Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Update on the proposal for STEPs multi academy trust

Since we confirmed our intention to move towards formal consultation Headteachers and Governor representatives from the six schools have continued discussions around the most appropriate model for our proposed trust. The values we shared with you are central to our decision making. Thank you for those of you who have contributed to the discussions in our schools. We are aware that there have been a number of points of clarification sought and we will attempt to address them below:

**Why are we considering a multi academy trust rather than other collaborative partnerships?**
There is common agreement that a collaborative partnership between schools is a valuable vehicle for working together and sharing best practice. However, non-academy models do not give protection to individual schools in the event of an unfavourable Ofsted judgement. Current government policy requires such schools to be immediately forced to become an academy within an existing trust. We do not want to be in the position that a school in our partnership is taken over by an academy chain. It is important to point out that currently our schools are high performing and do not expect a poor Ofsted judgement but we are also aware of the unpredictability of the current performance measures, changes to assessments and the vulnerability of all schools to a single issue safeguarding concern.

**Why has formal consultation not begun?**
The governing bodies of each of the schools are currently involved in informal pre consultation discussions with their own staff, pupils and parents. As more information becomes available a formal consultation will begin for each of the schools involved. Governors and Headteachers continue to explore the various options available to best support the pupils in our communities. This is a lengthy process as we are determined to investigate thoroughly our next steps.

**Is this a money saving exercise?**
You are probably aware of the government proposals to change the way that all schools are funded. For schools in Birmingham that is likely to mean considerable cuts. These are challenges that all schools will face whether they are maintained, free schools or academies. Saving money is not the driver for setting up our proposed trust. However, over time there maybe opportunities to find economies of scale that will help with any future difficult financial positions.

**What will be the impact on current staff?**
All schools in the proposed trust are absolutely committed to maintaining existing terms and conditions for teaching and support staff. If the trust goes ahead staff will TUPE from their existing positions with no break in service and no change in pensions.

**Will your admissions criteria change?**
We are committed to continue to follow the local authority admissions criteria including for pupils with special educational needs.

We have not entered lightly into this process and want to reassure you that any actions we take will be in the best interest of your children. Please get in touch with us if you’d like to discuss any aspect of this in more detail.

Yours faithfully
Shirley Hanson (Kings Heath Primary)
Diane Henson (Wheelers Lane Technology College)
Debbie James (Swanshurst School and Sixth Form Centre)
Kalsom Khan (Park Hill Primary)
Bernadette Przybek (Kings Heath Boys)
Helen Reeves (Queensbridge School)