



WOODLANDS SCHOOL

26th February 2021

Reference: Joining an Academy

Dear Parent / Carer,

As you may already be aware Woodlands School have started conversations with the local authority with a view that The Marches Academy Trust will sponsor Woodlands School as we convert to an academy. Further information about what becoming an academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

Will Woodlands School definitely become an Academy?

Woodlands School is working towards conversion by 1st April 2021. However, the conversion will only occur when The Marches Academy Trust and the Department for Education sign what is known as the Funding Agreement.

The academy trust will not sign the Funding Agreement until parents and carers of pupils at the school, staff, pupils and other members of the school community have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. We plan to hold a meeting in due course and will keep you informed throughout the process.

Any comments or representations which are made about the proposals will be considered by the academy trust before a decision is taken to sign the Funding Agreement. Details on how to provide comments and representations are set out below. The academy trust will not sign the Funding Agreement unless they are content that conversion would be in the best interests of the school taking into account all the legal and practical ramifications.

What is an academy?

An academy is essentially an independent school which is funded by the state. It is independent of the local authority and receives its funding direct from central government. It is proposed that Woodlands School will become an academy as part of The Marches Academy Trust. This means that the school will be part of an academy group, to which other schools may join in the future.

Why The Marches Academy Trust?

Academy chains are not new and there are a number of academy trusts operating across the country, some small and some large. The Marches Academy Trust will provide advice and support to Woodlands School.

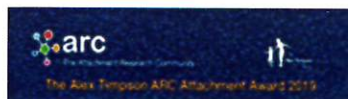
What are the benefits of being an academy?

In the school's opinion the benefits are numerous:

- Academies are independent of local authority control – this means that academies have more freedom about how they conduct themselves
- Academies receive their funding direct from central government – this means that academies have more autonomy on how their funding is spent in order to directly benefit pupils
- Academies have more freedom over the curriculum taught – this means that academies do not need to teach parts of the National Curriculum which they do not consider appropriate for pupils
- Academies are independent and so have more freedom to undertake innovative projects, such as setting up and utilising trading subsidiaries

Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?

The Marches Academy Trust will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety and property maintenance; however, as mentioned above, academies receive more funding from central government to help them meet these additional costs.



Woodlands School

Tilley Green, Wem,
Shropshire, SY4 5PJ

Tel: 01939 232372

Email: admin@woodlands.school

Web: www.woodlands.school



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Will the admissions arrangements change?

The current admission arrangements will remain in place for the time being. If the academy wanted to change its admission arrangements consultation would be required.

Will there be any changes to staffing?

If the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by the school will automatically transfer to the new academy on their current terms and conditions. Although the academy will have more freedom to amend those terms and conditions in the future, the school does not intend to take such a step in the foreseeable future and, in any event, any change to pay and conditions would need to be consulted upon with staff representatives.

Will Woodlands School change?

We do not intend to change Woodlands School except in ways which we think will improve the school even more. For pupils it is unlikely that they will see much, if any, change in their day-to-day school lives. Academies do have the power to vary their curriculums and vary the length of the school day; however, it is not intended to take any such steps at this stage, and would we engage with parents/carers, staff and pupils if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future.

How can I find out more?

A meeting will be held at the school on **5th March 2021 at 9:00am**. We would encourage you to attend if you have any questions, or simply want to learn more.

Details to log into the virtual meeting are below:

Topic: Consultation - Woodlands School

Time: Mar 5, 2021 09:00 AM London

Link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73308160112?pwd=akM0ZCtjQVhoRmVaMG5yK3NsZGsydz09>

Meeting ID: 733 0816 0112

Passcode: VMbG38

There is also information about academies on the DfE website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

If you cannot find the answer to your question on the DfE website, and cannot attend the meeting, please email Mrs Finch, CEO of Marches Academy Trust - ceo@mmat.org.uk

How can I make representations?

The closing date for comments is **Sunday 14th March 2021**.

Representations can be made by:

- Completing the electronic survey – if you would like to complete the survey electronically, please email admin@woodlands.school and we will email you the link
- Completing a hard copy of the survey (copy enclosed) and returning it to;
Mrs Sarah Finch, CEO, The Marches Academy Trust, Morda Road, Oswestry, SY11 2AR
- Or emailing ceo@mmat.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Jules Taylor
Headteacher



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Tilley Green, Wem,
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Woodlands School – Academy Conversion Consultation Survey

Are you a:

Pupil at Woodlands School

Parent/carer of a child at Woodlands School

Member of staff at Woodlands School

Other

Please advise _____

1. Are you in support of Woodlands School becoming an Academy?

YES

NO

Do not have an opinion either way

2. Are you in support of The Marches Academy Trust being the Trust that Woodlands School joins?

YES

NO

Do not have an opinion either way

3. Please provide us with any comments below:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please return to: **Sarah Finch, CEO, The Marches Academy Trust, Morda Road, Oswestry, SY11 2AR**

Or return to school reception.

