FRANCHE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Consultation report on the proposal to convert to an academy school and join The Rivers CofE Academy Trust.

Issue Date: 10 June 2026

Version: v1

1. **Background**

The school's Governing Board and Senior Leaders have been exploring options for potential conversion to an Academy as part of a Multi Academy Trust. Having considered a number of different trusts the Governing Board agreed to move to formal consultation to consider joining The Rivers CofE Academy Trust.

The Governing Boad are considering conversion to further enhance the school and create new opportunities for staff, pupils and our wider community. Joining a Trust is not a decision taken lightly, but it does present many positive opportunities including;

- increased financial stability to protect the school in the current economic climate and challenges faced by the sector,
- the ability to access lower costs for some essential services and equipment by using combined purchasing.
- strong networking and collaboration opportunities for our staff,
- access to wider and increased professional development opportunities for staff,
- enhanced and effective Central Support Services (e.g. estates and facilities, HR, finance, IT),
- primary-age specific support within a large community of schools, and
- greater opportunities for enrichment for pupils and collaborative activities with other Trust schools.

We therefore undertook a statutory consultation as per Section 10 of the Education Act 2010 to provide all stakeholders with an opportunity to find out more information about the preferred Trust, ask questions and share their views with us.

2. Process

- The consultation took place between 3 February and 27 March 2026. The closure date was extended from 17 March to offer stakeholders more opportunity to respond.

- The school's website was updated to publicise the consultation process.

- Stakeholders were invited to take part in the consultation in the following ways:

    - Verbal feedback at various meetings (see below for details)

    - Online: See Appendix A for a screenshot of the form

    - By email to: office@francheprimary.worcs.sch.uk

    - By post to: Franche Community Primary School, Chestnut Grove, Kidderminster, DY11 5QB

- Letters were sent to all staff, parents and a wide group of stakeholders to seek their views on the proposal. See Appendix B for a list of the stakeholders.

- Two face-to-face consultation sessions were held for staff at the school on 11 February 2026, at 3.30pm and 5.30pm. These meetings were hosted by the Headteacher and included a presentation from Matt Meckin, CEO of the Rivers CofE

Academy Trust who was joined by other senior members of the Trust. There was a Question and Answer session at the end.

- Two face-to-face consultation sessions were held for parents and other stakeholders at the school on 24 February 2026, at 2pm and 6pm. These meetings were hosted by the Headteacher and included a presentation from Matt Meckin, CEO of the Rivers CofE Academy Trust who was joined by other senior members of the Trust. There was a Question and Answer session at the end.

- Ten staff members have visited two three Rivers' schools during the period between March and May and given feedback to Franche leaders and staff.

- 6 parents from Franche (some PTA, SEND forum and some that attended the consultation sessions) visited a Rivers' school on 15th April to have a tour and meet some other parents. They met the HT and Chair of the BG to give feedback.

3. Summary Consultation Feedback

The feedback received was as follows:

1. Online and paper:
    a. 124 responses received, of which 94 were in favour of the proposal, i.e. 76%; 29 against (23%); and 1 'unsure' (0.8%)

2. Respondents:
    a. 42 responses were from members of staff; 81 responses from parents/carers; and 1 response from a parent who is also a staff member

3. Feedback from staff meetings:
    a. See Appendices D & E for updated FAQ lists
    b. Some of the general themes of discussions were around technology, curriculum, terms and conditions, SEND service level agreements and use of teaching assistants.

4. Feedback from parent and stakeholder meetings:
    a. See Appendices D & E for updated FAQ lists
    b. Some of the general themes of discussions was around PTA, SEND, headteacher decision making, WRAP care, lunch/kitchen, swimming pool, early years/TOTS, personal development, impact on pupils, governance and curriculum.

5. Feedback from the local authority
    a. See Appendix C

4. Detailed Consultation Feedback

4.1 Comments raised by those **in favour** of the proposal, with responses:

a. I would like to know whether the Senior leaders will still have control of their budget and can make decision for spend to suit the needs of their own pupils and context.

- *Response: When a school joins the trust, it continues to receive funding for its pupils so it can meet the needs of children and families. Over time, once the school is fully part of the trust, its main funding is managed alongside other trust schools. This helps the trust share resources fairly and provide extra support where it's needed, while making sure every school is properly funded. Funding for pupil premium and SEND is not shared and continues to go directly to the school based on pupils' needs.*

b. A review of support staff contracts should be considered if we move to an academy to ensure that staff doing the same roles across all the schools in the trust are paid the same.

- *Response: This review and discussion will take place as part of the TUPE consultation.*

c. But... I don't feel like I have had enough time or enough information to make this decision.

- *Response: Further information will be provided over the next few months. Also, subject to approval of a decision to convert to academy status, a formal staff TUPE consultation process will be undertaken which will address any staff working implications.*

d. I believe that working within an academy will bring further expertise, support and opportunities for staff and children. Rivers feels a good fit and the staff I have met have given me more confidence that this will be a positive move for Franche.

e. It would have been beneficial if I could have had a longer time from receiving the questionnaire to having to complete it to fully consider all aspects of the conversion.

- *Response: The consultation took place between 3 February and 27 March 2026. The closure date was extended from 17 March to offer stakeholders more opportunity to respond.*

f. Still waiting for the answers to the questions posed in the earlier questionnaire.

- *Response: See Appendices D & E for updated FAQ lists.*

g. I am hopeful it will improve the school. For pupils staff and parents.

h. Your explanations seem to answer a lot of the questions that may be circulating, I hope that things do not change too much.

i. Uncontrollable children being rewarded for bad behaviour while the good children's education is affected.

   - *Response: See appendix D and E*

j. I have answered yes, and I would be happy for this to happen if it was positive for the staff and pupils. My questions would be:

   - Will the cost of TOTS increase for parents? Will parents still be able to access the funding in the same way? I appreciate that rivers is also not for profit, but will those who have to pay for additional provision see an increase during already tight Financial Times?

     - *Response: The Rivers CofE Academy Trust is a primary specialist trust and place a strong emphasis on WRAP and early years, working within the early years Government guidelines for funding. Rivers value education starting from an early age and have expertise to support it. They also have a school with provision for babies and all schools provide an extended WRAP service, including during holidays. The cost of TOTS will not increase for parents as a result of conversion.*

   - Will staff remain on the same terms and conditions and have they been consulted? The staff at the nursery are very friendly and I would hate to lose any due to changes in circumstances.

     - *Response: Subject to approval of a decision to convert to academy status, a formal staff TUPE consultation process will be undertaken which will address any staff working implications. As part of TUPE, all staff are entitled to transfer across to the academy under their current contract and terms & conditions.*

   - Are there any changes being made to school uniform, as you can imagine, we will all be purchasing new uniform ready for September so it would be good to know… what would be required moving forward.

     - *Response: The school uniform will remain the same. There is no expectation for families to purchase new items, and there are no plans to change the current uniform.*

   - I hope this doesn't affect the TOTS provision and prices don't increase as they do in most academies.

     - *Response: The cost of TOTS will not increase for parents as result of conversion.*

4.2 Comments raised by those **not in favour** of the proposal, with responses:

a. How does the Trust ensure integrity when members of staff at Franche heard from staff at other Rivers schools that we were becoming an Academy before we were informed?

- *Response: Franche have been working in an informal partnership since September 2024. If anyone has made an assumption that Franche are joining Rivers, it would not be accurate. The Governing Body are yet to make a final decision and due process is being followed.*

b. What decisions will move to the central Trust board?

- *Response: The Academy Trust (which is a charitable company) is responsible for all the schools within the Trust. Local Advocates facilitate local governance and test out on the ground what it is like to be a pupil, parent and staff member at the school. The Local Advocates report back to the Trust Board on key matters at a local level, including how well the school is doing and how well the trust is serving the school.*

- *Academy Trust Boards, via the Central Team, are responsible for the pupil outcomes and school improvement, curriculum quality, safeguarding oversight, SEND provision and inclusion, attendance and behaviour standards, set budgets across schools, ensure value for money, handle audit, compliance, and financial controls and submit accounts and annual reports*

c. Will Lizzie still have autonomy over the school?

