



RED HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Zoar Street, Lower Gornal

Dudley. DY3 2PA

Tel: 01384 283697

Headteacher: Helen Tomlinson

10th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will know I am the very proud leader of Red Hall Primary School and since January 2019, when I came to the school, I have worked with the most amazing, dedicated team of colleagues. In partnership with you, we have a school that is welcoming, exciting and an inclusive learning space at the heart of the community. It has always been my intention to seek out how we can continue to evolve so that positive outcomes for children are the heart of what we do. The Governing Body of the school also have this same vision and desire.

The government's school white paper, [Every child achieving and thriving - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/every-child-achieving-and-thriving) (published February 2026), sets out an ambition for all schools in England to be part of a strong academy trust. With this in mind, and building on our positive experiences, we have been working with governors to explore whether joining an academy trust would be the right next step for Red Hall Primary School.

Together with myself, our senior leadership team and the governing body of Red Hall Primary, we would like to initiate a consultation regarding the potential academisation of our school to join the Stour Vale Academy Trust.

This decision has not been taken lightly, and I would like to reassure you that significant research and first-hand experience have informed the process over a number of years, with the full support of the governing body. Stour Vale Academy Trust was founded in 2017 by one primary and two secondary schools, who recognised the benefits of working collaboratively. Since then, Stour Vale has steadily grown and now comprises of thirteen member schools and one day nursery across Sandwell, Dudley and North Worcestershire. This number is due to rise with Brook Primary School and Summerhill Secondary School on their pathway to join the academy. Importantly, the trust's values—Integrity, Respect, Collaboration and Excellence—align closely with Red Hall Primary's principles and provide a clear moral and professional framework. We believe that Stour Vale offers a supportive and ambitious partnership that would enable us to continue to thrive while remaining true to what makes Red Hall Primary School distinctive. Therefore, it is our recommendation that Stour Vale is the academy trust best placed to support us in continuing to develop and evolve on our improvement journey.

We understand that this is an important decision for our school community, and we are committed to ensuring that you feel informed and able to share your views. The consultation process will provide you with the opportunity to find out more, ask questions and offer your feedback, all of which will be carefully considered by leaders and governors **before any final decision is made.**

The consultation will run from **10th September until 11th October 2026**. The Governing Body will meet on the 12th October to review the consultation. To help support your understanding of what a conversion to an academy with Stour Vale might look like, I have included a section of FAQ's underneath for your information. Also, you are warmly welcomed to attend a meeting on **21st September at 2.30pm** where there will be an opportunity for you to ask questions about a potential conversion to an academy.



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We also welcome any comments on the proposal, as well as any questions, suggestions or observations, which can be shared via email using the following address: academyconsultation@redhall.dudley.sch.uk

We are excited about the potential opportunities this could bring for our pupils, staff and wider community, whilst remaining firmly rooted in the values that make Red Hall Primary so special. This is about building on our strengths and ensuring that we are in the best possible position for the future. Your voice plays a vital part of this process, and I warmly encourage you to take part in the consultation and share your thoughts with us.

Thank you in advance for your time and continued support.

Warmest regards,

Helen Tomlinson and the Governing Body



Frequently Asked Questions

What is an academy trust?

An academy trust is a group of schools that work together under a shared governance structure. These schools remain focused on their own individual communities but benefit from being part of a wider network. The trust provides support, guidance and strategic direction, helping schools to collaborate, share expertise and continue improving. Academy trusts are funded directly by the government rather than through the local authority.

Why do schools join academy trusts?

Schools choose to join academy trusts for a range of positive reasons. Being part of a trust allows schools to work closely with others, sharing best practice, resources and expertise to improve teaching and learning. It can also provide greater opportunities for staff development and enhanced experiences for pupils. For many schools, it is about strengthening what they already do well and ensuring they are well-positioned for the future within an increasingly collaborative education system.

Is it only failing schools that join academies?

No—this is a common misconception. While some schools have converted to academy status following support or intervention, many strong and successful schools also choose to join academy trusts. These schools make the decision proactively, recognising the benefits of collaboration and wanting to build on their existing strengths. At Red Hall Primary, we are exploring this from a position of strength, not because it is required.

Will our school uniform change?

There are no plans to change the school uniform. Decisions such as uniform remain with the school, and we would not make changes without clear communication and consideration of our community. Maintaining our school identity is very important to us.

What impact will it have on our children?

Our children will continue to receive the same high-quality education in a familiar and supportive environment. The day-to-day experience of school life is unlikely to change. Over time, being part of an academy trust may bring additional opportunities, such as wider curriculum experiences, shared events, and access to a broader network of expertise. Any changes would always be made with the best interests of our pupils at the centre of decision-making.



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Will the school holidays change if we join an academy trust?

No—there is no intention to change the current school holiday pattern. While academies do have the flexibility to set their own term dates, we recognise how important consistency is for our families and community. We are committed to maintaining the existing holiday arrangements and would only consider any changes in exceptional circumstances, with clear communication well in advance.

Will the school's ethos and identity change?

Maintaining Red Hall Primary's strong identity, values and community ethos is a key priority. Any partnership we enter into must respect and support what makes our school unique. This has been an important consideration in identifying Stour Vale as a potential partner.