

Welton Primary School Academy Conversion

Frequently Asked Questions

Will the name of the school change?

We have no plans to change the school name.

Will the school change its uniform?

We have no plans to change the school uniform.

Will term dates and school day times change?

We have no plans to alter the times of the school day or term dates, keeping these in line with most Bath and North East Somerset schools. However, we may consult with the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership (MSNSP) schools to align our INSET days to make it easier for parents.

Will the curriculum change?

We would have greater freedom and autonomy over our curriculum. This will enable us to continue to develop our creative curriculum over the next few years should we so wish and the freedom to review any proposed changes by government and to decide whether they are right for the children at our school.

Will the admissions policy and criteria change?

We are part of admissions within Bath and North East Somerset and would remain so. This means we would adhere to the LA Admissions code, for example, we would not become selective.

Will the school receive more money from the government?

At present Bath and North East Somerset retains a proportion of our funding to provide some central LA services. As an academy we would receive that money directly and will be able to choose who to buy those services from and how they should be best deployed for the specific benefit of children at our school. By becoming part of the MSNSP, we would be able to take advantages of economies of scale to maximise our resources.

Will the Senior Leadership Team spend more time running the business side of the academy instead of focusing on the teaching and learning?

Setting up and running an academy will require extra administrative work particularly in the early stages. However, much of this will be taken on between the administrative staff at Welton and the MSNSP schools. The Senior

Leaders at our school will continue to be fully focused on delivering high quality teaching and learning.

How will the school be accountable financially?

We will be governed by the rules and regulations for charitable trusts so we will be required to produce and file annual accounts, as part of the Multi-Academy Trust.

What is the Local Authority view on academies?

Academy status offers schools an opportunity to develop a new relationship with the Local Authority with the Local Authority becoming the commissioner and schools the providers of education. We envisage that we will continue to work very closely with the Local Authority.

Does the loss of the current role with the Local Authority leave us on our own?

As a successful school for many years we have not relied on the support of the LA as much as many other schools. We will still be in a position to buy in the LA services as and when required rather than being tied in, or alternatively, look elsewhere if we feel there are better service providers. As we develop stronger partnerships within the MSNSP, we will definitely not be on our own.

What will be the future responsibility of the governors?

The key responsibilities will remain very much as they are at the current time:

- Ensure the quality of educational provision
- Challenge and monitor the performance of the academy
- Manage the finances and property
- Employ staff

Will the structure of the Governing Body change?

The structure will be maintained as it is now, with a balance of Governors.

What is a MAT?

A Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is governed by one trust and a single board of directors. There are representatives from each school on the Trust Board. The MAT would have local governing bodies for each of its academies, which would continue to work in much the same way as now.

What would our partnership with MSNSP look like as a MAT?

Representatives from both the schools in the current MSNSP and Welton Primary School would be on the MAT Trust Board. The Trust Board would be

responsible for policy and the strategic vision of the MAT. The Trust Board would delegate the strategic responsibilities for education, finance and premises to the local governing bodies of the MSNSP schools and Welton. Welton will retain their Headteacher.

Can you revert to LA control once you have become an academy?

The rules from the DfE state that a school would be required to maintain its academy status for at least 7 years.

What support will there be for children with special educational needs?

SEN support for children with statements/EHC plans and 'Looked After children' will still be provided by the LA who have a statutory responsibility for this and would continue to monitor us to ensure that we are doing all we should.

Do we need, or are we seeking a sponsor for the school to become an academy?

As a 'good' school we do not need a sponsor. As a charitable trust we would be entitled to receive donations to school funds.

Will the school still have Ofsted inspections?

Academies are subject to exactly the same system of Ofsted inspections as Local Authority Maintained Schools.

Has the decision to convert to academy status already been taken?

The legal process to becoming an academy has started with a special resolution, made by the Governing Body, to make an application to convert. This has triggered a full consultation across the school community. A final decision to convert will only be taken once the consultation has been concluded. It is feasible that the governors could reverse their current thinking if information came to light which made it not in the best interest of the children and the school.

If the governors decide to convert when would it happen?

We have indicated in our application a conversion date by the start of the next academic year.

Who are we consulting with?

We are consulting with parents and carers, staff and their representatives, the children, the Local Authority, other local schools, local community groups and any other interested parties.

Why do we need to change?

We don't *need* to change. However, in the current financial and educational climate, where the landscapes of primary education are rapidly changing, we feel that we would like to be in control of our own destiny, especially if the government decides to force every school to become an academy and then chooses who they will partner up with.

The majority of smaller schools in our Local Authority are facing the potential need to federate with other schools, with many already having gone down this route. This would mean sharing a Headteacher with another school. We do not feel that this would be the best outcome for our school.

The Governors feel that the opportunity to become an equal partner in the MSNSP directly benefits the children at Welton, both currently and in the future.

Where can I find out more about academies?

There is a large amount of information available from the Department for Education and the Independent Academies Association. Please note the difference between schools that are being required by government to become academies, and those successful schools, like our school, which are positively opting to become academies.

Have members of staff been consulted?

We are consulting with the staff. Some meetings have been held already.

Will staff terms and conditions of employment change?

Staff will transfer across under normal TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) rules. Terms and conditions would remain the same. In the future we would have the freedom to enhance terms and conditions if it was thought appropriate.

Do the school leadership and governing body have the capacity and expertise to take on the additional responsibilities of academy status?

The governing body has a wealth of professional expertise which it adds to that of the school leadership. The MSNSP already contain four academies and they have the required knowledge to complement our existing skills base.