- *Response: The existing leadership team, including the headteacher, will continue to manage the school, supported by the wider expertise of The Rivers CofE Academy Trust.*

d. What is the Trust's expectation of Teachers on the UPS?

- *Response: The Trust's expectations of teachers on the Upper Pay Range (UPR) are set out in the Development Review Protocol and the Pay Policy. In summary, UPR teachers are expected to::*
  • Consistently meet the Teachers' Standards at a highly competent level.
  • Make a substantial and sustained contribution beyond their own classroom, including supporting colleagues and contributing to school improvement priorities.
  • Engage fully in professional development and the Trust's coaching and review process.

  Progression onto the UPR from the Main Pay Range is application based and evidence-led. However, once a teacher is on the UPR, progression within the range is annual and expected where appraisal outcomes remain successful and the criteria continue to be met.*

  **The trust has broken down the UPR range to 5 points to enable an annual, rather than biannual, increment for staff within this range*

  Progression within the Main Pay Range is also automatic. The Trust values the expertise and leadership that UPR teachers bring, and the

framework is designed to recognise and support that contribution rather than create unnecessary barriers.

e. How long do Head Teachers typically stay in post after Academy conversion?

- *Response: There are no changes planned to the school staff as a direct result of joining Rivers. We have a stable staff team who know our community well and this will continue to be the case. As with any school there are sometimes changes as a normal part of school life and individual circumstances.*

f. Will my UPS salary and status be protected indefinitely? Do you have YBL's in other schools and will this role remain indefinitely?

- *Response: Under TUPE regulations, your existing terms and conditions transfer with you. As the Trust follows the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, your UPS salary and status are protected. This protection is not time-limited; it remains in place following transfer.*

  Each school within the Trust operates with its own staffing structure. Roles that transfer under TUPE are protected, and any changes to staffing structures would only ever be made for clear and legitimate business reasons, following the appropriate consultation processes.

  The Trust does have UPS teachers (including YBLs) in other schools, and these roles continue where they are part of the school's staffing structure and educational needs.

g. Ahead of conversion, can we be given (or will we be given) the Trusts pay policy, teaching and learning framework and leadership structure diagram?

- *Response: Yes. We these will all be provided and shared with staff.*

h. If roles are harmonised later across the Trust, what happens to existing allowances / roles?

- *Response: there are no current plans to harmonise roles across Rivers and through TUPE consultation, if inequalities are found in terms and conditions, then staff will be consulted with to ensure that no role is disadvantaged at Franche in comparison to Rivers.*

i. Will my subject leadership role extend across other schools. Do I have a say in this happening if it was offered?

- *Response No this does not happen. There are trust-wide roles that sometimes come available and they are open to staff from all schools with relevant experience.:*

j. How has other school staffing and staff turnover changed, after joining the Trust?

- *Response: Each school within the Trust operates with its own staffing structure. Roles that transfer under TUPE are protected, and any changes to staffing structures would only ever be made for clear and legitimate business reasons, following the appropriate consultation processes.*

k. What is in place to support children with SEND / extreme behavioural needs

- *Response: There would be no change, the leaders at Franche would continue to manage, plan and deploy the resources as per the need of our pupils. The Rivers CofE Academy Trust has a strong inclusion team and strategy, enabling us to strengthen our approaches even further.*

l. I didn't want to mark yes or no as I'm really on the fence about what I feel about the conversion. I visited schools under rivers and it was all very positive and at the time I left feeling that I didn't mind either way. But when I think about what I saw etc I don't think it's nothing that couldn't be achieved in tots our only reason for holding us back is financially. But when speaking with little treasures how their finances are managed with running the holiday club and wrap around care is how I believe they should be at Franche but know currently not. I honestly don't know what my answer is yes or no but being an academy may have some positive impact.

- *Response: The Rivers CofE Academy Trust is a primary specialist trust and place a strong emphasis on WRAP and early years. They value education starting from an early age and have expertise to support it. They also have a school with provision for babies and all schools provide an extended WRAP service, including during holidays. The cost of TOTS will not increase for parents.*

m. We love school as it is. We cannot fault the hard work that goes into every aspect we have been part of so far. Please do not change as the Academy chain will then have the over arching decision on all things that matter. No one understands our community as well as you. Do not lose your voice to someone who does not know your school.

- *Response: Franche Community Primary School will retain its name, ethos, and unique character. The Rivers CofE Academy Trust supports schools in maintaining their individuality while benefiting from being part of a wider collaborative community.*

  The Rivers CofE Academy Trust wants schools to have a distinctiveness to serve their unique communities. Franche will continue to have a local vision that enables this to happen. The Trust has a shared mission ('An extraordinary education for every pupil') across all schools and a set of values that unites all pupils and staff. There are clear links between the mission, values and ethos of Rivers and Franche.

  Franche Governing Body will only make the decision to join Rivers if it is in the best interests of pupils and the school community.

n. I believe becoming an academy is just funding corporations. As they look after their shareholders and not the pupils.

- *Response: Trusts do not have shareholders and are not run for profit. Please see appendix D and E for further information about what trusts are and the strict statutory functions they must follow.*

  Joining a strong, primary Academy Trust offers multiple benefits, such as:

  • Primary specific support within a large community of local and regional schools
  • A wealth of collaborative and enrichment experiences for pupils Box car rally, Mathematics Championships, Art projects, Sports competitions • Greater collaboration and shared best practice across schools for staff
  • Primary-age specific support within a large community of local and regional schools
  • Access to wider and increased professional development opportunities for staff
  • Enhanced support services (e.g., estates and facilities, HR, finance, IT) enabling leaders and staff to have added capacity and an even greater focus on Teaching and Learning.
  • Increase in inclusion support
  • Increase in school improvement support
  • Increased opportunities for career progression and/or professional experiences

o. There is no reason for the school to become an academy, the school runs perfectly fine as state run.

p. I think the school is absolutely beautiful as is it, my children are thriving because of it so I'm unsure what the change will bring, I think it's structure and management is already very good.

q. Will it change how the school is run now? if so then no.

Response: Joining a strong, primary Academy Trust offers multiple benefits for Franche as per response to comment 'n' above. Franche Governing Body will only make the decision to join Rivers if it is in the best interests of pupils and the school community. Please also see further information in the questions and answers within appendices D and E.

r. This is a community primary school, I worry that by becoming part of an academy parents voices will not be heard and it will no longer feel like a community school.

- *Response: Franche will retain its 'community' status and ethos whether it joins Rivers or not.*

s. I worry that jobs for support assistants will decrease or get cut.

- *Response: Staffing structures are determined by school leaders based on the needs of pupils and the school, and that does not change through joining a Trust. Decisions about roles, including support assistants, continue to be made locally, with a clear focus on providing the right support for children.*

  Like all schools, there is always a need to balance staffing with affordability, regardless of whether a school is part of a Trust or not. However, being part of a Trust can provide greater stability and support in managing budgets, helping schools to plan sustainably and protect the roles that are most important for pupils.

  There is no intention to reduce valuable support staff. These roles are vital to pupils' learning and wellbeing, and the Trust recognises the important contribution they make every day.

  All primary schools nationally are impacted by birthrate dips and needing to rationalise staffing where pupil numbers are reducing.

t. I worry about a lack of government regulations and the impact this will have on budgets, education and the well-being of staff and pupils.

   - *Response: Academy trusts are subject to strong statutory regulation and oversight. They must follow national requirements set by the Department for Education, including the Academy Trust Handbook, which sets out clear rules on financial management, governance and accountability.*

     This means there are clear expectations around how money is spent, how schools are run and how standards are maintained. Trusts are required to demonstrate value for money, manage budgets responsibly and ensure high-quality education and safeguarding for pupils.

     For staff and pupils, this provides reassurance that there are robust systems in place to protect quality, wellbeing and outcomes. Being part of a Trust does not reduce accountability; it brings a structured and transparent framework that supports schools to operate effectively and sustainably.

u. Not enough information for parents who couldn't attend the meeting.

