

10 March 2017



Dear Sir/Madam

Proposed Conversion to Academy Status

I am writing to you on behalf of the governors of Westfield School and the Board of the Westfield Learning Community Trust. The majority of secondary schools nationally and virtually all in Sheffield have converted to academy status often working closely together in multi-academy trusts (MATs).

The governing body has carefully considered our position on this and what further opportunities joining a MAT may bring to the school and wider learning community. We are keen to maintain our strong inclusive ethos and commitment to the community but also to seek options that could bring more post-16 and sixth form opportunities to our students. We would only work with a like-minded organisation that puts young people at the centre of their vision.

As a result, we have applied to become an academy and we are proposing to join **Silverdale Multi Academy Trust**. An academy order for conversion was issued by the Regional Schools Commissioner to this effect on Thursday 9 February 2017. This was prior to the recent Ofsted inspection of the school. Confidentiality rules prevent discussion of the inspection outcome at this moment in time but we are keen to move forward with stakeholder consultation on the academy conversion with the Silverdale MAT.

This letter forms part of our consultation process and further information about academy status and the Silverdale MAT are set out below. There will be an opportunity to attend a meeting at school to hear more about both the opportunities of joining the Silverdale MAT and the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection. The date and time for this meeting will be advertised on the school website and parents/carers notified by text. In the meantime, comments can be made through the contact details detailed later in this letter.

What is an academy?

An academy is still a state school but it is independent of the Local Authority (Sheffield City Council) and receives its funding directly from central government. As an academy, we have greater autonomy and control over many aspects of our work which we will exercise in a strong partnership with Silverdale Multi Academy Trust. As part of a trust with an outstanding sixth form, all students in Westfield will have the same entitlement to access this provision as those in Silverdale.

What will becoming an academy mean for us?

Working with Silverdale Multi Academy Trust means we will be able to benefit from joint services and contracts to reduce costs as well as share initiatives and developments in education. Academies are not bound to the National Curriculum and have more autonomy over what is taught. We will, however, continue to provide the same broad and balanced curriculum that enables all students to develop strong skills and succeed in appropriate qualifications.

Working with Silverdale Multi Academy Trust, we can share good practice from across the whole Trust, adopt the most effective ideas and work together to achieve the best outcomes for our school community. Westfield has worked with many partners over the last few years including Silverdale School and the local family of schools for mutual benefit. Under the formal arrangements of a MAT this partnership work and the opportunities it brings to young people will continue to flourish well into the future.

Admissions arrangements will remain as they currently are, managed by the Local Authority. Our staff will transfer to be employed by the Silverdale MAT under this new partnership. There are no immediate plans to change the uniform or the school badge/logo. If in the future, we decide to do so we will only do that following consultation with our parents, carers and school community.

Who is Silverdale Multi Academy Trust?

Silverdale Academy Multi Academy Trust has been established through Silverdale School and is seeking to work with local schools or clusters of schools in partnership. Silverdale is an 11-18 school located in the south west of Sheffield. Rated as outstanding by Ofsted in 2014 the school also hosts the Sheffield Teaching School Alliance.

Westfield School has worked in partnership with Silverdale informally for many years and already share staff training days and continual professional development programmes. Joining the Silverdale MAT will bring the following opportunities:

- Equal access arrangements for Westfield students to the Silverdale sixth form
- A common ethos of inclusion and high aspirations for all students across the MAT
- Collaboration in professional development, curriculum design and learning
- Maintain the strong working relationship with other partner schools including the local family of schools

How can I comment?

Any comments or representations made about the proposed academy conversion will be considered by the governors and Silverdale Multi Academy Trust. If you want to respond in writing, please send your comments to:

MAT Enquiries
c/o Westfield School
Eckington Road
Sheffield
S20 1HQ
Or email to MAT@westfield-admin.co.uk

Please refer to the school website (www.westfieldschoolsheffield.org.uk) for updates on the process and further meeting dates.

The governing body truly believe that seeking to join the Silverdale MAT will bring many opportunities and advantages to our school and learning community.

Yours sincerely



C Sellars
Chair of Governors, Westfield School