISE Academies.

It is proposed that Prudhoe West First School will become an academy and join the WISE Academies family of schools from the summer term 2017. The leaders and governors of both organisations are already working together to form this new partnership and to deliver the best possible outcomes for the children of Prudhoe.

When a school becomes an academy it is important to share information with key stakeholders including parents, employees and the local community that the school serves, in order to give them all an opportunity to express their views and raise any questions.

In this leaflet we have set out the real benefits of coming together with WISE Academies and how both Prudhoe West First School and WISE Academies can move forward together into a bright future with the combined strength of an established multi-academy trust (MAT) and an already strong school.

There are an increasing number of schools throughout the country who are choosing to become academies and to join successful MATs like WISE Academies. Prudhoe West First School is seeking to become an academy because the leaders and governors recognise the benefits of a school-led system which means more opportunity for sharing of best practice and effective benchmarking of standards.

The ethos of Prudhoe West First School is well-matched to the approach of WISE Academies, and both organisations already aspire to the highest possible standards of education. We know that this is what matters most to parents, the local community and (most of all) to our children. Prudhoe West First School has high expectations and WISE Academies is an organisation with a reputation for excellence.

After reading this leaflet we hope that you will agree that academy conversion is in the best interest of Prudhoe West First School and that the school will continue to go from strength to strength as part of WISE Academies. We would love to hear your views and would be pleased to respond to any queries that you may have about the academy conversion process.

Carrie Davison
Headteacher
Prudhoe West First School

Zoe Carr
CEO
WISE Academies



Headteacher's Message



For many years we at Prudhoe West have experienced success as a school and have benefitted greatly from working with other schools to extend our knowledge and expertise. This has had great benefits for our children who are taught and supported by staff who are highly skilled and committed to what they do. Our belief is that knowledgeable and motivated staff create a school experience for children which is positive and purposeful, and find ways of delivering the National Curriculum so that it inspires and equips children with the skills they need for future success. That belief will never change.

WISE Academies is a trust which has experienced much success working in the way outlined above; by its schools working together closely towards a better future for all their pupils. It is in this way that they achieve their motto to 'inspire success and excellence.'

I firmly believe that a partnership between Prudhoe West and WISE Academies will be mutually beneficial and will enable both our school and the trust to continue to improve and enhance the education of the children in our care. Established frameworks of support including joint staff training, peer to peer collaboration, across school moderation, a relentless drive for school improvement, and a body of staff at all levels who are passionate and committed to what they do, will all contribute to our children being educated in a way which develops their thirst for knowledge and love of learning.

Carrie Davison, Headteacher

"I am very excited at the prospect of the school joining with WISE Academies. This partnership will allow us to learn more and develop as teachers. The trust's systematic approach to staff professional development is clear, as is their commitment to improving the life chances of every child in their schools. Through this we will become even better and more skilled at what we do and will be able to lead and deliver outstanding and inspiring lessons to the children in our school. The trust's commitment to, and the opportunities within the trust to enable staff to further their own careers (through things such as school to school support work) will also help retain Prudhoe West's excellent staff and be attractive to new staff moving forward."

**Tony Irvine
Teacher,
Prudhoe West First School**

The role of the Governing Body is to help the head teacher and her staff to provide the best possible education for pupils at Prudhoe West. As a parent governor, with two children currently at the school, the education (and overall learning experience) provided at Prudhoe West is something that I care about very deeply. In all of the discussions held by governors regarding whether to convert to become an academy, and specifically whether to partner with WISE Academies, our overriding questions, which we came back to at every single stage, were whether any proposal would improve the very good education already provided at Prudhoe West and whether it would be in the best interests of our current and future children.

I think there are lots of good reasons to convert to academy status and to partner with WISE Academies. These include the ability to fully manage the finances of the school (in order to spend the funds in the way the senior leadership team considers most beneficial), being able to obtain and maintain good facilities and services for the school and being able to benefit from the very professional administrative and "back office" facilities which WISE already has in place. These are things which, as parents, we probably don't give much thought to on a daily basis but they contribute directly to the resources, time and energy which the teachers can put into teaching our children. However, the element that I am most excited about is for our school to gain the opportunity to work collaboratively with the other WISE schools, getting new ideas, hearing about different ways of working and learning from good practice which has worked well elsewhere. WISE have been very successful over the last few years, their team are very passionate about what they do and I think this partnership can only benefit Prudhoe West.