   - *Response: See Appendices D & E for updated FAQ lists. Please don't hesitate to contact the Headteacher if you have any further queries or concerns.*

v. I think you need to focus on the areas needed for development on last Ofsted rather than focusing on turning into an academy.

   - *Response: Leaders continue to focus on the school development plan, which is inline with the areas of improvement identified in the last Ofsted.*

w. Parents need to feel like they can make an informed decision but I don't feel I can at this stage.

x. Ive heard from teachers of schools who have been converted and parents and all say schools go downhill once becoming an academy. That good staff leave due to conditiins and pay and that schools are heavily encouraged to be profitable resulting in charges made to parents for things like the pool even though its part of school. I have asked lots of others and all have been very bad reports since changing.

- *Response: All staff will transfer under their existing terms and conditions through the TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) process.*

  A significant proportion of schools nationally have joined trusts overtime out of choice and are not failing. These are called 'converter' schools and that is the premise in which Franche is proposing to join Rivers. We recognise the benefits of joining Rivers (as per the response to the comment 'n' above) and can also see where we will be able to add strength to Rivers' collaborative community of schools.

  Please also see the appendices D and E for further reassurances about Rivers and multi-academy trusts.

y. I do not support the proposal for the school to become an academy. The school currently feels very much part of the local community and has a strong sense of its own identity. I appreciate the work that staff and leadership do to create such a positive environment for the children.

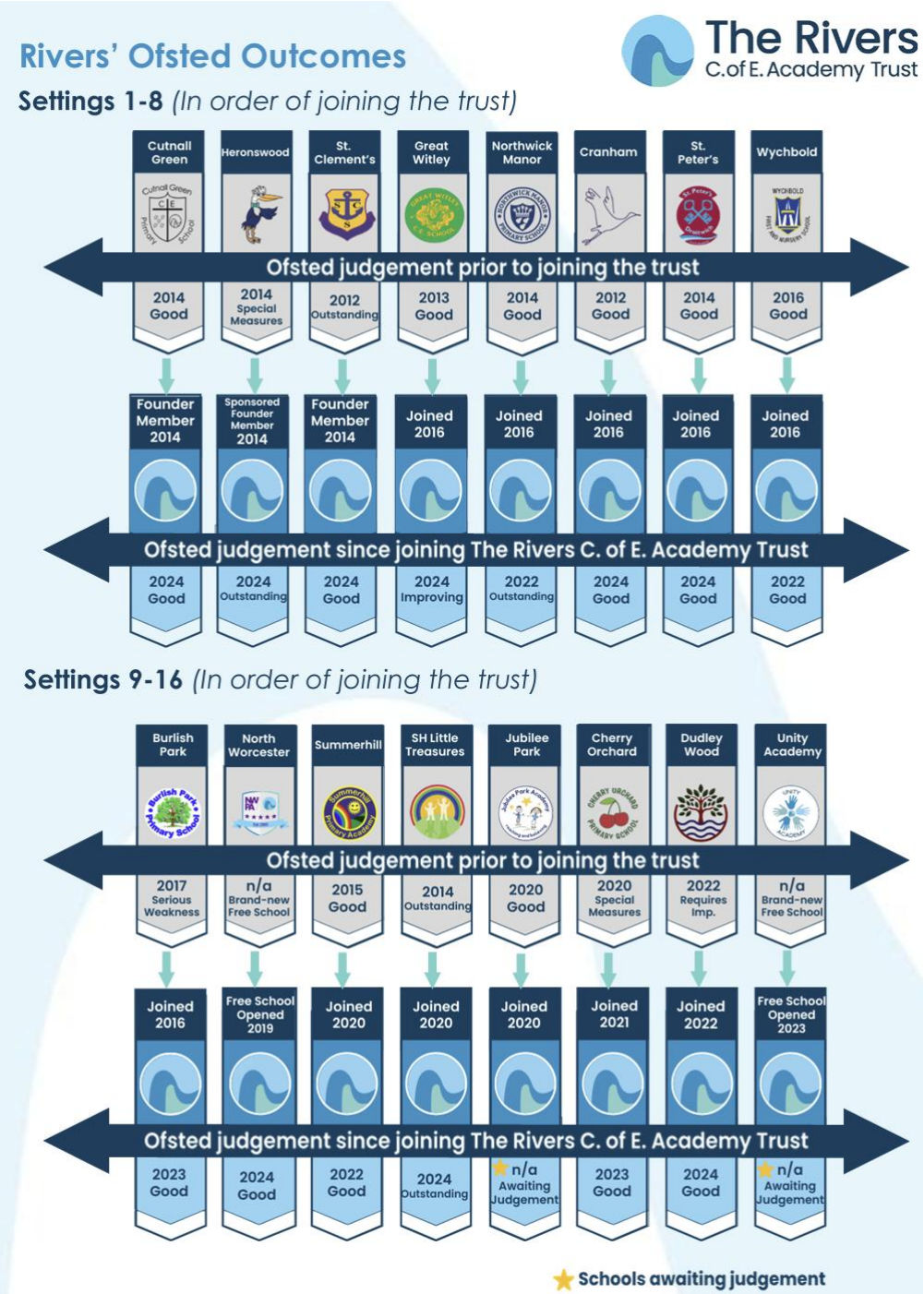
z. My concern is that joining a large multi-academy trust could reduce the school's autonomy and lead to more standardised policies and approaches. I would prefer the school to retain the ability to make decisions that reflect the specific needs of its pupils and community.

  Response: Headteachers within the Trust are empowered and best placed to provided day-to day leadership and management of their schools and thus retain autonomy in that way. Please also see the appendices D and E for further reassurances about Rivers and multi-academy trusts.

aa. The school is fantastic as it is. All those that have turned into academys take the fun out of learning... Don't change what isn't broken. Keep franche the best, fun school that there is.

bb. What are Ofsted outcomes like across the Trust?

- *Response: See below*



4.3 Comments raised at face-to-face consultation sessions were held for staff:

- See Appendices D & E for updated FAQ lists.
- Some of the general themes of discussions were around technology, curriculum, terms and conditions, SEND service level agreements and use of teaching assistants.

4.4 Comments raised at face-to-face consultation sessions were held for parents and other stakeholders:

- See Appendices D & E for updated FAQ lists.
- Some of the general themes of discussions was around PTA, SEND, headteacher decision making, WRAP care, lunch/kitchen, swimming pool, early years/TOTS, personal development, impact on pupils, governance and curriculum.

Note: *Three comments have not been included within this report as they included false, unfair and/or derogatory statements.*

5. Next steps

The outcomes of this consultation will be shared on the school's website, with the Governing Body of Franche Community Primary School, the Board of Trustees of Rivers CofE Trust and the Department for Education (DfE). On the basis of the feedback received as part of this consultation, we will submit a formal proposal to the DfE to seek their approval for Franche Community Primary School to join Rivers CofE Trust.

We hope to hear back from the DfE by end of May 2026, and subject to any consent conditions they may apply, we will then work hard to achieve our ambition for the conversion to take place by the end of the calendar year.

