



FRANCHE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

**FORMAL CONSULTATION TO CONSIDER
CONVERSION TO AN ACADEMY SCHOOL
AND JOIN THE RIVERS CofE ACADEMY TRUST**

**CONSULTATION PERIOD:
COMMENCES – Tuesday 3rd FEBRUARY, 2026
ENDS – Tuesday 17th MARCH, 2026**

Franche Community Primary School



Chestnut Grove, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY11 5QB
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Headteacher Mrs E. Dixon



Artsmark
Silver Award
Awarded by Arts
Council England



Tuesday 3rd February, 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

As you are aware from our previous correspondence the Governing Board and Senior Leaders have been exploring options for potential conversion to an Academy as part of an Academy Trust.

Having considered a number of different trusts the Governing Board have agreed to move to formal consultation to consider joining The Rivers CofE Academy Trust.

The Governing Board 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.

This letter forms the start of our formal consultation process which will run from Tuesday 3rd February, 2026 to Tuesday 17th March 2026. This process will provide all stakeholders with an opportunity to find out more information about the preferred Trust, ask questions and share their views with us. Within this document we have enclosed a copy of our FAQs which will hopefully provide clarification on some of the questions you may have.

During this consultation period we will be holding staff, parent and community consultation meetings. These meetings will include a presentation from Matt Meckin, CEO of the Rivers CofE Academy Trust who will be joined by other senior members of the Trust. There will also be time for questions to be answered by both School and Trust staff.

It is incredibly important that all members of the community have a chance to share their thoughts and ask any questions, so we look forward to your valued contribution to our formal consultation process.

As always if you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs E Dixon
Headteacher

Mr M Hughes
Chair of Governors

Franche Community Primary School

Parent/Community Consultation Meetings



Tuesday 24th February, 2026



Session 1: 2.00pm
Session 2: 6.00pm



Upper School Hall
Franche Community Primary School, Chestnut Grove, Kidderminster DY11 5QB
///simple.broker.palms



Have your say or submit a question:
Write to us at the address above, send us an email to
office@francheprimary.worcs.sch.uk
or click [HERE Franche Community Primary School Stakeholder Conversion Meeting – Fill out form](#) to submit your question online.



Your feedback matters and we would encourage you to complete our Consultation Form to support the Governing Board with their decision making. Click [HERE Franche Community Primary School Academy Consultation Questionnaire – Fill out form](#) to complete the form, click [HERE Franche Community Primary School - Academy Consultation](#) to download the form from our website or a hard copy is available at the school office.



All questions and Consultation Forms must be completed and submitted by no later than noon on Tuesday 17th March, 2026.



Register to attend by clicking [HERE Franche Community Primary School Stakeholder Conversion Meeting – Fill out form](#)

Franche Community Primary School

What is Academy Conversion?



What is an Academy?

An Academy is an independent state school, funded directly from central government rather than through a local authority. A charitable company limited by guarantee (the Academy Trust) is responsible for the Academy, and the Academy Trust signs the Funding Agreement (the contract) with the Secretary of State as part of the establishment of the academy.

Legislation requires that academies:

- offer a balanced and broadly based curriculum;
- provide education for pupils of different abilities; and
- provide education for pupils who are wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which the school is situated

How is an Academy different from an LA Maintained School?

An academy has several differences to an LA Maintained school, including:

- Admissions – The Trust Board is responsible for setting and implementing its admissions policy and for prioritising applications. An academy must continue to operate within the requirements of the national School Admissions Code in the same way as maintained schools, including full participation in the local coordinated admissions scheme administered by the local authority;
- Curriculum – an academy has to offer a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils of differing abilities, including Maths, English, and Science, but at the present time, does not have to follow the National Curriculum; the Funding Agreement requires that an academy teaches Religious Education;
- Employment – the Trust Board becomes the employer of school staff, rather than the local authority. Trustees also have freedom to set new terms and conditions for future staff;
- Funding – the academy receives its existing school budget and also its share of the funding that is retained by the local authority for maintained schools;
- Land and Buildings – the land and buildings of the school are leased to the Academy Trust for 125 years at a peppercorn rent from the Local Authority and the academy would be responsible for the land and buildings (and reliant on the Secretary of State for capital funding);
- Governance – The Academy Trust (which is a charitable company) would be responsible for all the schools within the trust. Local Advocates facilitate local governance, and support and challenge to the Headteacher and leadership team, including parents and staff. The Local Advocates would be formed from the current Governing Body in the first instance.

Some of these responsibilities are already held by Foundation and Voluntary-Aided Schools. Voluntary-Aided schools, for instance, are already responsible for their admissions, own their land and buildings (often through a Diocese) and employ their staff directly.

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

Will my child/children access any other opportunities by being part of Rivers?

offer might influence curriculum development in 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.

Will the school name change?

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'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.

What financial benefit does The Rivers CofE Academy Trust get with Franche joining? Is there extra money from the government for the trust?

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.

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.

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](#)