

Q. Will the Academy have the same school term/school holiday dates as all other local schools that continue to have links with the council?

A. Academies can set their own term dates and school day timings without consultation with parents or the local council. There are no plans to change school term/school holiday dates.

Q. Will the school change its name?

A. No, the names of the individual schools will not change but the academy trust will have a name. Governors are currently considering names that reflects the heritage of our area.

Q. Will you change the entry criteria? Will you become selective in choosing pupils? Will you change the catchment area?

A. All Academies are required to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code. When a school converts to become an Academy, it will be the admission authority and is responsible for its own admission arrangements. Applications for school places will still be made to the Local Authority, who will notify the Academy of the application. The schools will remain inclusive and not selective.

Q. Will class sizes go up?

A. Not as a direct result of becoming an Academy. Other factors such as increase in catchment area population may cause class sizes to rise, but being an academy will enable the schools to plan their own response to this issue. Infant classes cannot rise above 30.

Q. Will the school change its uniform?

A. No.

Q. Does becoming an academy mean that the school will get new buildings and facilities?

A. No. There is no automatic right to new buildings or facilities. Schools budget to provide new facilities and this will continue.

Q. Will there be more money for my child's education if the school becomes an academy?

A. Academy status should not give schools a financial advantage. The school will be allocated its share of the money that is currently held by the local authority to make provision across all schools for all pupils.

Q. Will it cost the parents more money e.g. for trips/visits/dinner money?

A. No, our plans do not include anything that should result in increased parental costs.

Q. Will parents be included in the decision making process?

A. Parents' opinions gathered via consultation are valuable when making a decision of this nature and will be considered.

Q. How are parent governors identified / appointed in an academy?

A. When there is a vacancy, applications are sought from the parents at the school. If there are the same number or fewer applications than vacancies then those individuals who applied are appointed. If there are more applications than vacancies, the parents vote to decide who becomes a governor.

Willows Academy Trust

Academy Conversion



**Dovedale
Primary School**



**Sawley Infants
& Nursery**



**Sawley Junior
School**



**Shardlow
Primary School**

Parent Consultation

30th April, 2014

Why are we consulting?

The Governing Bodies of Dovedale Primary School, Shardlow Primary School, Sawley Junior School and Sawley Infants & Nursery School are proposing to establish a Multi-Academy Trust.

The primary concerns of the Governing Body are for the welfare of the children that attend the school and to ensure the quality of educational provision. The Governing Body believes that academy status will assist in this undertaking and benefit the school for the following reasons:

- It will give the school access to additional funding which is currently retained by the local authority.
- Converting as a multi-academy trust rather than a single school brings additional financial benefits.
- Closer collaboration between schools will provide opportunities to develop initiatives which might be too costly or time consuming for an individual school.
- Purchasing services and resources across a group of schools reduces costs and enables services to be more tailored to our needs.
- Freedom to agree and establish our own curriculum and share staff expertise across the four schools.

What is a Multi-Academy Trust?

When schools become an academy, they are no longer within Local Authority control and are funded directly by the government.

A multi academy trust (MAT) is governed by a Board of Trustees who is ultimately responsible for the performance and running of each individual academy within the MAT.

Each school would continue to have its own local governing body to which the MAT's Board of Trustees can delegate decision-making powers. Each academy in the MAT will have representation on the board and thus influence how it operates.

The MAT enters into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education. Each individual academy also has their own supplemental funding agreements.

A portion of the individual academies' budgets can be combined and used to fund shared services which can give schools more freedom to work in partnership and share resources in the best interests of the pupils.

Questions parents frequently ask:-

Q. Will my child be happier if the school converts to academy status?

A. We have always been committed to ensuring all our pupils enjoy their learning and are happy

Q. Given that the school is graded good/ outstanding under current arrangements, why change it?

A. As a governing body we are not complacent. It is important to look at all options in our pursuit of sustaining/raising standards. We will still be inspected by Ofsted.

Q. Why can't the school secure improvement under current arrangements?

A. The school can and does. What is of interest is – what would be available to us as an academy that could support this further.

Q. What impact does academy status have on special educational needs (SEN/D) provision?

A. An academy is expected to behave as if they were a maintained school in meeting the needs of children with SEN/D. Individually assigned funding for children with statements will continue to be paid as normal, through the LA. The LA will continue to have a legal duty to ensure that the statement of SEN/D is fulfilled and does this by paying the individually assigned funding and monitoring the provision made by the academy.

Q. Will the curriculum change?

A. An academy can choose its own curriculum. We will have an obligation to provide a 'balanced and broadly based curriculum'. This will allow the school to design and implement a curriculum that will meet the needs of its students as they face ever-changing demands and requirements.