Appendix A - Screenshot of the online feedback form

Franche Community Primary School
Academy Consultation Questionnaire

Academy Conversion Proposal- **please reply by Tuesday 17th March 2026**

* Required

1. Are you a: *

- ◯ Parent or Carer of a pupil attending Franche Community Primary School/TOTS
- ◯ Member of Staff at Franche Community Primary School/TOTS?
- ◯ Pupil of the Franche Community Primary School
- ◯ Other ? Please specify in the comments box

2. Do you agree that Franche Community Primary School should become an Academy in order to enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State*? *

*The funding agreement is the contract every converting school must sign with the Secretary of State for education. It's the formal consent to allow the school to convert and it provides the operating framework for the school, including the commitment to ongoing funding. We are therefore seeking your feedback on whether you support the conversion, and if so, for you to respond accordingly below.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

3. Any other comments or questions:

Appendix B – List of stakeholders consulted with

Stakeholder	Key Contact
Local Nurseries	Kids Planet
	The World Outside
	Kiddy Winks
	Little Folks
	Mayfield House
	Barnabees
	First Class
	Deerhurt
All School Governors	
All Parents/Carers/School/TOTS	
All School Employees, inc. those on leave	
Town Council	
Mayor's Office	
MP	Mark Garnier
WCC Cabinet Member for Education	Stephen Foster
WCC Director of Education	Sarah Wilkins
All WCC Education Staff	Nicky Burford
	Sarah Wilkins Assistant Director for Education, Early Years, Inclusion and Place Planning
	WCC HR
	EnTrust
	Gail Hodett
	SALT
	SES
	SFT
	Denise Hannibal
	SEND Services
	Chestnut Infrastructure
	CCN
	Ed Psych
	Lettings
	Ashley Bennett
	Tracey Wilson
	Jane Howard
	Warwickshire DPO
	Legal Team
	Richard Pill PR Associates
	Governor Services
	Critical Incident Team
	Bosco
WCC Schools	Baxter College
Local Primary Schools-indirect feeder	Birchen Coppice
	Blakedown
	Comberton Primary
	Hersonwood Primary

Stakeholder	Key Contact
	Offmore Primary
	St Catherine's
	St Johns Primary
	St Marys Primary
	St Oswalds Primary
	Sutton Park Primary
	Upper Arley Primary School
	Bewdley High
	Wolverley Secondary
	King Charles
	Holy Trinity
	Hagley Primary
	Foley Park Primary
	Chaddesley Corbett Primary
	Burlish Primary
	Wilden Primary
	Stourport High School
	Wolverley Sebright
	Cookley Primary

Appendix C – Feedback from local authority

worcestershire county council

Sarah Wilkins
Assistant Director for Education Early Years, Inclusion and Place Planning

Wildwood
Wildwood Drive
Worcester
WR5 2QT

Private & Confidential
Mrs E Dixon, Headteacher
and
Mr M Hughes, Chair of Governors
Franche Community Primary School

Date: 17th March 2026
Our Ref: SW/KW

Dear Lizzie and Mark,

Response to formal Consultation to Consider Conversion to and Academy School and join The Rivers CofE Academy Trust

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your consultation to convert to an academy school and join The Rivers Academy Trust.

Land and buildings
The community school site comprises several elements: the main school buildings (former first and middle school site Wyre Forest Review 2007), associated grounds, a swimming pool, Children's Centre accommodation, and a former school house, which I understand is currently used by the Children's Centre (2020).

Estates and Legal have confirmed that a Children's Centre lease was granted by the LA to the Governing Body in 2018, expiring in 2024. Renewal to 2030 was initiated in 2023/24, and a draft renewal lease has been agreed. However, despite multiple chaser emails, the Governing Body has not returned the engrossment, preventing completion of the renewal.

There is a covenant in respect of the recreational ground land (known as White Wickets) next to the school site, which states that this land must only be used for public or private recreational use, playing fields, leisure facilities and other purposes incidental to these. This is not part of the school site.

Condition and Compliance Responsibilities
Upon conversion, the academy trust will assume responsibility for the management and maintenance of the school buildings, including health and safety, statutory compliance, and condition-related needs.

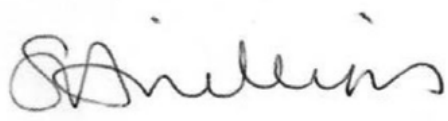
The LA currently has the following capital projects at the school:

- Fire compartmentation works – £50k of LA capital funding has been committed.
- Replace Roofing Phase 4 - Yr 2 – included in capital maintenance programme for 26-27 – budget £125,000

Tel: 01905 846082 • Email: swilkins@worcestershire.gov.uk • www.worcestershire.gov.uk

Given the complexity of the site, a site visit by Estates will be required at the earliest opportunity once confirmation is received that the conversion will proceed.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Wilkins
Assistant Director for Education, Early Years, Inclusion and Place Planning

Appendix D – Updated Frequently Asked Questions list for employees

Franche Community Primary School
Frequently Asked Questions



As Franche Community Primary School starts to consult and consider joining The Rivers CofE Academy Trust, we understand that staff may have questions about what this means for their position and the school. These FAQs aim to provide clear and reassuring information.	
When might this happen?	The 1st October, 2026 is the provisional planned timeframe for conversion. However, before then there are lots of statutory things that need to happen, including checks, due diligence work and consultation before any 'joining' can be considered.
Will the school name change?	**No.** There are no plans to change the name of the school.
The Rivers CofE Trust has Church of England in its name because it began as a CofE Trust. We are a community school and will this have any implications for us as a school?	**No.** Rivers started as a CofE Trust because the founding school was a Church School. Rivers now has far more community schools than Church schools (twelve community schools like us and four Church schools). The trust it's proud of its history and diversity of schools, welcoming pupils, families and staff from all faiths and no faiths. There are no CofE expectations placed on us, but we will be able to gain from Rivers' Church schools' expertise if we do routine developmental work to the statutory National Curriculum subject, Religious Education.
Will there be any changes to the school uniform?	**No.** The school uniform will remain the same. There is no expectation for families to purchase new items, and there are no plans to change the current uniform.
Will our school lose its identity?	**No.** Franche Community Primary School will retain its name, ethos, and unique character. The Rivers CofE Academy Trust supports schools in maintaining their individuality while benefiting from being part of a wider collaborative community.
Will Franche have to change its values and vision?	**No.** The Rivers CofE Academy Trust wants schools to have a distinctiveness to serve their unique communities. Franche will continue to have a local vision that enables this to happen. The Trust has a shared mission ('An extraordinary education for every pupil') across all schools and a set of values that unites all pupils and staff. There are clear links between the mission, values and ethos of Rivers and Franche.

What difference will it make joining The Rivers CofE Academy Trust?	The proposal is designed to secure long-term stability and open up new opportunities for our school. By joining a primary, values-driven, local trust, Franche would continue to thrive while benefiting from greater support, resources and shared expertise. The proposal offers clear educational benefits for pupils and staff, including stronger collaboration, mutual support and an expanded range of high-quality professional development.
What are the benefits of joining The Rivers CofE Trust?	Joining a strong, primary Academy Trust offers multiple benefits, such as: • Primary specific support within a large community of local and regional schools • A wealth of collaborative and enrichment experiences for pupils Box car rally, Mathematics Championships, Art projects, Sports competitions • Greater collaboration and shared best practice across schools for staff • Primary-age specific support within a large community of local and regional schools • Access to wider and increased professional development opportunities for staff • Enhanced support services (e.g., estates and facilities, HR, finance, IT) enabling leaders and staff to have added capacity and an even greater focus on Teaching and Learning. • Increase in inclusion support • Increase in school improvement support • Increased opportunities for career progression and/or professional experiences
Will the curriculum change?	**No.** The curriculum will remain the same but may develop over time like any strong curriculum should. Franche Community Primary School will continue to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum tailored to the needs of our pupils. The trust will work in partnership with us to ensure that we provide the best possible curriculum offer to our children. As the years go by, there may be aspects of the curriculum that evolve through collaboration with other schools in Rivers. Equally, aspects of Franche's curriculum offer might influence curriculum development in Rivers.
Would the school still work with the local authority e.g. Maths & English consultants?	The Franche leadership team will work in partnership with Rivers to determine the most appropriate school improvement support. The Rivers CofE trust have good working relationships with Worcestershire LA.

