



Kinver Primary Federation



5 November 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

Proposed Conversions to Academy Status

As you may already be aware, the Governing Board of Kinver Primary Federation has applied to convert Foley Infant and Brindley Heath Junior Schools to Academies, under the Academies Act 2010. The Governing Board is now consulting on whether the academy conversions should take place. Further information about what becoming an Academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

When will the conversion of Foley Infant School and Brindley Heath Junior School take place?

The Governing Board submitted an application to convert each school to Academy status earlier this year and is working towards conversions in April 2019. However, the schools are not obliged to become Academies until the contract between the Academy Trust and the Department for Education ("DfE") (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed. The Governing Board has not yet begun to negotiate the Funding Agreements with the DfE.

The Governing Board will not agree to sign the Funding Agreements until the parents and carers of pupils at the schools, staff at the schools, and pupils themselves have had the opportunity to comment on whether the conversions should take place. This letter is being sent to all parents and carers at both schools and there are details below of a meeting scheduled for Thursday 6 December at 6.30pm at Brindley Heath Junior School, at which you will have the opportunity to learn more about the proposals to become Academies, and/or to comment on the proposals.

We have also held meetings with staff and will be keeping pupils informed throughout the process.

Any comments or representations which are made about the proposals will be considered by the Governing Board before a decision is taken to sign the Funding Agreements. Details of how to provide comments and representations are set out below.

Please be assured that the Governing Board will not agree to sign the Funding Agreements unless they are content that conversions would be in the best interests of both the schools, taking into account 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.

Under the Academies Act 2010, all schools can become Academies. Whilst there is no longer a compulsion to convert to Academy status, the lack of financial and curriculum support from the Local Authority coupled with the availability of alternative funding streams and support for

academies, has led the Governing Board to look to conversion.

The DfE prefer that schools convert to academy status within a Multi-Academy Trust ("MAT") so that the academies can support each other within the Trust. The Governing Board have researched at length suitable MATs into which to convert. There are very few MATs that are focused on primary only education and it is difficult to find schools that share our vision and values. However, the Governing Board consider that they have been extremely fortunate to find Manor MAT, who are looking for additional schools to join them. Manor is an existing multi-academy Trust currently comprising five schools, all primary, infant or junior.

Further information regarding Manor can be found at:
<https://www.manormultiacademytrust.co.uk>.

Anita Cliff, the CEO of Manor MAT will be speaking at the meeting on 6 December and will answer any questions you may have.

What are the benefits of being an Academy?

In the schools' 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 control more of their funding because none is retained by the Local Authority for the provision of central services;
- **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 is appropriate for their pupils;
- **Academies can set their own pay and conditions of service for their staff** – Academies have the freedom to alter the pay and conditions of their staff (subject to normal employment law protections for staff) and so can provide staff with better pay and conditions than previously;
- **Academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects** – Academies are charitable companies 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?

As part of a Multi Academy Trust, the Trust we will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety, and property maintenance. However, as mentioned above, Academies receive slightly more funding from central Government to help them meet these additional costs.

Will the admissions arrangements change?

As community schools, the admission arrangements for Foley and Brindley are set by the Local Authority, and the Local Authority also decides which pupils should be offered places at the schools. As an Academy, we will be able to put in place our own admission arrangements and decide which pupils should be offered places in accordance with those arrangements. The Academy will still be bound by the national Admissions Code, and Admissions Appeals Code.

The current admission arrangements will remain in place for the time being. If the Academies wished to change their admission arrangements, further consultation would be required.

How are staff affected?

If the schools convert to Academies within Manor Multi-Academy Trust, all staff currently employed by the Local Authority will automatically transfer to the Multi-Academy Trust on their current pay and conditions. Although the MAT will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, the Governing Board 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 the schools change?

We want both schools to continue as they are, rated as good schools but aiming towards Outstanding. It is the view of the Governing Board that joining Manor MAT will give both schools the opportunities and training that they need to achieve outstanding status.

For students, 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, but this is not intended at this stage and we would, of course, engage with parents and carers, staff and students before making any such change in the future.

How can I find out more?

A meeting will be held at **Brindley Heath Junior School** on **Thursday 6 December at 6.30pm**. We would encourage you to attend if you have any questions, or simply want to learn more.

There is also more information about Academies on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

If you have any queries regarding the conversion and are unable to attend the meeting on 6 December, please email Hattie Grove on hgrove@kpf.staffs.sch.uk, who will seek to assist, if she is able.

How can I make representations?

If you wish to make any representations regarding the proposed conversions, please write to:

Hattie Grove
Kinver Primary Federation
c/o Brindley Heath Junior School
Enville Road
Kinver
DY7 6AA

Or send your representations by email to: hgrove@kpf.staffs.sch.uk

The closing date for receipt of representations is **12pm, Wednesday 12 December 2018**.

We hope to see you at the meeting on 6 December.

Yours faithfully,



IR **Ian Rumble**
Chair of Governors

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