



Consultation on proposals to convert The Sixth Form College Solihull to an academy and for it to join Ninestiles Academy Trust





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This pamphlet brings you information regarding the consultation on proposed changes to The Sixth Form College Solihull and Ninestiles Academy Trust.

An application has been made to the Department for Education to approve the proposed conversion of The Sixth Form College Solihull to an academy under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

Under the Act, the College would dissolve and transfer its property, rights and liabilities to Ninestiles Academy Trust.

If the proposals go ahead, the merger should take place in August 2017 and would create a pioneering Multi-Academy Trust which would be the first of its kind in the country.

What is proposed?

In early 2015, Ninestiles Academy Trust and The Sixth Form College Solihull began discussing the possibility of a merger between the Trust and College.

A Government review of Further Education provision for Birmingham and Solihull later in 2015 recommended the College converts to an academy and joins Ninestiles Academy Trust.

Following extensive financial and legal due diligence, the Boards of both the College and Trust voted in December 2016 in favour of pursuing the merger and submitted formal applications to the Department for Education.

It is proposed that the College converts to an academy under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The dissolution of the College would see it transfer its property, rights and liabilities to Ninestiles Academy Trust. If the merger goes ahead, it will create the first Multi-Academy Trust of its kind in the country for children and young people aged three to 19.



About The Sixth Form College Solihull

The Sixth Form College Solihull is located in Widney Manor Road, Solihull, B91 3WR, and has more than 2,300 students.

It is a specialist provider of A-level, BTEC and CACHE education to 16-19 year-olds from Solihull and Birmingham.

The College is one of the largest centres of A-level study in the country with a long track record of securing overall pass rates above the national average.

Every year, more than 700 students progress from the College to university, including places at some of the most competitive and demanding courses and universities in the country.

In 2013, Ofsted rated the College as 'Good' overall with 'Outstanding' features. At its core are its three values: Aspire, Invest and Respect. These values create the capacity to transform life chances, enabling students to stretch their potential to the full.



About Ninestiles Academy Trust

Ninestiles Academy Trust, based at Ninestiles School An Academy in Hartfield Crescent, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 7QG, currently consists of seven schools across Birmingham and Solihull serving 5,200 pupils.

The schools run by the Trust are Ninestiles An Academy, Erdington Hall Primary School, Lyndon Secondary School, Pegasus Primary School, The Oaklands Primary School, Yarnfield Primary School and Cockshut Hill School.

Ninestiles School became Birmingham's first converter academy in January 2011. Now called Ninestiles An Academy, it is the Trust's lead school and is rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. It has a long and proud history of providing school-to-school support, both locally and across the country. In 2012 it was designated as a National Support School, while the Trust has also developed The Ninestiles Teaching Alliance – a teaching school which has developed a strong alliance of more than 30 schools.



What are the benefits of the merger?

Improving the quality of teaching and educational outcomes for children and young people in Birmingham and Solihull is the key motivation for this proposal.

The aim is to create a Trust which will boost both the aspirations and attainment of those living in the communities they serve.

The vision is to create a Trust offering young people and their families access to the best possible education at each and every level, from pre-school to post-16.

Staff would be able to share their expertise and learn from one another, contributing to a stable, motivated and expert workforce which would provide excellence at every stage of a child's educational journey.

The 'all-through' Trust would create new career development opportunities for existing staff, while helping to attract the best educational practitioners in the country.

The merger would allow the Trust to continue to grow and prosper, making it more financially stable and robust in order for it to run effective services despite economically challenging times facing the education sector.

The new Trust will have the scale, resources and profile to initiate significant new developments and partnerships with regional employers and Higher Education establishments, leveraging a further set of opportunities for local young people.

How will The Sixth Form College Solihull change?

As an incorporated Sixth Form College, the College has been fully independent of the Local Authority for more than 20 years. It has a long history of strong governance which has delivered a well-run, financially strong, and community focused College.

In many ways, incorporation prefigured the autonomy many schools achieved later through academisation. This means that the move into the academy sector does not represent a significant break with its recent past, but a natural progression returning it to the mainstream.

Students and families should not experience any change in the ethos, atmosphere or approach of the College following the proposed merger. Quality improvements should be secured over time, but there is no intention to alter the core approach of the College to teaching or to the way it works with students.

By making the College more secure financially, the merger helps the College to protect and sustain its special qualities.

Will the College or Trust become financially at risk?

The new Trust combines the strengths of Ninestiles Academy Trust in terms of experience in school-to-school improvement, with the specialism of The Sixth Form College Solihull in the post-16 sector. The new Trust will be stronger both educationally and financially than the two independent partners, and therefore will place them in an even better position to support other institutions who need help.

Economies of scale, the rationalisation of behind the scenes work, and changes to the tax regime for The Sixth Form College Solihull, mean that there will be a very useful increase in the resource available for front-line educational spending at a time when every penny counts.

Will staff lose jobs?

All staff at the College will transfer into the new Trust on their current terms and conditions of service, salaries and pension arrangements, so there should be no staffing disruption for students. There are no plans for any redundancies arising from the merger, as both partners bring significant reserves into the new Trust and a long term approach to staffing change will secure the planned efficiency gains over time.

Staff across the new Trust will have wider opportunities for development, training, broadening their experience and promotion. This will help the new Trust to attract and retain outstanding staff, in both teaching and support, which are vital if it is to maintain and improve performance.



Will my child lose their school place?

Absolutely not, your child will continue to have a place at their current school within Ninestiles Academy Trust. Those who have applied for a place at a school within the Trust beginning in September 2017 will not be affected by this proposed merger.

Will my child have to re-apply for the College place for September 2017?