Will the children access any other opportunities by being part of Rivers?	**Yes.** Rivers place equal importance on pupils' personal development (through enrichment) with high academic standards. In addition to opportunities our pupils already access, they will be involved in collaborative activities with other Rivers' pupils, such as a design and technological project called the Box Car Rally, a mathematics championship, a dance festival, sports competitions, art projects and much more. Eventually, pupils will also be involved in an initiative called 'My Extraordinary Experiences' – 24 things that every pupil experiences before they leave primary school. Because Rivers is an established and successful trust, they also have access to capital grants and expertise to ensure the school building is the best possible learning environment for pupils and staff, including access to resources and computing equipment fit for the 21st century.
How about the length of the school day, school holidays or Teacher Education Days (TED)?	The Rivers CofE Academy Trust has schools in Worcestershire and they follow the agreed Local Authority term dates. There are no plans to change timetables or the length of the school day. They do have an additional TED each year, so if we join it will be six TED and not five. TED dates are aligned across the trust to enable collaboration. However, at least four and often five of these days are protected for school specific focuses.
What about our WRAP care, TOTS and early years?	The Rivers CofE Academy Trust is a primary specialist trust and place a strong emphasis on WRAP and early years. They value education starting from an early age and have expertise to support it. They also have a school with provision for babies and all schools provide an extended WRAP service, including during holidays.
How would SEND resources and interventions be managed under a trust? **When joining a trust does this mean we will lose outreach support and specialist services that we currently access?**	There would be no change, the leaders at Franche would continue to manage, plan and deploy the resources as per the need of our pupils. The Rivers CofE Academy Trust has a strong inclusion team and strategy, enabling us to strengthen our approaches even further. School leaders will still be able to access outreach or specialist services support if they choose to continue to purchase it from their school budget. However, there are a range of services that The Rivers CofE Trust provide from an educational and professional services perspective. Over time, we would work with them to consider any additional specialist support we may need.
As a result of joining The Rivers CofE Academy Trust, will there be staff redundancies?	**No.**
Will there be any changes to school	**No.** Not as a direct result of joining Rivers. We have a stable staff team who know our community well and this will continue to be the

staff?	case. As with any school there are sometimes changes as a normal part of school life and individual circumstances.
Will my pay and conditions change?	**No.** All staff will transfer under their existing terms and conditions through the TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) process, save for any 'measures' that the Rivers CofE Trust stipulate in the TUPE measures. Your salary, pension, and other contractual entitlements will remain unchanged. You will receive further information on this during the TUPE consultation. There will be additional benefits provided for you that will be shared by Rivers at the consultation events in the coming weeks.
Will I still be employed by the school/LA?	You will become an employee of The Rivers CofE Trust, but you will continue to be based at Franche Community Primary School. This will be fully supported through TUPE.
Will changing my employer impact my continuous service?	**No.** Continuous service would be maintained.
Does The Rivers CofE Trust recognise unions?	**Yes** – The Rivers CofE Trust have close links and productive open relationships with unions. There is a Trade Union Recognition Agreement (TURA) in place with six major unions and regular Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meetings take place between the unions and the trust.
Would teachers and leaders still be able to apply for NPQs through The Rivers CofE Trust?	**Yes** – through the trust. The Rivers CofE Trust have a thriving Teaching Alliance where a range of professional learning can be accessed for all roles, including NPQs. The Teaching Alliance also runs provision for Early Career Teachers and for initial teacher training and apprenticeships.
Would staff still be able to apply for apprentice training being part of The Rivers CofE Trust?	**Yes** – through the trust.
Will there be changes to leadership or management?	The existing leadership team will continue to manage the school, supported by the wider expertise of The Rivers CofE Academy Trust.

Will staff have to work across other schools in Rivers?	**No.** Staff will remain based at Franche Community Primary School unless they choose to apply for or undertake a role at another school within the Trust. However, there are cross-trust roles and opportunities that staff can be a part of or apply for.
What does cross-trust working mean, and what are the implications for staff?	Cross-trust working takes place through a number of different ways e.g. online meetings or staff whom have a cross-trust role having meetings in different schools. This may be where a staff member has joined a cross-school collaboration project. This may mean driving to another school or joining a TEAMs meeting, these are planned in advance and travel costs are reimbursed, subject to suitable car insurance. This will likely impact Lizzie the most, followed by senior leaders more than wider staff. No real difference to the travelling senior leaders do currently to attend meetings and training across Worcestershire.
Will we have to attend training or meetings at the other schools or venues in the MAT?	There will be no regular commitment or expectation for staff to attend meetings at the other school sites. Most training and meetings will continue as normal on Franche's site. Sometimes, there will be training or collaborative opportunities at other venues or on Teams. However, part of our decision making was about a trust that is local. The Rivers CofE Trust has schools near us - they operate a learning hub model to enable close and manageable collaboration for leaders, staff and pupils.
Will school policies change?	Some policies may be changed to promote alignment and in recognition of being part of a single employer e.g. with HR policies. The specifics will be discussed as part of the TUPE process.
Will there be changes to our behaviour policy and expectations?	There may be minor changes to policies to align with The Rivers CofE Trust's behaviour policy, which evolves to meet national statutory guidelines. These would be fully shared with staff and parents. The behaviour policy at Franche would continue to meet the needs of our pupils, as it does currently.
Would the systems staff use for assessment and pupil management change under Rivers?	**No.** The strongest management information system in the sector right now is Arbor and the most effective assessment system is Insight. We had already decided to move to are these systems this academic year as other contracts come to an end. Rivers' schools that use both systems do so with great success.
Does Ofsted inspect Academies? Will conversion change our reinspection timeline?	**Yes.** In exactly the same way as for maintained schools. The timeline for reinspection will not change if we convert.

Academy governance - How are academies governed?	The Academy Trust (which is a charitable company) would be responsible for all the schools within the Trust. Local Advocates facilitate local governance and test out on the ground what it is like to be a pupil, parent and staff member at the school. The Local Advocates report back to the Trust Board on key matters at a local level, including how well the school is doing and how well the trust is serving the school.
Will school communication to parents change as part of moving to an Academy? **Will there be any difference for the school's PTA if we become an academy? Including how the money is spent.**	No. The Leadership team at Franche will continue to communicate to parents as they do now. Any changes in the future would be made by Franche's Leadership team. The Rivers CofE Academy Trust produce an annual parents' newsletter to share the impact of the trust's work on pupils and staff. **No.** All Rivers' schools have PTAs and Rivers do not have any involvement in how money is raised and spent. That is up to the PTAs and the leaders in the schools.
What financial benefit does The Rivers CofE Academy Trust get with Franche joining? Is there extra money from the government for the trust?	There is no extra money from the government for The Rivers CofE Academy Trust for Franche joining. The trust works as a Charity and does not make a profit. The trust's mission is 'An extraordinary education for every pupil'. The trust is compelled by a strong moral purpose to ensure support and develop all children to become the best version of themselves, academically and personally. The Trust does not 'make a profit' from schools. The Rivers CofE Academy Trust is an established medium-sized trust with a strong track record of success. Due to this, they have access to capacity for school improvement support which includes working with schools outside of the trust. As a medium sized trust, Rivers receives funding to improve school buildings and outdoor environments. This funding is used for specific improvement projects based on the condition of the buildings and the needs of pupils. All schools in the trust have benefited from investment over time to improve their buildings and learning environments. Franche will also benefit from this investment over time.
Does the school keep its own funding or does the trust keep it and share it out?	Franche would still receive its own General Annual Grant (GAG) funding in the first instance, making sure that the school continues to meet the needs of pupils and the local community. Once the school is gradually aligned with the trust's financial systems and practices it would join the trust's GAG pooling arrangement. Under this arrangement, GAG funding is managed at trust level and distributed to ensure fairness and sustainability across all schools, allowing resources to be targeted where they are most needed. While this means that a portion of funding is not held exclusively by individual schools, the trust ensures that no school is unfairly impacted by the approach. This will result in additional funding for

