



St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School

'Learning together for life in all its fullness' John 10:10

Becoming an Academy

Building Better, Stronger, Together



Summary

01 Why?

Why is this happening now?

02 What?

What is an Academy / MAT and how does it work?

03 How?

How do you become an Academy?

04 Pro's & Con's

Exploring the advantages and disadvantages

05 The Journey

Our journey to joining the Bath and Wells MAT

06 Q & A

Common questions and answers



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01 Why?

Why is this happening now?



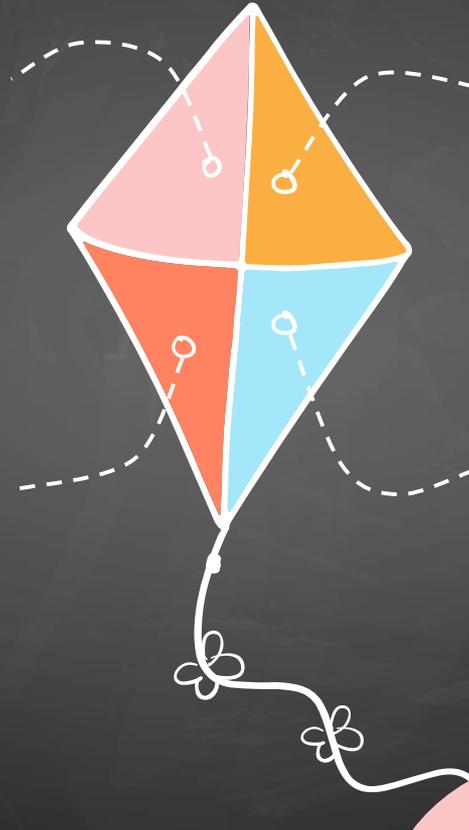
Why Now?

Ofsted Nov 2021 School Improvement

Following the school's Ofsted inspection, the school entered into a partnership agreement with BW MAT which has led to ongoing governor discussions about academisation

Education White Paper All Schools to Academies

The government has said it wants all schools to either have become academies or be in the process of joining a multi academy trust (MAT) by 2030 (White Paper March 2022)



Take a Positive Step Shape our future

Now we have the opportunity to choose our future for the school, this may not be the situation in the longer term. Let's build a stronger, better future

The Right Support Limited Sources of Support

The traditional areas of education support for schools has been becoming more expensive for less reliable methods of support. MATs are able to combine resources and offer quality services

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02 What?

What is an Academy / MAT and
how does it work?



What is an Academy?

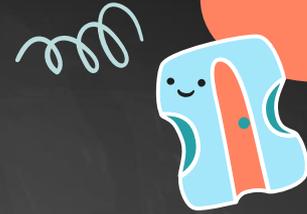
An Academy

- An academy is an independent state funded school. This means it's funded directly by the government (the Education Funding Agency, EFA) rather than by a local authority as maintained schools are.

vs Local Authority School

- As local authorities do not fund academies, academies have more freedom to decide certain things for themselves. For example, they can control their own curriculum and finances, and decide how long terms and school days will be.
- However they do, now, have to join a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and depending on the organisational structure, must have policies in place to guide schools.

What is a MAT?



- When a group of schools become part of a trust, governed by a single board of members and directors, that is known as a multi academy trust.
- The trust employs staff as opposed to a local authority in the case of state funded schools, CEO / School Improvement Team / HR / Finance / etc.
- The Head Teacher, or principal, at each academy school is responsible for its day to day running. Sometimes trusts prefer a leadership model that involves an Executive Head across 2 or more schools (Strategic) and Heads of School for day to day running (Operational).
- Schools are then overseen by the academy trust, which provides support and advice.
- Expertise is also shared among the schools which belong to an academy trust and its directors are responsible for strategic overviews of those schools under its umbrella.



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03 How?

How do you become an
Academy?



How to Convert to an Academy

01 Prepare

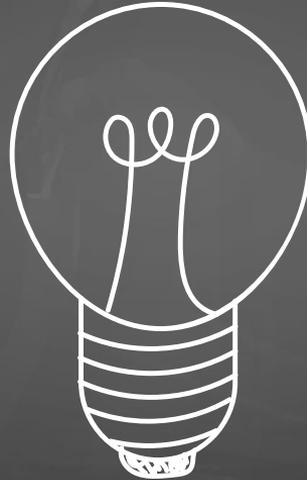
Governors to agree and prepare the school to convert to an Academy

