



# Cromwell High School

*'Learning today for a better tomorrow'*

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6<sup>th</sup> March 2023

## Re: Academy Consultation

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you are hopefully aware from Mr Foord's communication, I am writing to inform you that the Governing Body of Cromwell High School has applied to become an academy under the Academies Act 2010 and is proposing to join Kingfisher Learning Trust in September 2023. The Governing Body is now consulting on whether the school's conversion to academy status should take place. Further information about what becoming an academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below and included in the attached Parent Information Letter from the Trust.

### Will Cromwell definitely become an academy?

The Governing Body has submitted an application to convert to academy status and is working towards a conversion in September 2023. However, the school is not obligated to become an academy until the contract between Kingfisher Learning Trust and the Department for Education (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed.

Neither the Governors of Cromwell High School, nor Kingfisher Learning Trust, will sign the Funding Agreement until parents and carers of children at our school, staff, and students themselves have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. On 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023, representatives of the Trust would like to share their vision and values with you and answer any questions about academisation and the Trust itself. The Trust will also be meeting with staff and we will be keeping children informed throughout the process as appropriate.

The Governing Body will not vote to proceed with academy conversion unless they are content that conversion would be in the best interests of the school, taking account of all the views expressed by parents, staff and other stakeholders and the legal and practical ramifications.

### What is an academy?

An academy is essentially an independent school which is funded by the state. It is independent of Tameside Local Authority and receives its funding direct from central government.

We are proposing to become an academy as part of Kingfisher Learning Trust. This means that we will be part of a Trust that currently comprises of four schools - Kingfisher Special School, Medlock Valley Primary School, Littlemoor Primary School and Halcyon Way Special School. A further school – Blackshaw Lane Primary School – is also expecting to join the Trust in September 2023.

### What are the benefits of being an academy?

In the school's opinion the benefits are numerous:

- **The academy trust will offer greater, more frequent, constructive challenge to our school to be providing ever better opportunities for our pupils** – we have always welcomed external challenge to add to the internal challenge provided by Governors and found it useful to continually improve our offer for our pupils. Being a member of the Trust will improve this process in the interests of our pupils. As a Special School led trust, the trust will be experts in our pupils’ needs and make this challenge even more perceptive and valuable.
- **The academy trust will offer greater, more frequent, more effective, support to our school to be providing ever better opportunities for our pupils** – in parallel with additional challenge we have also always welcomed external support to continually improve our offer for our pupils. Being a member of the Trust will improve this process in the interests of our pupils. As a Special School led trust, the trust will be experts in our pupils’ needs and make this support even more effective and valuable.
- **academies have more freedom over the curriculum taught** – this means that as an academy we can prioritise the most important elements of the curriculum to meet our pupils Special Educational Needs as they learn about the world around them, develop their skills for life and grow to be confident, caring, considerate citizens.
- **academies can set their own pay and conditions of service for their staff** – academies have the freedom to alter the pay and conditions of their staff (subject to normal employment law protections for staff) so that we can better structure job roles around our pupil and school needs.
- **academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects** – academies are companies and so have more freedom to undertake innovative projects, including with other community partners.

#### Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?

Kingfisher Learning Trust will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety and property maintenance. Cromwell High School will need to contribute to these costs along with Kingfisher Learning Trust which already deals with these matters for its existing schools.

#### Will the admissions arrangements change?

As a special school, Cromwell’s admissions arrangements will remain the same and be based on meeting the provision in each pupil’s Education, Health and Care Plans in negotiation with the Local Authority administering the plan.

#### How will staff be affected?

If the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by the school will automatically transfer on their current pay and conditions. Although the school will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, the Trust does not intend to take such a step in the foreseeable future and, in any event, any change to pay and conditions would need to be consulted upon with staff representatives.

#### Will Cromwell change?

The Trust recognises the unique identity of all its schools and will continue to work collaboratively to enhance provision and practice at Cromwell. For students, it is unlikely that they will see much, if any, change in their day to day school lives. Our school will maintain its identity with no plans to change our logos or uniform.

You may have heard that Academies have the power to vary some things including the curriculum and the length of the school day. However, there is no intention to take any such steps at this stage. The Trust would always engage with parents/carers, staff and students if there was ever any need to make such changes in the future.

### **How can I find out more?**

On Tuesday March 21<sup>st</sup> at 2.30pm and again at 5pm - there will be a presentation for parents/carers by Trust representatives. Should you wish to attend, in order to help us to provide for the correct numbers of people, please complete and return by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023, the reply slip overleaf and please include any questions you would like answering.

There is also more information about academies on the DfE website:<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies> and more information about the Kingfisher Learning Trust on their website.

<https://www.kingfisherlearningtrust.co.uk/>

If you can't find the answer to your question on our, or the DfE website, and cannot attend the meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March, please email [admin@cromwell.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:admin@cromwell.tameside.sch.uk), marking the subject as "Academisation questions" and we will be able to answer any questions you may have.

### **How can I make representations?**

Any comments or representations you would like to make about the proposal to academise and join Kingfisher Learning Trust will be considered by the Governing Body before it takes the final decision to convert to academy status. Representations can be made in writing to: Mr Andrew Foord, Headteacher, Cromwell High School, Yew Tree Lane, Dukinfield, SK16 5BJ or by email to [admin@cromwell.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:admin@cromwell.tameside.sch.uk) marking the subject as "Academisation response".

### **The closing date for representations is Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

We hope that you will be as excited as we are about joining Kingfisher Learning Trust and the opportunities this will offer the students, families and staff at Cromwell.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Bates  
Chair of Governors



**Cromwell High School**

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**KINGFISHER**  
**LEARNINGTRUST**  
ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

## Reply Slip: Academisation Consultation Presentation 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023- please return by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March

I confirm that I/we .....

Number attending: .....

Parent/s / carer/s of .....

Will / will not be attending the Academisation Consultation Presentation on the 21<sup>st</sup> March

At 2.30pm / 5.00pm

Optional – We would like to ask the following question:

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