	Franche when it is needed the most. Funding for pupil premium and SEND is not included in the GAG pooling and continues to be allocated directly to schools based on pupil numbers and need.
What are the next steps for Franche if, after consultation and Governing Board review it is decided that joining Rivers is not right?	The Governing Board would re-convene and consider based on feedback received through Consultation what are the barriers identified for not joining Rivers and therefore whether academy conversion is still a consideration for the school. The Governing Board would then review all options, including remaining as a LA Maintained School and decide how best to proceed. Any future decision to formally explore academy conversion would be carried out in exactly the same way with a further consultation period.
Further questions received	
I would like to know whether the Senior leaders will still have control of their budget and can make decision for spend to suit the needs of their own pupils and context.	See the originally published Q and As.
What decisions will move to the central Trust board?	The trust board make key strategic decisions that impact the whole trust – all schools, staff and pupils. The board is made up of highly skilled and experienced trustees with knowledge and background in education, finance, cyber security, safeguarding, HR, legal and IT. The trust leadership group (made of headteachers and trust executive leaders) strongly advise, shape and recommend strategy to the board. There are also several key decisions that heads and executive leaders are empowered to make. The scheme of delegation is on Rivers' website and sets out the detail of decisions made at board level. It is available here: The Rivers C. of E. Academy Trust - Governance
Will Lizzie still have autonomy over the school?	See answer in Rivers' presentation and the originally published Q and As. Heads are empowered and best placed to provided day-to-day leadership and management of their schools.
What is the Trusts expectation of Teachers on the UPS?	The Trust's expectations of teachers on the Upper Pay Range (UPR) are set out in the Development Review Protocol and the Pay Policy. In summary, UPR teachers are expected to: • Consistently meet the Teachers' Standards at a highly competent level. • Make a substantial and sustained contribution beyond their own classroom, including supporting colleagues and contributing to school improvement priorities. • Engage fully in professional development and the Trust's coaching and review process. Progression onto the UPR from the Main Pay Range is application-based and evidence-led. However, once a teacher is on the UPR, progression within the range is annual* and expected where appraisal outcomes remain successful and the criteria continue to

	be met. *The trust has broken down the UPR range to 5 points to enable an annual, rather than biannual, increment for staff within this range Progression within the Main Pay Range is also automatic. The Trust values the expertise and leadership that UPR teachers bring, and the framework is designed to recognise and support that contribution rather than create unnecessary barriers.
Will my UPS salary and status be protected indefinitely? Do you have YBL's in other schools and will this role remain indefinitely?	Under TUPE regulations, your existing terms and conditions transfer with you. As the Trust follows the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, your UPS salary and status are protected. This protection is not time-limited; it remains in place following transfer. Each school within the Trust operates with its own staffing structure. Roles that transfer under TUPE are protected, and any changes to staffing structures would only ever be made for clear and legitimate business reasons, following the appropriate consultation processes. The Trust does have UPS teachers (including YBLs) in other schools, and these roles continue where they are part of the school's staffing structure and educational needs.
What are Ofsted outcomes like across the Trust?	100% good or better schools.
Ahead of conversion, can we be given (or will we be given) the Trusts pay policy, teaching and learning framework and leadership structure diagram?	Yes. We these will all be provided and shared with you.
Will my subject leadership role extend across other schools. Do I have a say in this happening if it was offered?	No this does not happen. There are trust-wide roles that sometimes come available and they are open to staff from all schools with relevant experience.
Will our continuous service be honoured for calculating redundancy, maternity leave and sick pay?	See previous F A Q
Are there any planned changes to our working conditions, hours or duties either immediately or in the future?	See previous F A Q
Will support staff retain their membership in the local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)?	Yes. There are no changes to pension scheme membership for either teachers or support staff.
Will the trust secure 'admitted body' status to protect rights for support staff?	Yes. The trust already has admitted body status.
I worry that jobs for support assistants	Staffing structures are determined by school leaders based on the

will decrease or get cut.	needs of pupils and the school, and that does not change through joining a Trust. Decisions about roles, including support assistants, continue to be made locally, with a clear focus on providing the right support for children. Like all schools, there is always a need to balance staffing with affordability, regardless of whether a school is part of a Trust or not. However, being part of a Trust can provide greater stability and support in managing budgets, helping schools to plan sustainably and protect the roles that are most important for pupils. There is no intention to reduce valuable support staff. These roles are vital to pupils' learning and wellbeing, and the Trust recognises the important contribution they make every day. All primary schools nationally are impacted by birthrate dips and needing to rationalise staffing where pupil numbers are reducing.

Who can I speak to if I have further questions?

You can speak to Lizzie. Additionally, staff briefings and drop-in opportunities will be arranged to ensure everyone has the opportunity to ask questions and receive updates.

Franche Community Primary School

Useful Links and Further Information



Franche Community Primary School Website
What is a school trust?
The Rivers CofE Academy Trust Website

Appendix E – Updated Frequently Asked Questions list for parents and other stakeholders

Franche Community Primary School
Frequently Asked Questions



As Franche Community Primary School starts to consult and consider joining The Rivers CofE Academy Trust, we understand that Parents and Carers may have questions about what this means for their children and the school. These FAQs aim to provide clear and reassuring information.

When might this happen?	The 1st October, 2026 is the provisional planned timeframe for conversion. However, before then there are lots of statutory things that need to happen, including checks, due diligence work and consultation before any 'joining' can be considered.
Will there be any changes to the school uniform?	**No.** The school uniform will remain the same. There is no expectation for families to purchase new items, and there are no plans to change the current uniform.
Will our school lose its identity?	**No.** Franche Community Primary School will retain its name, ethos, and unique character. The Rivers CofE Academy Trust supports schools in maintaining their individuality while benefiting from being part of a wider collaborative community.
Will Franche have to change its values and vision?	**No.** The Rivers CofE Academy Trust wants schools to have a distinctiveness to serve their unique communities. Franche will continue to have a local vision that enables this to happen. The Trust has a shared mission ('An extraordinary education for every pupil') across all schools and a set of values that unites all pupils and staff. There are clear links between that overall mission and set of values with our ethos at Franche.
There is a misconception that Academisation is for failing schools - is this the case?	**No.** A significant proportion of schools nationally have joined trusts overtime out of choice and are not failing. These are called 'converter' schools and that is the premise in which Franche is proposing to join Rivers. We recognise the benefits of joining Rivers and can also see where we will be able to add strength to Rivers' collaborative community of schools.
What difference will it make joining The Rivers CofE Academy Trust?	The proposal is designed to secure long-term stability and open up new opportunities for our school. By joining a primary, values-driven, local trust, Franche would continue to thrive while benefiting from greater support, resources and shared expertise. The proposal offers clear educational benefits for pupils and staff, including stronger collaboration, mutual support and an expanded range of high-quality professional development.
Will the curriculum change?	**No.** The curriculum will remain the same but may develop over time like any strong curriculum should. Franche Community Primary School will continue to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum tailored to the needs of our pupils. The trust will work in partnership with us to ensure that we provide the best possible curriculum offer to our children. As the years go by, there may be aspects of the curriculum that evolve through collaboration with other schools in Rivers. Equally, aspects of Franche's curriculum offer might influence curriculum development in Rivers.

Will my child/children access any other opportunities by being part of Rivers?	**Yes.** Rivers place equal importance on pupils' personal development (through enrichment) with high academic standards. In addition to opportunities our pupils already access, they will be involved in collaborative activities with other Rivers' pupils, such as a design and technological project called the Box Car Rally, a mathematics championship, a dance festival, sports competitions, art projects and much more. Eventually, pupils will also be involved in an initiative called 'My Extraordinary Experiences' – 24 things that every pupil experiences before they leave primary school. Because Rivers is an established and successful trust, they also have access to capital grants and expertise to ensure the school building is the best possible learning environment for pupils and staff, including access to resources and computing equipment fit for the 21st century.
Will the school name change?	**No.** There are no plans to change the name of the school.
How about the length of the school day, school holidays or Teacher Education Days (TED)?	The Rivers CofE Academy Trust has schools in Worcestershire and they follow the agreed Local Authority term dates. There are no plans to change timetables or the length of the school day. They do have an additional TED each year, so if we join it will be six TED's and not five.
What about our WRAP care, TOTS and early years?	The Rivers CofE Academy Trust is a primary specialist trust and place a strong emphasis on WRAP and early years. They value education starting from an early age and have expertise to support it. They also have a school with provision for babies and all schools provide an extended WRAP service, including during holidays.
How would SEND be managed under a trust?	There would be no change, the leaders at Franche would continue to manage, plan and deploy the resources as per the need of our pupils. The Rivers CofE Academy Trust has a strong inclusion team and strategy, enabling us to strengthen our approaches even further.
As a result of joining The Rivers CofE Academy Trust, will there be staff redundancies?	**No.**
Will there be any changes to school staff?	**No.** Not as a direct result of joining Rivers. We have a stable staff team who know our community well and this will continue to be the case. As with any school there are sometimes changes as a normal part of school life and individual circumstances.
Will there be changes to leadership or management?	The existing leadership team will continue to manage the school, supported by the wider expertise of The Rivers CofE Academy Trust.