I would encourage all parents to participate in the consultation process and ask any questions which you have. All responses will be evaluated by the Governing Body and this is your chance to express your views.

**Nicola Nutley
Parent Governor, Prudhoe West First School**

A WISE choice!



Multi-Academy Trusts (MAT) are the government's preferred model of academisation and have many clear benefits compared to other school models. MATs are able to achieve important efficiencies and have proven to be the best model of sharing and collaboration.

WISE Academies has been established as a MAT since 2011, so is well placed to support schools in the process of becoming academies by joining our Trust. WISE Academies has its heart in the north-east of England, successfully operating academies in Northumberland, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Sunderland. Everything we do is focussed on the success of our local communities. Within Prudhoe this can only be enhanced by the prospect of a powerful local partnership with Prudhoe West First School.

The idea of partnership is important to us and is central to the success of our MAT. We know that we can learn from each others' successes. The way we work means that we can use the talent that exists within our organisation in a creative way to allow all of our academies to achieve their full potential.


Key to our educational vision is the provision of a welcoming, caring and supportive learning environment which will nurture the development of each child in our care. This is something that we never lose sight of in our Trust.

WISE Academies will offer strategic leadership skills, proven practitioners and high aspiration for the whole MAT. We know that Prudhoe West First School shares our ambition to succeed.

One of the major strengths of working as a Trust is that senior leaders within WISE Academies work together to develop practical and effective strategies to transform learning across all of our academies. There is real opportunity through partnership between Prudhoe West First School and WISE Academies to benefit from the combined strength and proven leadership that both organisations can offer.

WISE Academies does not only have proven strength in providing high quality inspirational teaching, we also have well-established and successful support services, which will complement the expertise that exists within Prudhoe West First School.

There are already many MATs in existence, with more being established going forward. Some are large national chains whilst some others are just starting out on their journey. However, few MATs will have the same level of experience, the established systems and the successful track record of WISE Academies.



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We are determined to create outstanding academies and will work hard to ensure that every school in the WISE family is a first class organisation
”

WE



INSPIRE



SUCCESS
AND



EXCELLENCE



Your questions answered

Will the name of the school change?

From the date of conversion, the school will become Prudhoe West Academy. This new name will be specified in the funding agreements and other legal documentation.

Will the curriculum change?

Whilst it is true that academies have greater freedom and flexibility in terms of the curriculum followed, parents will be reassured that Prudhoe West Academy will adhere to the current arrangements. We continue to feel that it is important to follow the National Curriculum and this will assist the children in readiness for transition to middle school. It is important to recognise that Prudhoe West is a good and improving school and we do not intend to change what we do... just refine and enhance it.

Will we have a new uniform for pupils?

This is something that will be carefully considered taking account of everyone's views and in particular the leaders and governors of Prudhoe West First School. It is always important to be aware of factors such as cost and availability of the uniform when making such decisions, along with the appearance and the practicality of uniform. You will start to see the WISE logo introduced alongside the Prudhoe West logo as a symbol of unity with other academies across the Trust.

Will there be a different Headteacher and staff after conversion to an academy?

No. Mrs Davison is an established and successful leader and will still be the Headteacher of Prudhoe West. Mrs Davison has already been working closely with the staff of WISE Academies to prepare for the proposed transition. The leaders and governors of Prudhoe West are enthusiastic about the prospect of working with like-minded professionals from across the Trust. The main difference in leadership will be that the leaders of Prudhoe West will benefit from the deep supportive partnership which exists within WISE Academies amongst its family of schools which is of mutual benefit to all.

Why is it better for Prudhoe West to be part of a larger organisation like WISE Academies?

Outstanding schools need outstanding leaders and this is central to the success of WISE Academies which uses collaboration and sharing of good practice to 'Inspire Success and Excellence' across all of its academies. Senior leaders within WISE Academies work together to develop practical and effective strategies to transform learning across our academies. We recognise the importance of this in developing the role of leadership and learning strategies across the whole Trust.

There is a real opportunity for both WISE Academies and Prudhoe West to benefit from the combined strength and proven leadership that both organisations can offer.

Could class sizes change?