There will be no change to the admissions policy of The Sixth Form College Solihull which will continue to warmly welcome young people from partner schools across the region.

The College's entry policy and requirements will not change as a result of the merger. It will continue to recruit students from a wide range of schools across Solihull and south Birmingham, with a focus on its established partner schools. Ninestiles Academy Trust's academies are already partner schools, and no special arrangements beyond this will be made for students applying from within the Trust.

Will the College or Trust change its name?

The name of the college will remain The Sixth Form College Solihull, and it does not intend any significant spend on re-branding or changing its identity. The new Trust may decide to change its name to reflect the merger, but this is not a priority at the moment and will be decided by the Trustees.

What happens next?

All views expressed during this consultation will be collated and shared with the Boards of both the College and the Trust. These views will help the Boards to reach a decision as to whether to continue with plans for the College to convert to an academy and join the Trust. A final decision will be made by the Secretary of State for Education.

The Governors, Board Members and Senior Leadership Teams at both the Trust and the College are keen to hear your views and would be grateful if you could take a few

minutes to share your thoughts and help inform the future of these organisations. The consultation period ends at midnight on March 20th 2017 and there are a various ways and opportunities to have your say.

A number of drop-in sessions and a public meeting will also be held throughout the consultation period, details of which can be found on the back page of this pamphlet.

Have your say

You can find out more by visiting ca-education.co.uk. You can also share your views by answering an online survey, available at: smartsurvey.co.uk/s/merger-consultation/

Alternatively you can email your views to response@ca-education.co.uk or you can call 0330 9000 012.

You can also write to:

**Clarke Associates,
The Old School House,
Chapel Lane,
Wythall,
Birmingham,
B47 6JX**

Consultation responses are being handled by an independent company, Clarke Associates, which has been appointed by the Trust and the College for this purpose.

Both Ninestiles Academy Trust and The Sixth Form College Solihull are committed to delivering services to all members of the local community in a fair and equal way. If you or anyone else would like to complete this survey in any other way (such as an enlarged print version or in other languages) please call 0330 9000 012.

Drop-in sessions for staff and parents/carers with children at schools within Ninestiles Academy Trust

Erdington Hall Primary School Ryland Road, Birmingham, B24 8JJ

PARENTS	STAFF
Tuesday 14 th February 2017: 3:30pm - 7:00pm	Wednesday 15 th February 2017: 4:00pm - 6:00pm

Ninestiles School An Academy Hartfield Crescent, Acocks Green, B27 7QG

PARENTS	STAFF
Monday 13 th February 2017: 3:30pm - 7:00pm	Thursday 16 th February 2017 4:00pm - 6:30pm

Drop-in sessions for staff, students and parents/carers at The Sixth Form College Solihull

The Sixth Form College Solihull Widney Manor Road, Solihull, B91 3WR

STAFF	STUDENTS	PARENTS
Tuesday 14 th February 2017 4:00pm - 5:30pm	Tuesday 28 th February 2017 12:35pm - 2:30pm	Monday 6 th March 2017 5:00pm - 7:30pm
Daily sessions between 8:30am and 9:30am from Monday 13 th February to Friday 17 th February 2017	Wednesday 1 st March 2017 12:35pm - 2:30pm	Wednesday 8 th March 2017 5:00pm - 7:30pm

Community drop-in meeting

Community

Thursday 9th March 2017
5:00pm - 7:00pm
Venue TBC



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What is proposed?

- The Sixth Form College Solihull would convert to an academy and join Ninestiles Academy Trust
- Under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, the College would dissolve and would transfer its property, rights and liabilities to Ninestiles Academy Trust
- If the proposal goes ahead, it would create the first Multi-Academy Trust of its kind in England
- If approved, the merger is likely to take place in August 2017



Background

- The College and Trust began talks to work together back in 2015
- A Government review recommended the College converts to an academy and joins the Trust
- The boards of both the College and Trust have voted in favour of the proposals
- The proposal would create an 'all through' Multi-Academy Trust



The benefits of merging

- Improved teaching and outcomes for students
- Access to the best possible education – from pre-school to post-16
- Raise aspirations and attainment levels
- Create new career opportunities for staff
- Increase scale, resources and profile of Trust, its schools and the College
- Shared expertise will lead to potential new partnerships and business opportunities



Academy conversion means...?

- ... being able to continue a proud history of providing the best education
- ... a natural progression for the College
- ... no change in ethos, atmosphere or approach
- ... protecting and sustaining the college's special qualities
- ... enable the College to become more financially secure



Admissions

- No change to College or Trust admissions policy
- Entry policy and requirements remain the same
- College will continue to recruit from a range of schools
- Name of the College is to stay the same
- Trust may rebrand, but not a priority



What happens next?

- We want to hear your views
- Consultation ends March 20th 2017
- All views will be collated and shared with the Trust and College's Boards
- Boards will reach a decision whether to approve progressing the proposals after the consultation period
- Secretary of State for Education will make final decision



Full list of drop-in sessions

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The Shirley Centre 274 Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull, B90 3AD

NAMES AND ADDRESSES WITHELD TO COMPLY WITH DATA PROTECTION LAWS

Students – The Sixth Form College Solihull consultation session 1/03/17

- The main worry is of change to college timetables
 - They prefer the existing timetable structure as it provides a better stepping stone to university
 - People are waiting for an outline of what will change at the college so that they can voice their opinions
 - The general feeling is that the merger won't affect the students much, or if there are any changes they are likely to affect staff more than students
 - The college has got to a really good place and they wouldn't change anything that would flip the equilibrium
 - A cautious endorsement of the merger – a step in a positive direction

Names of pupils: [REDACTED]

