



# Consultation for Stakeholders of Moat Farm Junior School Conversion to Academy Status as part of the Stour Vale Academy Trust

## **Why are stakeholders being consulted?**

Moat Farm Juniors is a Sandwell school that has had an opportunity to work in increasing partnership with Stour Vale Academy Trust over a number of years. As the pandemic ends, now is the right time to consider joining the trust. As part of the consultation process, the school and the Trust will provide information, answer questions and listen to feedback. The purpose of this statement is, therefore, to provide information about a potential conversion to academy status and about the Stour Vale Academy Trust, signpost you to where you can find additional information and tell you how you can make your views known to the governors.

## **What is an Academy?**

An academy is a state-funded school which operates independently within the requirements of national codes of practice for state schools. However, unlike a state school, it receives its funding directly from central government rather than through a local authority.

## **What is a Multi-Academy Trust?**

The model involves a family of schools forming a 'Multi-Academy Trust' (MAT) under a Shared Company. The essential principles of the model are that it involves no external business sponsorship and there will be no change to the distinctive and individual nature of any of the schools in the trust.

## **Why be part of Stour Vale Academy Trust?**

Moat Farm Junior School has worked with Stour Vale for several years. The Trust shares many of the same values as at Moat Farm and are a group of schools that the school has already forged strong relationships with. Stour Vale demonstrates

ethical leadership and is underpinned by a core moral purpose to make a difference to the lives of children, much in the way that we are. They are also committed to working in partnership with schools whilst at the same time respecting the distinct character and situation of each individual member. If the school joined the trust, it would still be recognisable as the friendly, amazing and unique school that it is. Stour Vale's belief in the importance of secure autonomy makes them excellent potential partners. The leaders within the trust are consistently great people who want to make a difference to the children they teach by being open to relationships and partnerships with others. It is an impressive school improvement model. Schools within the trust are encouraged to develop and improve – they are provided with consistent challenge and ongoing support. As a good school, Moat Farm would benefit from the opportunities to collaborate with other schools to further develop our wider curriculum and to also develop our leaders from the experience of working with a wider group of schools- either in providing or receiving support.

As a trust school, Moat Farm currently falls between two stools. We are not a full Local Authority school, so cannot access emergency funding in the same way that other Sandwell schools do but at the same time, we cannot access the DFE funding earmarked for academies. Our school became a trust school before the current leadership team took post but that decision has left us in something of a black hole in the case of funding for large remedial building work - rather worrying in a time of declining budgets. Stour Vale receives a School's Capital Allocation and there is a process in place to ensure that this meets the costs of essential projects. Schools also have the option to bid for funding for non – essential works that improve the learning environment. These funding streams are currently closed to us as a trust school.

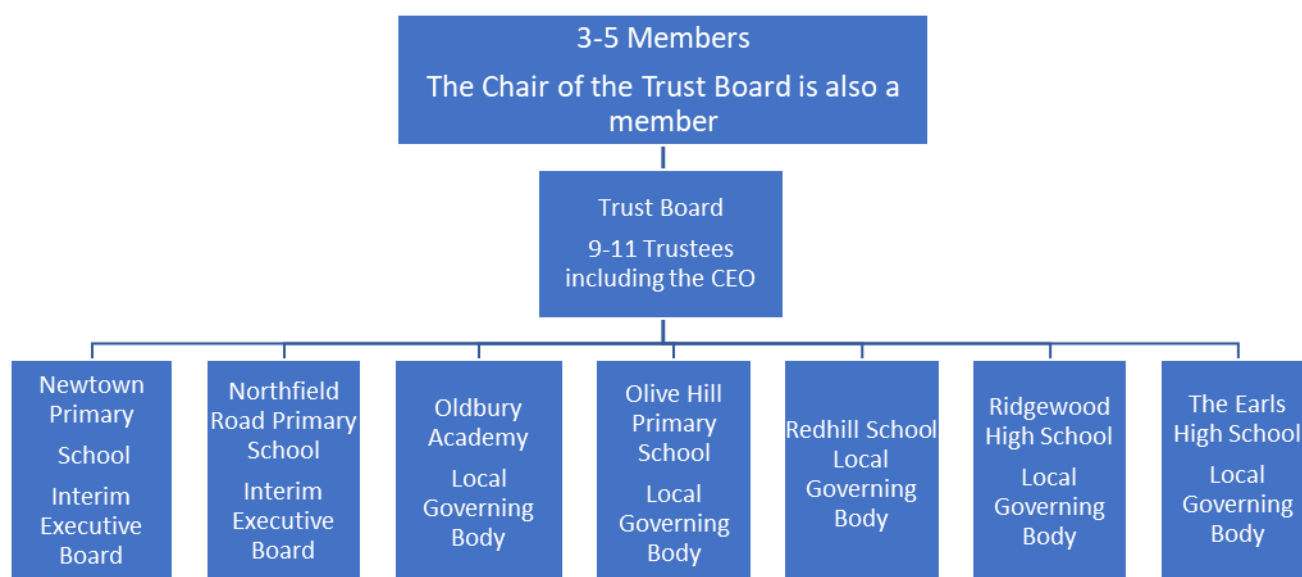
The areas where working with Stour Vale could bring benefits to our school:

