



Moat Farm Infant and Nursery School

and Lavender Farm Nursery

Headteacher: Mrs. D. Walker

Lavender Farm Nursery Manager: Mrs S. Stevens



**Consultation for
Stakeholders of Moat Farm Infant
School and Lavender Farm
Conversion to Academy Status as
part of the
Stour Vale Academy Trust**

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Monday 12th September 2022

The current political landscape has focussed our minds on the future of our school and how best to continue to secure ongoing and sustained improvements for our children. With this in mind, the Governors are seeking to consult with parents, staff and other stakeholder about Moat Farm Infant school and Lavender Farm academising and joining Stour Vale Trust.

Why are stakeholders being consulted?

A number of our staff had the opportunity to work alongside the Stour Vale Academy Trust during last academic year. This has enabled the leadership team to really get to know Stour Vale and see how schools work once they have joined. The leadership team have seen first-hand the high levels of support that schools receive after joining Stour Vale and also recognise the opportunities to further improve teaching and learning by collaboration and partnership that joining the trust would bring. We have found that they share our approach to education and welfare of students. As such, I feel that Stour Vale Academy Trust is a good match and offers many opportunities to Moat Farm Infant School and Lavender Farm, as we move forward following the government's 'White Paper' – in which it states that it wants all schools to become an academy by 2030.

A consultation process must take place with all our stakeholders before any changes can take place. This process involves the school and the Trust providing information, answering questions and listening 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





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Why be part of Stour Vale Academy Trust?

- Like Moat Farm Infant School and Lavender Farm, Stour Vale Academy Trust places children and young people at the heart of they do.
- Stour Vale Academy Trust respects the distinct character of each of its member schools. Moat Farm Infant School and Lavender Farm wouldn't change their names, our uniform, or our own uniqueness. We would still be the friendly, caring school that you know.
- Collaboration and partnership are key to all we do and nothing will change with that. In fact, it will just improve. By expanding that network through Stour Vale we are able to access a wide range of expertise that ultimately ensures the curriculum provision is of the highest quality for our children.
- Moat Farm Infant School is a Sandwell maintained school and we are very proud to be here serving the community of Oldbury. That wouldn't change, we would still access all Sandwell has to offer, whilst being part of the family of schools that make up Stour Vale.
- Our funding would come direct from government rather via the Local Authority. We should save money and be able to reinvest that for our children.
- Our building is difficult to maintain and we currently have to take large amounts of money from our own school budget towards building improvements. Stour Vale receives a School's Capital Allocation that meets the costs of essential building projects. Money we could access to improve our building and our learning environments. Something we definitely need.

Other areas where working with Stour Vale could bring benefits to Moat Farm Infant School and Lavender Farm:

- 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.
- 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. (paper, photocopiers, insurance)

Which schools are in the Stour Vale Academy Trust?

Stour Vale was founded in 2017 by one primary and two secondary schools who recognised the significant benefits of working collaboratively. Since then, Stour Vale has steadily grown. Stour Vale School Members are located across Dudley and Sandwell.

Secondary: The Earls High School, Redhill School, Ridgewood High School, Oldbury Academy

Primary: Olive Hill Primary School, Newtown Primary School, Northfield Road Primary School.

(Moat Farm Juniors will join in the autumn term and Queen Victoria Primary have also applied to the DfE to join).





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What wouldn't change?

Many things would remain the same and you may find it hard to see how things have changed.

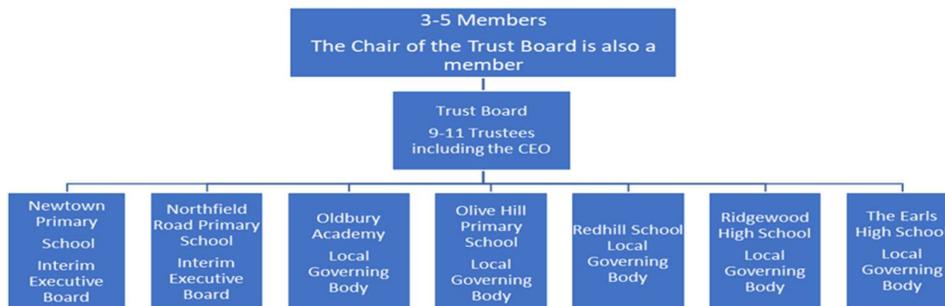
- Moat Farm Infant School and Lavender Farm would remain a school in Sandwell, teaching Sandwell children. The partnerships we have made with other schools and external agencies over the last few years would continue.
- The school would also continue to have the same holidays as other Sandwell schools.
- Moat Farm Infant School and Lavender Farm would still be bound by the statutory codes for Special Educational Needs and would continue to work closely with Sandwell's inclusion Support. 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 uniform will remain the same. And so will our school name!
- Moat Farm Infant School and Lavender Farm staff will remain the same.
- School admissions will continue to be through Sandwell, we will still support those children transferring to Junior schools at the end of Year 2 as well as visiting children new to the school as they start their journey into Nursery and Reception.

The schools have excellent relationships and also work well in partnership with other schools. That commitment to wider partnership working is what we want to be part of.

What will be the governance structure for Moat Farm Infant School and Lavender Farm?

Should Moat Farm Infant School and Lavender Farm 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. Existing Moat Farm Infant School and Lavender Farm Governors would continue in their role.

Current Governance Structure for the Stour Vale Academy Trust:





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All schools 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.

How do I make my views known?

The consultation period will cover the four-week period from Monday 12th September until 10th October 2022 and welcome views from parents, carers and families.

You are invited to submit your comments and views using the following e-mail address: enquiries@mfi.school Alternatively letters should be marked 'Confidential - Academy Conversion' and sent to the School Office.

In addition, you are welcome to attend the information event 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:

Parents and other Community Stakeholders: Tuesday 27th September at 2.30pm an open meeting with a presentation and the opportunity to ask questions and verbally express views.

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 <https://www.svat.org.uk> where you can find further information about the Trust's values and about the directors/trustees and members.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs D. Walker,
Headteacher

Hannah Massey
Chair of Governors

