

# CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS/CARERS AND MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. What is an Academy?

Academies are independent, state-funded schools, which receive their funding directly from central government, rather than through a local authority. The day-to-day running of the school is with the head teacher or principal, but they are overseen by individual charitable bodies called academy trusts and may be part of an academy chain. These trusts and chains provide advice, support, expertise and a strategic overview.

### 2. Why Harmony Trust?

Harmony Trust is a Multi-Academy Trust of 5 primary schools based in Oldham and 1 school in Derby. The Trust has a strong track record of improving outcomes for pupils in its' schools. The schools within Harmony Trust have a similar context to our schools and a vision and ethos, which supports the work we do in our schools. Alvaston Junior School and Village Primary would form part of a Derby Hub within the Harmony Trust. We would work alongside other schools in Derby as we currently do as we have already built a number of strong partnerships. There are currently 4 other schools in Derby consulting on forming a Derby Hub of Harmony Trust.

### 3. What advantages would joining a MAT bring?

There will be a number of benefits to Alvaston Junior School and Village Primary:

- Protect the school's ethos and inclusive philosophy by maintaining control of our own destiny
- Better opportunities to share best practice and professional development programmes across the schools, adding real value to the education of all children
- Increased opportunities for children to work with other local schools, broadening their social horizons
- Recruit staff through opportunities to work across all schools
- More opportunities for staff retention, deployment and promotion, by keeping good staff within the Trust who might otherwise further their career elsewhere
- A good base for developing leadership
- Increased economies of scale in the running of central services such as finance (purchasing and resourcing), HR and premises

### 4. What are the associated risks of joining a MAT?

- Some loss of autonomy through shared accountabilities
- Reduction in support from the Local Authority and more direct influence from the Government
- The need to fulfill all employer and company liabilities, many of which are currently provided by the Local Authority
- Increased statutory requirements and costs

### 5. Who will be responsible for running our school?

Harmony Trust have a Board of Trustees, which will include individuals from our current Governing Bodies. The Trust Board will delegate responsibilities to a Derby Hub Board, which will be a similar role that the governors currently have. Each school will also have a parent, pupil, staff and community forum which will provide opportunities for all these stakeholders to have a say in the running of the schools. The leadership structure with Heads of School and an Executive Headteacher will stay the same.

### 6. Would the school have to change its name, logo or uniform?

No, under the proposed MAT plans, the Governors have no plans to change the name, logo, uniform or individual identity of each school. We are proud of our identities as Alvaston Junior School and Village Primary Schools. Letter headings may change slightly to reflect our participation in a MAT, but little else will change.

**7. How are the children affected?**

In many ways the children will not notice any immediate difference; they will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. We will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all our children. However, in time the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the pupils' learning. They may also start to notice the increased opportunities for co-operation with the other schools within the Derby Hub.

**8. How will being an Academy affect staff?**

Currently, the employer for staff is Derby City Council. After conversion all staff at all the schools will be employed by the Trust. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. Their continuity of service is protected and all staff will be consulted in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE)

**9. How will admissions to the school be affected?**

The Local Authority will continue to have responsibility for making sure there are sufficient places locally and will co-ordinate the admissions process for all schools. This means parents will still only have to complete one application per child. Applications will still be via the coordinated process.

**10. Will the schools have to follow the National Curriculum?**

Academies are not required to teach the National Curriculum but rather a broad and balanced one that includes English, Mathematics, Science and Religious Education and promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

**11. Will my child still have to do SATs and the Phonics Screening Check?**

Yes, academies carry out all the same statutory tests as local authority schools do.

**12. How can I make my views known?**

You are invited to submit your comments and views using the following emails:

[admin@alvastonj.derby.sch.uk](mailto:admin@alvastonj.derby.sch.uk)

[admin@village.derby.sch.uk](mailto:admin@village.derby.sch.uk)

In addition we invite you to attend consultation events detailed below. Any views expressed at these meetings will be captured and included in the final considerations of the Governing Body.

Alvaston Junior School 16.10.17 @ 4.00pm – 5.15 pm or 30.10.17 @ 9.00 a.m.

Village Primary School 16<sup>TH</sup> October @ 3.15 or 2<sup>nd</sup> November @ 9.00

The formal consultation will close at 4pm on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**Our proposal for conversion to MAT status is underpinned by a shared commitment to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children and that the identity, characteristics and ethos of the schools are maintained and strengthened.**