What are the benefits of joining The Rivers CofE Trust?	Joining a strong, primary Academy Trust offers multiple benefits, such as: • A wealth of collaborative and enrichment experiences for pupils e.g. Box car rally, Mathematics Championships, Art projects, Sports competitions • Greater collaboration and shared best practice across schools for staff • Primary-age specific support within a large community of local and regional schools • Access to wider and increased professional development opportunities for staff • Enhanced support services (e.g., estates and facilities, HR, finance, IT) enabling leaders and staff to have added capacity and an even greater focus on Teaching and Learning. • Increase in inclusion support
Will teachers be moved to other schools in the Trust?	**No.** Staff will remain based at Franche Community Primary School unless they choose to apply for or undertake a role at another school within the Trust. Sometimes, leaders and staff will collaborate with other staff from Rivers' schools on different sites or at Franche.
Will school policies change?	Some policies may be changed to promote alignment and in recognition of being part of a single employer and one community of schools. For example, there is a standard safeguarding and behaviour policy to cover statutory guidance, but there is always a need to tweak these to meet local approaches and needs.
Does Ofsted inspect Academies?	**Yes.** In exactly the same way as for maintained schools.
Academy governance - How are academies governed?	The Academy Trust (which is a charitable company) would be responsible for all the schools within the Trust. Local Advocates facilitate local governance and test out on the ground what it is like to be a pupil, parent and staff member at the school. The Local Advocates report back to the Trust Board on key matters at a local level, including how well the school is doing and how well the trust is serving the school.
Will school communication to parents change as part of moving to an Academy?	**No.** The Leadership team at Franche will continue to communicate to parents as they do now. Any changes in the future would be made by Franche's Leadership team. The Rivers CofE Academy Trust produce an annual parents' newsletter to share the impact of the trust's work on pupils and staff.
The Rivers CofE Trust has Church of England in its name because it began as a CofE Trust. We are a community school, will this have any implications for us as a school?	**No.** Rivers started as a CofE Trust because the founding school was a Church School. Rivers now has far more community schools than Church schools (twelve community schools like us and four Church schools). The trust it's proud of its history and diversity of schools, welcoming pupils, families and staff from all faiths and no faiths. There are no CofE expectations placed on us, but we will be able to gain from Rivers' Church schools' expertise if we do routine developmental work to the statutory National Curriculum subject, Religious Education.

Will there be any difference for the school's PTA if we become an academy? Including how the money is spent.	**No.** All Rivers' schools have PTAs and Rivers do not have any involvement in how money is raised and spent. That is up to the PTAs and the leaders in the schools.
What financial benefit does The Rivers CofE Academy Trust get with Franche joining? Is there extra money from the government for the trust?	There is no extra money from the government for The Rivers CofE Academy Trust for Franche joining. The trust works as a Charity and does not make a profit. The trust's mission is 'An extraordinary education for every pupil'. The trust is compelled by a strong moral purpose to ensure support and develop all children to become the best version of themselves, academically and personally. The Trust does not 'make a profit' from schools. The Rivers CofE Academy Trust is an established medium-sized trust with a strong track record of success. Due to this, they have access to capacity for school improvement support which includes working with schools outside of the trust. As a medium sized trust, Rivers receives funding to improve school buildings and outdoor environments. This funding is used for specific improvement projects based on the condition of the buildings and the needs of pupils. All schools in the trust have benefited from investment over time to improve their buildings and learning environments. Franche will also benefit from this investment over time.
Does the school keep its own funding or does the trust keep it and share it out?	When a school joins the trust, it continues to receive funding for its pupils so it can meet the needs of children and families. Over time, once the school is fully part of the trust, its main funding is managed alongside other trust schools. This helps the trust share resources fairly and provide extra support where it's needed, while making sure every school is properly funded. Funding for pupil premium and SEND is not shared and continues to go directly to the school based on pupils' needs.
What are the next steps for Franche if, after consultation and Governing Board review it is decided that joining Rivers is not right?	The Governing Board would re-convene and consider based on feedback received through Consultation what are the barriers identified for not joining Rivers and therefore whether academy conversion is still a consideration for the school. The Governing Board would then review all options, including remaining as a LA Maintained School and decide how best to proceed. Any future decision to formally explore academy conversion would be carried out in exactly the same way with a further consultation period.
Additional Questions	
How does the Trust balance inclusive practice with ensuring that pupils who are achieving at or above expected	Research consistently shows that inclusive, high-quality teaching benefits all pupils, including those who are achieving at or above expected levels. Approaches such as adaptive teaching, high

levels continue to receive sufficient challenge, support and teacher attention?	expectations for all and a well-sequenced curriculum ensure that pupils are appropriately supported and challenged within the same classroom. The Trust's approach is rooted in this principle: inclusion is not about lowering expectations, but about ensuring every pupil can succeed and be stretched. Teachers are supported to adapt their teaching so that pupils who need additional support receive it, while those who are ready for greater challenge are extended through depth, complexity and higher-level thinking. Collaboration across schools further strengthens this, allowing staff to share effective practice and develop approaches that support both inclusion and high attainment. The aim is a balanced approach where all pupils, regardless of starting point, are supported to make strong progress, with high expectations and the right level of challenge for each individual. This work is supported by a rigorous CPD model to support the development of all staff.
Does being part of an academy trust cut out the restrictive Local Authority governance on exclusions – hence allowing a stronger stance on the most disruptive pupils?	The Rivers CofE trust follows the national statutory legislation and guidelines on suspensions and exclusions, as set out in the behaviour and suspensions/exclusions policy. Decisions to suspend or exclude pupils are taken on a case-by-case basis and must be lawful, reasonable and fair. We are an inclusive trust and recognise that some pupils have complex needs that need to be supported. We also have a clear line of expectations to maintain and safe and respectful environment for staff and pupils.
The reasoning for joining the trust comes across as largely for financial and staff benefits. Do you feel that this will readily translate to driving standards, ultimately improving the standard of education offered to the pupils?	Yes. While financial stability and staff benefits are important foundations, they are not the end goal—they are what enable schools to focus more fully on delivering high-quality education. A key strength of being part of Rivers is the impact of collaboration and shared practice. This is already evident in the schools—for example, at Burlish Park Primary, Ofsted recognised how *'Rivers' vision, values and expertise are translated into practice through strong leadership and support, helping to drive high standards and positive outcomes for pupils. Staff there also value the high-quality support and collaboration that helps them teach effectively.'* Across the Trust, this collaboration includes shared professional development, open classrooms (TRGs) and opportunities for pupils to learn from one another. Combined with consistent systems and clear accountability, this creates the conditions for sustained improvement.

