



Coddington C of E Primary and Nursery School

7 November 2022

Letter from the Chair of Governors to open consultation regarding Coddington C of E Primary School (“the School”) conversion to Academy status

Further to my communication of 2 November, in which I outlined the recommendation of the governors that the School should begin the process of converting to academy status, I write to confirm that the consultation process regarding whether the school’s conversion to academy status should take place will open on Friday 11th of November.

In this letter you will find information about why we have started this process and additional details about the consultation process itself and how you can contribute to the consultation. Please take a moment to read this information, which is also available on the School website (www.coddingtoncofeprimary.com/academy). Details of how to respond to our consultation are given at the end of this letter.

As I mentioned in my previous letter, if the School were to convert to Academy status, it would wish to do so as part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). Governors feel that this is the right thing for the School because they believe passionately in local people/Governors being in control of their own destiny to realise the benefits of collaboration for everyone concerned.

What does the consultation involve?

During the consultation we will be communicating with students, staff, parents and carers of current and future students, the local community and other stakeholders of the School, with the consultation period beginning on **Friday 11th November 2022 and ending on Friday 16th December 2022.**

Will The School definitely become an Academy?

No, the final decision has not yet been taken and will not take place till after the consultation period has ended. Whilst the Governing Body is in the process of submitting an initial application to convert to Academy Status, the School is not obligated to become an Academy until the contract between the Governing Body and the Department for Education (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed. The Governing Body has not started to negotiate the Funding Agreement with the Department for Education as yet. The Governing Body will not sign a Funding Agreement until all interested parties have been consulted and their views considered.

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 directly from the Central Government. Previously, Academies have tended to replace schools which have poor results or otherwise needed to improve significantly. However, under the Academies Act 2010, all schools are able to become Academies. The education system as a whole is moving in this direction and this was reinforced by a government White Paper in March 2022 ([‘Opportunity for all Strong schools with great teachers for your child’](#)) which stated that all schools must convert to an academy by 2030. Whilst there is no rush to convert given the government deadline (and given how far along the

journey the education system has come it is highly unlikely that a change in government would mean a change in this policy), Governors feel that we must consider the best interests of the School and the ability to make our own decision rather than it becoming one of necessity further down the line. It is not a decision which has been taken lightly and has been under discussion for a while, even prior to the white paper. We must consider carefully whether converting would be in the best interests of our students – both present and future.

What are the benefits of being an Academy?

- Academies are free from Local Authority control – this means that Academies have more freedom over how they conduct themselves
- The ethos and identity of the School would be preserved
- Academies receive their funding from the Central Government – this means that Academies receive more funding because none of it is retained by the Local Authority for provision of central services.
- Academies have more freedom over the curriculum taught – this means that, if they wish, academies do not need to teach parts of the National Curriculum which they do not consider appropriate for their students.
- Academies can set their own pay and conditions of service for their staff – they have the freedom to alter the pay and conditions of their staff (subject to normal employment law protections for staff) and therefore can provide staff with better pay and conditions than previously offered, should they choose to. It is the expressed intention of the Governors that no current member of staff will be worse off as a result of the conversion, should it go ahead.

What are the compelling reasons for joining Minster Trust for Education (MITRE)?

- We would be able to protect the ethos and identity of the School in MITRE. MITRE is not a corporate trust which would rebrand the School in its own image.
- By joining MITRE we would have a strong degree of protection and cooperation from other schools who have the same ethos as we do.
- Because MITRE is accountable for the outcomes of all the students in the partnership, it can be an excellent mechanism for ensuring that support and challenge are directed to where they are needed most.
- We would be creating structures to help sustain and strengthen the partnership work of the school by working with like minded schools and partners.
- Schools within MITRE work collaboratively to improve provision and standards for students
- The central funding agreement can make it easier to pool resources and achieve economies of scale in contracting.
- By joining MITRE we would be one of less than 10 schools (at present) as opposed to one of almost 200 schools within the Local Authority area. Everything would be more bespoke to us rather than something which was dictated by the Local Authority.
- We have been working very closely with MITRE for almost 12 months and have had the opportunity to check whether this is the right MAT for the School and whether our values align or not. Governors feel that the opportunity to work with MITRE over these months has given us greater insight, the opportunity to effectively “try before you buy” has been invaluable which is why we are recommending joining MITRE. The support and assistance provided to the School over the last year by MITRE has been beneficial for all concerned.

Other issues regarding becoming an Academy

As an Academy, we would be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety and property maintenance. As mentioned above, Academies receive more funding from the Central Government to help them to meet these additional costs, which would allow us to buy services from the very best providers, including the Local Authority.

Will admissions arrangements change?

As an Academy, we would deal with our own admissions but would still be bound by the National Admissions Code. If, in the future, the Academy wished to change its admission arrangements, consultation would be required. As a Church of England voluntary aided school, our current offer of places to students on the grounds of faith will not be affected by academy status.

Will the staff terms and conditions change?

If the School converts to an Academy, all staff currently employed by the School will transfer to the new Academy on their current pay and conditions. Although Academies have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions, the Governing Body of the School is supportive of current pay and conditions.

Will The School change?

Any school is constantly looking at how it can improve, and we are no different. However, in terms of our School's ethos, values and character, I can assure you that nothing would change. We would not be looking to change our name, uniform or logo. Our school holiday patterns and school year would remain unaffected. For the students and staff, it is unlikely that they would see much, if any, change to their daily routines.

The Consultation Process

There will be a number of opportunities for you to express your views about the move to Academy status, as outlined below:

Monday 28 November 2022, 6.30pm in the School main hall – public open session. All are welcome to this open meeting. Representatives of MITRE will also be in attendance to answer any queries you may have.

Students will also be kept informed through assemblies and through representatives of the school parliament.

Further information is available on the School website www.coddingtoncofeschool.com

To respond to this consultation on whether the conversion of the school to academy status should take place, representations can only be considered by governors if made in writing to:

Coddington C of E School

Brownlows Hill

Coddington

NG24 2QA

Please mark your envelope 'Coddington School Academy Consultation'

Or by email to: academyconsultation@coddington.notts.sch.uk

Although individual responses will not be sent, all representations will be considered by governors.

How can I find out more?

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

The closing date for representations to be made, and the end of the consultation process, is **Midday on Friday 16th December 2022.**

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Evans".

Sarah Evans

Chair of Governors