02 Apply

Apply to the DfE for the school to become an Academy

03 Join a MAT

Request approval to join the chosen Multi Academy Trust



Transfer

Agree the responsibilities to transfer to the MAT

Setup

Prepare to open as an Academy, final preparations

Open

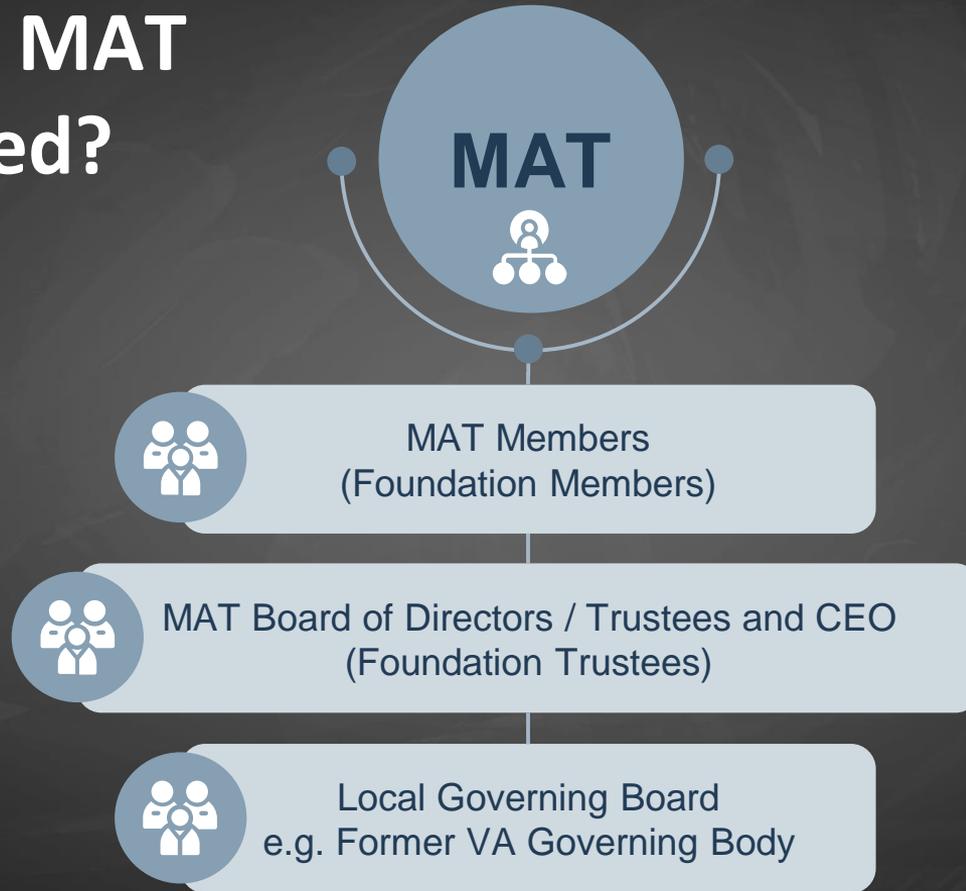
Open as an Academy and start settling in

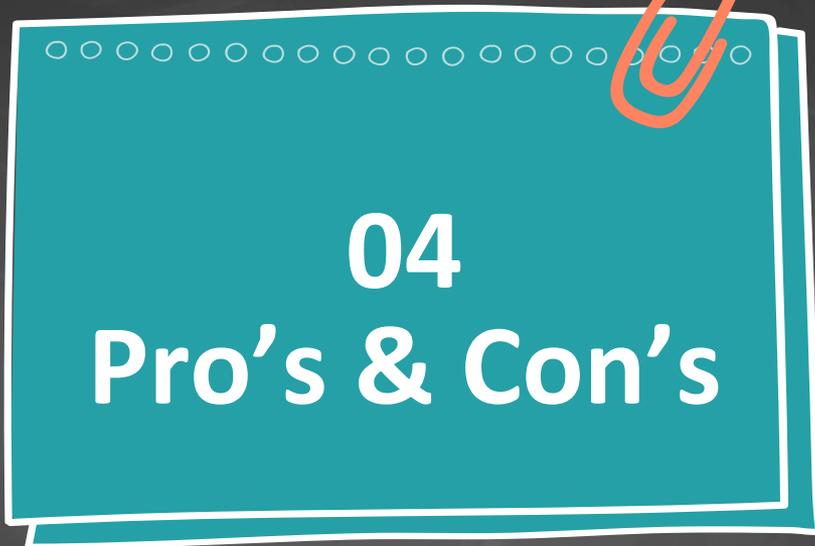
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05

06

How is a MAT Structured?





04 Pro's & Con's

Exploring the advantages and disadvantages.



Advantages?



- **Flexibility:** Head teachers have more freedom to run academies, by setting their own term dates, not having to follow the national curriculum and getting access to extra funding through sponsorship. Although BWMAT have decided many of these elements in advance.
- **Innovation:** Staff can be more innovative in academy schools to try new things and think outside the box in the way they teach their children and the curriculum they follow.
- **Funding:** Academies have access to extra funding through sponsorship which can enable them to improve facilities and offer a wider range of educational visits and trips to their children.
- **Shared expertise and resources:** Schools in a multi academy trust benefit from being able to share money, best practices and even their staff, who can be deployed at other trust schools who might be short staffed or in need of a fresh teaching approach. Struggling schools can also be supported by others in their trust to help them improve.