Organisation of classes is very much a matter for determination by the leaders of Prudhoe West taking account of pupil numbers and characteristics along with staff availability and curriculum needs. This is not something that WISE Academies prescribes to its current schools and would not seek to do so for schools joining the Trust.





How will pupil admissions be handled?

Parents will notice no difference in this respect. Although the Academy Trust will become the admissions authority, it must comply with the same Admissions Code. This means that the Academy Trust will participate in the co-ordinated admission arrangements operated by the Local Authority (LA), participate in the local in-year Fair Access Protocol and comply with equalities law on admissions.



Would sessional hours change?

There is no change planned. Prudhoe West already determines the timing of its school day and can make changes as necessary to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Will policies change?

Certain policies will need to be updated to reflect the differences within the academies sector. These will be reviewed individually and will change where it is necessary to do so and to ensure that they are compatible with statutory requirements. Stakeholders will be reassured that the policies of WISE Academies in relation to admissions, pupil exclusions, employment of staff and all other aspect of school life remain fully inclusive.

Will the school receive more money after academy conversion?

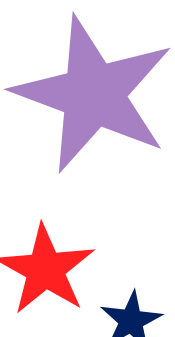
Academies receive their funding direct from the Government rather than via their Local Authority (LA). At present academies receive the same level of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the LA as a maintained school plus additions to cover the services that are no longer provided for them by the LA. This is known as the Education Services Grant (ESG).

Academy Trusts have greater freedom on how they use their budgets, alongside the other freedoms that they enjoy. There are also certain sources of funding which are exclusively available to academies.


Will this change the relationship with other schools in the area?

No. It is recognised that Prudhoe West has well established links with other schools in the area through the Prudhoe Partnership. This relationship with other local schools will be maintained. WISE Academies has a very strong commitment to working in partnership with all local schools and academies outside of the Trust in the areas where the Trust operates through collaboration, provision of services and the work of its successful Teaching School.

Transition is important at every stage of a child's education and therefore it is deemed essential that strong links are maintained and developed with other school phases to ensure continuity of learning.



Like Prudhoe West First School, WISE Academies has its heart in the north-east of England. Everything we do is focussed on the success of our local communities. We believe that within Prudhoe this can only be enhanced by the prospect of a successful local partnership between Prudhoe West and WISE Academies.



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Meet the CEO

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. My name is Zoe Carr and I am proud to serve as the Chief Executive Office (CEO) of WISE Academies.

I have worked in education since 1995 when I qualified as a primary school teacher and have spent the last 12 years in school leadership, recently having been recognised as a National Leader of Education.

I have real practical experience of the academy conversion process and have gained further insight into all aspects of academy performance, accountability and operation through my work on the Regional School Commissioner's Head Teacher Board (HTB). This HTB role has led to me working with a range of other providers throughout the North of England who are either thinking of becoming academies or who are already academies and need clear practical guidance from an experienced MAT leader.

My passion has always been getting the very best outcomes for all pupils through the highest quality of teaching. As a mother of two young daughters, my benchmark when judging the quality of any school is whether it would be good enough for my own children.

I, and some of the WISE team, have spent time meeting Prudhoe West staff, governors and pupils over the last few weeks. I have also had a couple of meetings with the Local Authority to discuss future plans. During this time, very positive relationships have been developed and our future partnership is being viewed very favourably by all concerned.

I look forward to meeting you at forthcoming meetings for parents and members of the local community.



A Trust with a National Reputation for Excellence

"Now look at chains like WISE Academies Trust in Sunderland. It was established by two converter primaries in 2011 and became a sponsor in 2012. It now comprises a number of schools in the North East Operating in areas of high deprivation but refusing to accept disadvantage as an excuse for low aspiration. The Trust focuses on changing mind sets, core skills and a consistent approach to assessment for learning in every classroom. And in two of its sponsored schools it has seen huge jumps, as much as 25% in the percentage of students achieving Level 4 in reading, writing and maths, with one school achieving 77% and another 91%. It is no wonder that WISE stands for 'We Inspire Success and Excellence'."

Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan
Secretary of State for Education
April 2016 - The Academies Show

"The Headteacher, staff, governors and the WISE Trust work very effectively together to ensure that the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and the overall effectiveness of the academy continue to improve and this it meets challenging targets."

