



## Proposal to become an academy and join Enlighten Learning Trust

The senior leadership and governing body at St. Giles' C of E (Aided) Infants is proposing that our school becomes an academy in partnership with the Enlighten Learning Trust (ELT). The senior leadership and governing body welcome your questions and comments about this proposal to help inform its final decision.

This period of consultation will begin on **01/03/2023** and ends on **31/03/2023**.

### What is an Academy?

An academy is a state school, funded directly by central government. When a school becomes an academy, it gains some additional freedoms and responsibilities. Further details can be found in the 'Frequently Asked Questions' document on our website. Joining an academy is known as 'academisation'. Historically, some schools have been forced to join academies to address low standards of teaching and learning and this has led to some negative press. St Giles' Infants, in contrast, is a school that consistently performs well and where pupils achieve well, and this proposal is not driven by the Local Authority or the government but by the senior leaders' and governing body's considered understanding that pupils and teachers will benefit from collaboration with ELT which shares our values and vision.

### Why now?

#### Seeking the best for all children is our responsibility as a Christian school

Guildford diocese is advising its schools to academise for the future protection of its distinctively inclusive and values-driven education. The governing body strongly believes that we have the moral duty to remain rooted in our distinctive school Christian values and to continue to strive for an excellence which reaches beyond our own school. This can be achieved through formal partnership with other like-minded schools, ensuring that an even greater number of children can flourish in an excellent values-based quality education.

#### Enlighten Learning Trust shares our vision and values

School leaders and the governing body have been aware of the government agenda for schools to become academies within a trust for some time and has spent time looking at different trusts and how they might be aligned with St Giles' vision and values. Dialogue and due diligence show that ELT feels like a natural partner for St Giles' on account of its inclusive and at the same time distinctive Christian ethos and its belief that its schools are equally important family members as part of the trust.

ELT shares our vision of aspiration for all to achieve well through a nurturing, holistic and empowering education.

<https://www.enlightenlt.education/VisionandValues>

#### There is a national move towards academy status for all schools

In March 2022, the government White Paper 'Opportunity for All' sets out its ambition that 'By 2030, all children will benefit from being taught in a family of schools, with their school in a strong multi academy trust or with plans to join or form one. It sets out the agenda for all schools to provide a high quality and

inclusive education within the 'resilient structure of a strong trust, sharing expertise, resources and support to help teachers and leaders deliver better outcomes for children'. Although the White Paper has been formally withdrawn the ambition and rationale regarding academies remains the same. Many Local Authorities are essentially reducing and /or withdrawing support for education, which means that the education system itself is increasingly school led. Some schools in Surrey are becoming increasingly 'isolated' often with insufficient government support towards a sustainable long-term future. School leaders therefore find themselves focusing on operational procedures and limitations at the expense of excellent teaching and learning standards.

Academisation seeks to address this imbalance, focusing on pupil outcomes as the top priority of partnered schools.

We believe that collaboration with the ELT will further improve outcomes for pupils and staff through drawing on a wide bank of expertise, creating economies of scale and sharing excellence and resources to give our school an even stronger, more resilient structure to ensure that every child's learning opportunities are maximised and that every member of staff has opportunity to grow and lead.

The senior leaders and governing body believe that both the children and teachers at St Giles' will benefit from collaboration with ELT which will, with aligned vision, further strengthen our resilience and opportunities for staff as well as maximise the outcomes of our children through focus on educational excellence.

### **Consultation Process – How you can have your say**

We want to listen to your views and to answer any questions that you may have. We encourage you to join our dialogue by:

- Emailing the school using the email [academy-consultation@stgiles.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:academy-consultation@stgiles.surrey.sch.uk) to ask questions relating to this consultation. This information will help us to further develop our FAQ document.
- Attending a drop-in session with a governor, headteacher and Mike Boddington (CEO of Enlighten Learning Trust) to answer any questions you may have. Once a date has been finalised you will be able to book a place by emailing [office@stgiles.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:office@stgiles.surrey.sch.uk)
  - **Face to face drop-in**      **Notification of date to be sent once agreed.**

Our parents, staff and the diocese are being consulted as part of this process.

The consultation closes by **noon on 31/03/2023.**

### **What happens next?**

Our senior leaders and full governing body will consider all feedback prior to making a final decision about becoming an academy and partnering with ELT. Should the proposal proceed, it is anticipated that St Giles' would convert to academy status on or after **1<sup>st</sup> September 2023**. Should the proposal not proceed, St Giles' will remain as a maintained school and would be seeking alternatives.

Please visit our website for FAQ and this will be updated if / when more information is available.

Mrs Angus

Headteacher

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