Disadvantages?



- **Schools are run more like businesses:** Some parents are concerned that education is becoming privatised as more schools become academies. Critics say there is too much of a focus on money and financial return, rather than what is best for the children who attend academies. Academies though are not allowed to make a profit.
- **Trusts can get too big too soon:** There have been some fears voiced that some academy trusts have taken on too many schools too quickly and are unable to cope as a result. When trusts increase in size, it has been argued, some of their schools lose out because of a shortage of resources to manage them effectively.
- **Flexibility is not always a good thing:** Parents who send their children to a local authority run school can be certain that they will be taught National Curriculum subjects. There is not the same certainty with academy schools, whose head teachers have the option to follow a different curriculum. Academies can also set their own term dates which could cause childcare issues for parents who have different children at an academy and a state funded school.



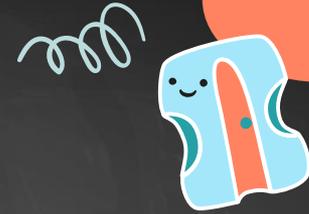


05 The Journey

Our journey to joining the Bath
and Wells MAT



Our Journey



- Following an Ofsted inspection in November 2021, the governors of St Aldhelm's agreed to enter into a Trust and School Improvement (TSI) Plan with school improvement leaders in the Bath and Wells MAT. This enabled the school and governors to experience first hand the support that a MAT can offer
- Research began in April 2022 - supported by Diocese Education Team, the school governors agreed to delegate this exercise to a smaller group of governors (4) as a MAT working group
- Finding the best fit for our school - matching our values and offering local support, ensuring we considered the options available and making the best decision
- Identified a list of 19 MATs – these were compared against the factors important to our school
- The MAT working group visited a MAT school which had recently converted to academy status and held an honest, open conversation with the head teacher
- The MAT working group produced a strengths and weakness matrix of selected MATs
- In January 2023 Governors voted to pass a resolution for St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School to convert to become an academy and join Bath and Wells MAT
- The process has been the culmination of 14 months' fact finding and the governing body believe this is the absolute best choice available for our school and will enable the school to retain its identity whilst benefiting from the relationship with a strong MAT which will help us to keep improving





Bath and Wells MAT Credentials

'That they may have life, life in all its fullness' John 10:10



BW MAT Schools

No. of Schools	35 Schools
No. Church/non Church	34/1
Diocese Areas	Bath and Wells Diocesan MAT
LA Areas	B&NES, North Somerset, Somerset
Primary / Secondary	All Primary

What's Next?

BW MAT Assess

MAT ensures we are a good educational / geographical fit

Apply to DfE

Submit an application to the DfE for conversion to an academy, joining BW MAT



01

02

03

04



Consultation

Communicate with all stakeholders and address any concerns

Conversion

Many legal and practical steps to complete conversion



06 Q & A

Common questions and
answers



Frequently Ask Questions



- **Does academising mean staff will lose their jobs?** No all staff will be moved over to the MAT under the same terms and conditions (TUPE).
- **Will academising change our school?** Yes, but generally for the better - more support for staff CPD (meaning better trained staff) and more modern / better supported back office systems, like online payments for parents. Generally though, the biggest impact initially is on leadership, administration and Governance.
- **Is an academy like a business?** No. A business makes profit for its shareholders. An academy is a charitable trust which cannot make a profit.
- **Who makes the decision to become an academy?** The governing body.
- **Will the school need to change its name?** No, but it may be shortened - St Aldhelm's Church School rather than St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School.



Frequently Ask Questions



- **Will there be a new uniform/logo?** No new uniform but we will update the name on our existing logo. So parents should just purchase uniform with an updated logo as, and when, required.
- **Are academies bound by the same rules and regulations as other schools?** Academies are required to follow the law and guidance on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions.
- **Will the academy follow the National Curriculum?** Mostly yes, but we will have more freedom to try different things in the curriculum and make sure that what is taught is relevant to our children and their specific needs. Anything we don't teach from the NC we will have to justify why not to Ofsted.
- **Does becoming an academy change the relationship with local schools and the community?** No. Academy funding agreements state that trusts must ensure that the school will be at the heart of its community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other local schools and the wider community.



Frequently Ask Questions



- **How does academy status affect SEN funding?** SEN funding will come directly from the government through the Education Funding Agency. Funding allocated to a named child would continue to be funded directly by the local authority, as it is now.





Thank You!

Do you have any questions?

Leave feedback at:

<https://forms.office.com/e/e9M6ng2X6m>

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www.staldhelms.co.uk

