

*Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026*



Dear Parents/Carers and members of our local community,

We are writing to inform you that the Governing Body of St Helen's Primary School has agreed to enter into a formal period of due diligence with Meridian Trust, a well-established local multi-academy trust. Due diligence is a process in which the school and the Trust make sure they have the information needed to make fully informed decisions about transferring a school into an academy trust.

Over the past year, a working party of the Governing Board has carefully explored the option of academisation by engaging with a number of local multi-academy trusts. This work has included discussions, meetings and school visits, with the clear aim of identifying an organisation that shares our values and would support St Helen's to remain a strong village school at the heart of its community.

Through this structured process, we initially explored six trusts and reduced this to a shortlist of three. Following further meetings, the Governing Body has agreed to undertake detailed due diligence with Meridian Trust in order to explore a potential partnership in more depth.

Meridian Trust is committed to valuing people and the local communities we live and work in. They have a strong track record of school support & improvement, and currently oversee 36 academies across the region, including 19 primary schools, 14 secondary schools and several special schools. They have a strong presence overseeing a number of local schools including Somersham Primary School, Abbey College, Swavesey Village College, Northstowe Learning Community, The Martin Bacon Academy and The Harbour SEND Schools.

While many of Meridian's schools are judged to be outstanding by Ofsted and achieve excellent outcomes, the primary reason for choosing Meridian has been the strong alignment between our values, our shared beliefs about education, and our focus on improving children's lives. This alignment, together with Meridian's existing partnership with our nearest primary school in Somersham and the fact that many of our year 6 pupils transition to Abbey College or Northstowe (both Meridian Trust schools), makes Meridian Trust a strong strategic fit for St Helen's Primary school.

Entering a due diligence process does not mean that a final decision has been made. This is a careful and thorough stage process that allows governors to examine how a partnership would work in practice and to ensure that any decision taken is in the best interests of our pupils, staff and wider community.

To assist with our due diligence, we are now entering a formal period of consultation, during which you will have opportunities to ask questions and share your views with the Governing Body and representatives from Meridian Trust. There will be 3 opportunities to meet in person and online which will be:

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> May – <b>In Person</b> | 8:30am - 9:30am in the school hall                                                                                                                                |
| Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> May – <b>In Person</b> | 3:30pm - 4:30pm in the school hall                                                                                                                                |
| Wed 13 <sup>th</sup> May - <b>ONLINE</b>      | 6pm - 6:30pm. Please email <a href="mailto:consultation@sthelensprimary.org">consultation@sthelensprimary.org</a> and we'll send you a teams link to the meeting. |

Please give your views via the link below, which will be open until the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026.

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/80Y7hw3UKp>

Thank you for your continued support of St Helen's Primary School. We remain committed to openness and transparency and will keep you informed as this process progresses.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Minett, Vice Chair of Governors  
& Matthew Sampson, Chair of Governors

*On behalf of the Governing Body St Helen's Primary School*

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why is St Helen's considering joining a multi-academy trust?**

The Governing Body believes it is important to plan proactively for the future of the school. By exploring academisation, governors are seeking to secure long-term stability, strengthen collaboration with local schools, and ensure continued high-quality education for our children within a strong local partnership.

### **What are the Governors looking for in a multi-academy trust?**

The Governing Body is seeking a partnership that provides clear benefits for both pupils and staff. For pupils, this includes being part of a larger community of schools that can offer wider opportunities beyond the classroom, such as enhanced experiences in sport, music, the arts and STEM. For staff, governors are looking for access to high-quality professional development, opportunities to work with research-informed subject specialists, stronger leadership support and clearer career development pathways. In addition, a multi-academy trust can offer greater financial resilience and economies of scale, helping to ensure long-term stability for the school.

### **Has a decision already been made to join Meridian Trust?**

No. Entering a period of due diligence does **not** mean that a final decision has been taken. This stage allows governors and the Department of Education an opportunity to examine in detail how a partnership would work in practice before deciding whether joining Meridian Trust is in the best interests of St Helen's.

### **What is due diligence?**

Due diligence is a detailed and thorough process where governors review information relating to education, finance, staffing, governance and the day-to-day running of the school. It helps ensure that any future decision is well-informed, robust and in the best interests of pupils, staff and the wider community.

### **What would change for staff & pupils?**

There will be very little visible change as a direct result of joining Meridian. The school name, staff, uniform and premises will all continue to be very much St. Helen's School. The changes that we hope you will see, will be a general continued improvement in the performance and running of the school and hopefully some new and improved resources and enhanced opportunities for our staff & pupils to benefit from.

### **Will St Helen's lose its identity as a village school?**

No. A key priority for the Governing Body is that St Helen's continues to serve our community as a village school. One of the reasons we would like to work with Meridian Trust is due to their vision and track record of providing a high-quality educational experience for all, at the heart of the local communities we live and work in.

### **How can parents share their views?**

A formal consultation period has begun. During this time, parents, carers and the local community will be able to ask questions, attend meetings and share their views with the Governing Body and representatives from Meridian Trust. Please see the letter which details the times of the meetings on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of May. Please share your view by completing this form <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/80Y7hw3UKp>

### **The Chair of Governors works at Meridian Trust, how have you ensured that the process is impartial?**

The Governing Body has been transparent about the Chair of Governors' professional role within Meridian Trust. He has a great knowledge of the academisation process, and it has been helpful for the governors and staff to talk through the process and what's it's like to work for an academy trust. The Vice Chair is leading the academisation working group, and the Chair will not take part in the final decision or vote, in line with governance best practice.