	At its heart, the purpose of joining is to strengthen teaching, broaden opportunities and improve outcomes for every pupil—ensuring they benefit from both excellent practice and the collective strength of a family of schools.
Will it change how the school is run now?	Schools are always evolving, and being part of a strong trust does bring opportunities for change—but these are designed to strengthen, not disrupt, what already works well. The day-to-day leadership of the school remains with the headteacher and senior leadership team, with decisions continuing to be made in the best interests of the school and its community. Being part of a strong trust means working more closely with other schools—sharing practice, collaborating and aligning systems where it adds value. For example, headteachers across Rivers have worked together to shape and refine the digital strategy, ensuring it reflects the needs of schools and supports teaching and learning in practice. This kind of collaboration is a key strength of being part of a community of schools. Change is a natural part of improvement, and the trust provides the structure, expertise and capacity to manage that change well, helping to protect and sustain the quality of education over time.
Once you discover a child's talent how do you help them to bloom and excel in this area?	Rivers encourages all schools to provide a wide and varied curriculum and extra-curricular offer, one that seeks to find talents, passions and interests. We also put on a range of pupil collaboration events so that pupils can showcase and further develop their work. For example, we have a mathematics championship, a dance festival, a cricket competition and the famous Box Car Rally! These events also have older pupils, local clubs and adult specialists talking to pupils about how they became successful and followed their passions in life. My Extraordinary Experiences (MEE) are 24 things that Rivers' pupils will do before they leave primary school. They are tweaked to meet local context and curriculums but are a way of raising aspirations and ensuring that there is an equity of experience for every pupil. For example, one school commits to taking pupils to see a West End Show. MEE is another example of where Rivers seeks to find talents and interests and further develop them too. Helping pupils to bloom and excel is a dual role between the great things that school leaders and staff plan on the ground for pupils and the additionality that Rivers provides.
Will the curriculum change? If so, how?	Yes, gradually, overtime. Any strong school curriculum evolves and develops, regardless of joining a trust or not. To collaborate deeply and meaningfully in a local area, teachers need to be talking about the same things. However, this would be a gradual

	process done in collaboration with school staff with a commitment to ensuring that the curriculum always meets the needs of the Franche community and that local aspects are considered. There will be elements of Franche's curriculum that will be strong and will influence Rivers' curriculum work.
How would it look different for a child with SEND if Franche convert?	For most children with SEND, much will remain the same. They will continue to be supported by the same staff, within the same school, with provision tailored to their individual needs. What being part of the Trust adds is greater opportunity for collaboration and shared expertise. Pupils will be able to take part in Trust-wide events and experiences, and staff benefit from working together, for example, through the Trust's SENCO network, where colleagues collaborate to address inclusion and SEND challenges and share effective practice. The Trust is also developing a wider inclusion strategy, with input from stakeholders, including Franche staff where appropriate. This work is focused on strengthening support and ensuring that children with SEND receive consistent, high-quality provision across all schools. This means will be ahead of the changes that the Government are not introducing until 2029. Overall, the aim is not to change what works well, but to enhance it, bringing additional expertise, consistency and opportunity to support every child to succeed.
Will there be any changes to lunches and Wraparound care in terms of process and offer?	Lunches and wraparound care are determined at school level, so there is no requirement for these to change as a result of conversion. In most cases, existing provision and processes continue unless the school chooses to review or improve them. The academy trust will have oversight, but decisions about the day-to-day offer—such as catering arrangements and wraparound provision—remain largely the same. National initiatives, such as the introduction of breakfast clubs, may influence future provision, but these would apply regardless of conversion.
Is the swimming pool a priority for the Trust?	The swimming pool is a valued part of the school's provision and is clearly important to the school community. Decisions about its use and future sit at a local level, and Rivers would not seek to change this where it is working well. As with all resources, it does need to remain viable and sustainable, but there is no intention to remove provision that is valued and beneficial for pupils and the wider community.
How much will conversion impact the children? Will it have an impact on them day to day?	For pupils, there is unlikely to be any noticeable day-to-day change. School life will continue as normal, with the same teachers, routines and experiences that they already know and

	enjoy. What being part of Rivers does bring is more opportunities. For example, events such as the recent dance festival and maths competition, where Franche pupils achieved second place, are trust-wide opportunities that bring schools together and enrich pupils' experiences beyond their own setting. Over time, this collaboration creates more chances for pupils to take part in events, share experiences and benefit from being part of a wider community of schools. The focus remains firmly on ensuring children continue to thrive, achieve and enjoy their education.
What is the Trusts measure of success and who keeps the trust accountable?	Success is measured through a combination of outcomes, quality and impact. The Trust's 2030 strategy sets clear priorities and KPIs focused on delivering an extraordinary education, strong pupil outcomes and positive futures for every child. This includes measures such as academic performance, school improvement and the quality of provision, alongside wider indicators of pupil and staff development, safeguarding, financial health and estates compliance. Our trust is held accountable through a strong governance structure, with trustees responsible for setting strategy and holding leaders to account, supported by members who oversee governance itself. External accountability is provided through Ofsted inspections and oversight from the Department for Education, ensuring standards, compliance and financial integrity. Above all, success is grounded in the Trust's mission: delivering an extraordinary education for every pupil —and everything the Trust does is measured against that purpose.
Is the 1st October the most sensible time to convert financially due to contracts with the county council that may still be in place until the end of the financial year?	There is no single "ideal" time to convert to academy status, as timing depends largely on your existing contractual arrangements rather than a fixed point in the year. While the academy financial year runs from 1 September to 31 August, many local authority or county council contracts may instead align with the standard financial year ending on 31 March. Converting on 1st October can be sensible, but other points in the year can be equally appropriate. The key consideration is not the specific date, but how well the conversion is planned and managed. This includes effective change management for staff

	and stakeholders, as well as ensuring all legal and contractual aspects—such as the novation or termination of existing agreements—are handled properly. Local authorities and other suppliers are generally familiar with this process and will usually honour existing agreements.
I believe becoming an academy is just funding corporations. As they look after their shareholders and not the pupils.	No. Academy trusts are not-for-profit organisations; they do not have shareholders and cannot distribute profits. Any funding received is used to support schools, invest in staff, improve resources and enhance opportunities for pupils. The Trust is accountable for how public money is spent and is regulated by the Department for Education. It is governed by Trustees, whose role is to act in the best interests of pupils and ensure high standards, strong outcomes and responsible use of funding. The purpose of joining a Trust is not to generate profit, but to strengthen education, using collective resources, expertise and collaboration to improve the experience and outcomes for every child.
This is a community primary school, I worry that by becoming part of an academy parents voices will not be heard and it will no longer feel like a community school.	No. Maintaining a strong sense of community and ensuring parents feel heard are central to how the Trust operates. Schools remain rooted in their local communities, with Headteachers continuing to lead day-to-day and build relationships with families. This is reflected in Ofsted feedback across Trust schools, where inspectors recognise the importance of strong relationships with parents and the wider community, and how these are maintained and strengthened as part of the Trust. Schools continue to value parental engagement, communication and partnership as key to pupils' success. Being part of a Trust does not remove that local identity, it supports it. By providing additional capacity, shared expertise and consistent systems, the Trust enables schools to focus more on what matters most: strong relationships, high-quality education and a thriving school community. Not changing the name of Franche or the uniform typifies how Rivers wants each school to retain local connection and identity with their community.
I worry that jobs for support assistants will decrease or get cut.	Staffing structures are determined by school leaders based on the needs of pupils and the school, and that does not change through joining a Trust. Decisions about roles, including support assistants, continue to be made locally, with a clear focus on providing the right support for children. Like all schools, there is always a need to balance staffing with

	affordability, regardless of whether a school is part of a Trust or not. However, being part of a Trust can provide greater stability and support in managing budgets, helping schools to plan sustainably and protect the roles that are most important for pupils. There is no intention to reduce valuable support staff. These roles are vital to pupils' learning and wellbeing, and the Trust recognises the important contribution they make every day. All primary schools nationally are impacted by birthrate dips and needing to rationalise staffing where pupil numbers are reducing.
I worry about a lack of government regulations and the impact this will have on budgets, education and the well-being of staff and pupils.	Academy trusts are subject to strong statutory regulation and oversight. They must follow national requirements set by the Department for Education, including the Academy Trust Handbook, which sets out clear rules on financial management, governance and accountability. This means there are clear expectations around how money is spent, how schools are run and how standards are maintained. Trusts are required to demonstrate value for money, manage budgets responsibly and ensure high-quality education and safeguarding for pupils. For staff and pupils, this provides reassurance that there are robust systems in place to protect quality, wellbeing and outcomes. Being part of a Trust does not reduce accountability; it brings a structured and transparent framework that supports schools to operate effectively and sustainably.

Franche Community Primary School
Useful Links and Further Information



Franche Community Primary School Website
What is a school trust?
The Rivers CofE Academy Trust Website