Ofsted, June 2014

"WISE Academies is our family of schools. Like all families we want the best, but we are also there to support each other when things get tough. We have proved time and time again that this works to all our advantages."

Robert Symonds –
Chair of Directors, WISE Academies

"Brilliant sponsors are transforming schools up and down the Country _ sponsors like WISE Academies Trust in Sunderland. The Trust was formed four years ago by two strong primary schools. Two failing primary schools quickly followed and the Trust is seeing huge success. Both previously struggling schools are now judged Good by Ofsted and exam results have shot up. In the year before it became an academy just 53% of children at Hasting Hill Academy achieved the expected level in their Key Stage 2 tests. This year the Trust reports that 91% of pupils met the Level 4 standard. We want more schools to achieve these rates of improvement and that is why, as the Prime Minister recently made clear, we want all schools to be able to benefit from the freedom that academy status brings."

Lord Nash (in statement to the House of Lords)
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
October 2015



Why does WISE Academies want to join with Prudhoe West?

Having already established itself as part of the educational landscape through sponsorship of Adderlane Academy, WISE Academies is ready to take the next important step to establish the Trust as an even greater contributor in the Northumberland area. With the addition of Prudhoe West we will have a comprehensive offer of high quality education up to the age of 9 in the Prudhoe area.

Prudhoe West First School is an excellent match for WISE Academies because the Trust already operates in the area. Prudhoe West has an outstanding and innovative leader who recognises the opportunities of working in this partnership. The mutual benefits of working together to serve this local community are clear through the use of shared resources, expertise, intelligence and above all a shared commitment to the highest expectations for Prudhoe.

The reputation of WISE Academies is growing and this will be further developed by the addition of a good school like Prudhoe West.

What's the benefit to Prudhoe West First School?

The previous section set out the clear advantages of working together to build the highest aspirations for the young people of Prudhoe. However, the opportunities for Prudhoe West go beyond this.

Prudhoe West Academy will be at the forefront of the development of the Trust elsewhere in the Northumberland area by supporting other schools in the county who join our organisation in the future. The profile of Prudhoe West in the region will therefore be raised by joining our well-established Trust.

It is clear that Prudhoe West has successful leaders, enthusiastic staff, good pastoral systems and supportive governors. It is recognised that Prudhoe West is a good school and it is these strengths that make it the perfect partner for WISE Academies. Together we will seek to replicate these successful features in other schools that join the Trust. A partnership between Prudhoe West and WISE Academies will make best use of the combined strengths of both organisations.

Into the Future - A Joined Up Approach

Because WISE Academies is North-East based, there is a deep understanding of the needs of schools within the region. The Trust already has three schools in Sunderland (Bexhill, Hasting Hill and Town End Academies) and one school in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Welbeck Academy).

Under these proposals, Prudhoe West will become the second school to join WISE Academies in the Northumberland area (Adderlane Academy became part of the Trust in 2016). It is expected that further schools will join the Trust elsewhere in Northumberland and, if the Trust's plans are realised, this will result in the establishment of local hubs, which will further strengthen partnership and collaboration.

Conclusions

As can be seen, WISE Academies is built on firm foundations and is ready and able to provide real and effective partnership to Prudhoe West. We very much welcome the opportunity to work with our new partner in taking all of our academies forward into an even brighter future.

WISE Academies is determined to create outstanding academies. Just like Prudhoe West, every effort is made to provide a learning environment where all children achieve highly and are ready to meet the challenges of the wider world.

There are some great opportunities ahead and we look forward to welcoming Prudhoe West Academy to be part of the WISE Academies family of schools.





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This is a consultation document.

The information in this booklet is provided to assist parents and the local community in understanding the benefits that lie ahead as a result of the partnership between Prudhoe West First School and WISE Academies.

It is an important part of the conversion process that we hear from parents and other interested parties so that they can express their views and receive answers to any questions that they might have.

Consultation meetings are arranged to take place at the school as follows: -

Monday 30th January 2017 at 5.45 p.m.

or

Tuesday 31st January 2017 at 8.45 a.m.

The email address for responses is;
admin@prudhoewest.northumberland.sch.uk

Alternatively, should you wish to submit your views in writing please do so to Prudhoe West First School, West Road, Prudhoe, Northumberland NE42 6HR.

We look forward to hearing from you!



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