- **Teaching and Learning.** Sharing our vision of curriculum development by collaboration with other schools across the trust.
- **School Improvement Strategies.** Increased opportunities to work closely with a small group of highly committed schools to develop practice and outcomes for our children.
- **Developing Leadership Potential.** There are opportunities for leaders within Stour Vale to share experience and practice in order to raise achievement.
- The option to apply for extra funding for essential projects and non-essential works in school
- **Economies of Scale.** By entering into contracts with suppliers for all schools in the Stour Vale Academy Trust, we will be able to save money. Examples will include frontline resources such as stationery and teaching resources and also areas such as insurance.

## What will be the governance structure for Moat Farm Juniors ?

Should Moat Farm Juniors take the decision to academise, common with the other schools in the Stour Vale Academy Trust, we would be governed by a 'Local Governing Body' (LGB). The governance structure for each academy within the multi-academy trust also includes a Trust Board with responsibility for all schools in the Trust. This Trust Board are in turn accountable to the Members of Stour Vale Academy Trust.

Governance Structure for the Stour Vale Academy Trust:



The Members:

They have ultimate responsibility for the academy trust, with the ability to appoint some of the directors and the right to amend the trust's articles of association. In Stour Vale Academy Trust there will be a maximum of five members. Members are appointed with no term of office.

Trust Board:

The Stour Vale Trust Board is made up of between nine and eleven directors or trustees. This Board has oversight of the performance of all of the academies within the Trust and makes strategic decisions about the Trust and its resources. Stour Vale Academy Trust Directors, as a group, have a wealth of experience in education and are committed to upholding the Trust's values and ethos.

## Local Governing Body:

Schools in the Stour Vale Academy Trust are run by their own Local Governing Body with representation from parents, staff and the community. Under the delegated powers the LGBs would keep the responsibility for high standards and maintaining the particular culture and ethos associated with the school. The new LGB would be made up of the following members.

- Headteacher
- 2 Elected Parent governors
- 2 Elected Staff governors
- 4 Community governors

An individual LGB can also choose to appoint a small number of associate governors, each for a term of one year. Associate governors have the right to vote and may be members of specific committees. Existing governors at Moat Farm would become members of the LGB.

Many things would remain the same. Moat Farm Juniors would remain a school in Sandwell and the partnerships we have with other schools and agencies in the locality would continue. Moat Farm Juniors would still be bound by the statutory codes for Special Educational Needs and would continue to work closely with Sandwell's inclusion Support and Children's Board. The school would continue to abide by School Teachers Pay and Conditions and the National Joint Council terms and conditions including pay recommendations. The school would also continue to have the same holidays as other Sandwell schools. Members of the leadership team would continue to be part of Primary Partnership and would work closely with the Oldbury Learning Community. The school uniform will remain the same. The school will continue to work closely with Moat Farm Infants and the secondary schools that our children go to in Year 7 and Sandwell would continue to administer admissions.

## **Which schools are in the Stour Vale Academy Trust?**

The Earls High School, Redhill School, Ridgewood High School, Oldbury Academy, Olive Hill Primary School, Newtown Primary School and Northfield Road Primary School. The schools have excellent relationships and also work well in partnership with other schools. That commitment to wider partnership working will remain.

## **How will stakeholders be able to make their views known?**

The consultation will run from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 until 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022 We will welcome views from

- Parents

- Pupils
- Staff including staff unions and associations
- Governors
- The Sandwell Local Authority
- The wider community including groups associated with Moat Farm Juniors

You are invited to submit your comments and views using the following e-mail address: [stakeholder.consultation@moatfarm-jun.sandwell.sch.uk](mailto:stakeholder.consultation@moatfarm-jun.sandwell.sch.uk)

Or to respond by letter. Letters should be marked 'Private and Confidential – Academy Conversion' so that they can be forwarded on quickly.

In addition, you are welcome to attend the information events listed below. Any views expressed at the meetings will be captured and included in the final considerations of the Full Governing Body

Stakeholder Consultation Meeting Timetable:

Information meetings to be held at Moat Farm Juniors on:

**Parents and other Community Stakeholders: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March at 2.30pm**

**Staff: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 3.30pm**

**Parents and other community stakeholders** – . These will be open meetings with a presentation and the opportunity for questions.

**Staff** . This will provide the opportunity for staff to hear more about the opportunities for Moat Farm Juniors joining The Stour Vale Academy Trust and for them to ask questions and verbally express their views. This is in addition to the formal consultation which forms part of the TUPE process.

## **Before I give my views where can I find out more information?**

Further information generally on Academies provided by the DfE can be found on their website. Stour Vale Academy Trust also has a website where you can find further information about the Trust's values and about the directors/trustees and members.

**Ms L Stone**  
**Head Teacher**  
**January 2022**