

Please see below for answers to frequently asked questions. We have shown questions in green and answers in black.

Why are we proposing joining Ivy Learning Trust?

Churchfield has worked successfully with Brimsdown and Lavender, the two schools that comprise Ivy Learning Trust, over the last year. Joining Ivy is the natural progression of this successful relationship.

What are the benefits for the children of this proposal?

Additional progress will be made through the benefits highlighted below.

It will provide an opportunity to share expertise. The Trust has a large number of Specialist Leaders of Education who can spread good practice across all schools. Furthermore, it can provide the very best professional development opportunities for staff. This will help us retain our best staff at this time of potential teacher shortages.

A school is only as good as its teachers, support staff and leaders. With a worrying crisis in recruitment, we want to do everything possible to recruit and retain the best staff. For example, we would be able to set up our own teacher and support staff training facility, enabling each school to benefit from the best new staff entering the profession.

With a greater ability to share resources between schools and greater economies of scale as part of a Trust, there will be cost savings when it comes to areas such as purchasing services. This money can go directly back into the individual schools' budgets. Furthermore, with greater pooled experience within the Trust, the schools will be able to respond to new initiatives, always be ahead of the game and not waste time re-inventing the wheel.

What will be the main characteristics of Ivy Learning Trust?

Each school will retain its own individual character and uniqueness. Each school will still have its own local governance. Each school will continue to serve its local community. The Executive Head/ CEO will retain his strategic and operational decision-making position. We will share practice from one school to another only when we see it benefiting the children of the other school. One of the guiding principles of the Trust is that each school retains its uniqueness and we do not become a 'one size fits all' chain in the future.

What would stay the same if Churchfield were to become an academy and join Ivy learning Trust?

Your child's class will have:

- the same teacher
 - the same number of children
 - the same teaching and learning strategies
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- universal free school meals for R, Y1 & Y2 will continue
 - children in Y3, Y4, Y5 & Y6 who qualify for free school meals will still receive them
 - there will still be breakfast and after school clubs
 - there will still be extracurricular clubs

Will local residents be consulted?

The information is on our website for the local community to respond to. The change in status to become an academy will not change any admissions criteria; therefore we believe that a meeting for local residents is not necessary, and we have been advised that we have followed the normal process in this regard.

How will it affect staff? What will happen to staff pay and conditions?

All pre-existing terms and conditions will be honoured. We plan to keep everything the same through TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) arrangements.

A consultation period will take place, which will include a meeting for staff members with representatives from the local authority and the main unions involved (NUT, NASUWT, NAHT and Unison). Although TUPE involves statutory consultation with staff representatives, informal discussions will also offer opportunities for individuals to ask questions about their position. Among the positive benefits for staff is that being part of the Trust may lead to career development opportunities to work across the whole organisation.

What will happen to staff pensions? Will they change?

If staff are currently a member of either the Teachers' Pension Scheme or the Local Government Pension Scheme, then membership will continue unaffected. Ivy is required to offer or continue membership of either the Teachers' Pension Scheme or the Local Government Pension Scheme (as appropriate) to existing and new employees; continuity will be maintained for any employee moving back to a maintained school. Therefore nothing will change.

How will this affect admissions and SEN provision?

It will not have any adverse effects and could have positive benefits. For example, working so closely with other schools will mean we will be able to benefit from experts in all fields of SEN.

Who will pay for the conversion?

The school will receive £25,000 from central government to help the conversion process. It will be spent mainly on legal fees and staff costs.

Who will own the land and the buildings? Who pays for maintenance?

The academy will have a long-term lease (125 years) from the local authority. The Trust has a capital budget and can apply for additional money from the government through the Condition Improvement Fund if there is a major capital project.

Will there still be parent governors?

The LGB of the school will continue to include parent representatives.

If there is an issue in future that a parent feels is unresolved at a school/Trust level, what would be the process for escalating this?

It will go first to the Trust and then on to the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Will the schools still be subject to OFSTED inspections?

Yes – this situation will not change.