

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *What is an Academy?*

Academies are charitable companies funded by the Government to provide state education free of charge. Multi academy trusts bring together several academies under a single board of trustees, who are accountable for the academies within the Trust. They are funded at the same level as schools maintained by local authorities; and have the same responsibilities for children with special educational needs, pupils in receipt of pupil premium and for admissions. Due to the size of the Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust we also attract an element of capital funding direct.

### *So why make the change?*

The leadership of the College has been continuing to work to secure both the future stability and continued improvement of the College. Thanks to our fantastic community of students, parents and staff, our College is in a very strong position. We believe it is the right time for the College to join a multi-academy trust and reap the benefits that the right collaboration will bring to the community of Sidmouth College. We are proposing to convert to academy status and to join the **Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust**, as we believe this will fundamentally support the College to improve even further for the benefit of our students. This Trust aligns with our vision and values for all students and is established with a commitment to working collaboratively to improve outcomes for all.

### *Who are the Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust?*

The Ted Wragg Trust is an ambitious and inclusive Trust of Schools strengthening communities through excellent education. Schools work collaboratively towards their collective mission to transform lives and strengthen communities to make the world a better place. Love for each unique community within the Trust is demonstrated through values of ambition, selflessness and collaboration.

The Ted Wragg Trust was formed in 2013 with the aim of local schools working together to be the best that they can be. The Trust has since grown from a one school Trust to a 14 school Multi-Academy Trust and is responsible for the education of over 10,200 children aged between 2-18 in the South West.

The Ted Wragg Trust has the highest expectations for every child, every day, with social justice at its core. The Trust is determined for everyone to fulfil their greatest potential, to be the best that they can be. The Ted Wragg Trust puts children at the centre of all they do. Joining schools will become part of that caring and inspirational team, leading in their own unique local context and working together to equip students with the knowledge, skills and experience to become compassionate and courageous citizens, determined to make the world a better place. The Trust believes in maintaining a minimum across all schools whilst enabling excellence in each individual community.

### *What about the staff?*

If we convert to academy status all our staff will transfer to the new trust on their existing terms and conditions protected under the TUPE regulations. The Trust will employ qualified teachers and pay all its staff on national terms and conditions. Staff will benefit networking and sharing best practice as well as increased professional development opportunities. The Ted Wragg Trust's people strategy is committed to welcoming, retaining and developing great people.

### *What will happen to the local governing body?*

The local governing body (LGB) will remain. The Ted Wragg Trust has LGBs at the heart of its governance structure.

### *Doesn't joining a multi-academy trust mean that everything will change?*

No. Sidmouth College joins the Trust in a strong position and will benefit from working in a collective for the benefit of all students. Being part of the Ted Wragg Trust will enable us to work together and be part of a family of schools helping each other to improve. We will not require any targeted support from the Trust but will be able to access their universal offer of support. We will make no changes to staffing in the school and all pupils remain on roll. The schools' names, term dates, school times, uniform and admissions arrangements will not change. We do not expect parents and children to notice any difference in your day to day experience of school.

### *Will support still be available for children with additional needs?*

Yes. Academies are bound by the same requirements as all maintained schools to meet the needs of individual children. As part of a Trust of schools, we will be able to explore ways of working together to develop the support

that we can provide. The Ted Wrapp Trust has an SEND Strategy which was developed for the 2022/2023 academic year and is providing bespoke CPD, Speech and Language Therapy and additional Educational Psychology support; enabling thorough identification of need and the best support possible for those with additional needs.

#### *Who decides the admissions policy?*

The Trust use DCC to manage admissions, including drafting admissions policies. However, the Trust is legally the admitting authority for each school. We do not foresee any changes to our admissions policy.

#### *What changes will there be to staffing, particularly leadership?*

There are no foreseeable changes to any staffing as part of the conversion. Governors will continue to work with staff, ensuring that they feel happy and supported.

#### *What's the timescale for this change?*

Consultation is to 11 November and outcomes of the consultation will be reviewed shortly afterwards. If we decide to go ahead, we will be looking at a conversion at some point during the Spring of 2023.

### **Academies: Some key facts**

#### *Curriculum*

Academies are required to have a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. Academies are required to take part in the same pupil assessment arrangements and to report on the achievement and attainment of pupils in the same way as all other statefunded schools.

#### *Inspection*

Academies continue to be subject to Ofsted inspections.

#### *Staffing*

The regulations that place requirements on maintained schools do not directly apply to academies. General employment law applies to academies in the same way as to other organisations. Teachers must be suitably qualified. The Academy Trust has responsibility for setting pay and conditions. We will employ all staff on national terms and conditions so there is no change for staff. All teachers employed at an academy have access to the Teachers Pensions Scheme and all other employees at an academy have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

#### *Funding*

The academy trust will receive General Annual Grant from the Secretary of State calculated as the equivalent to that which would be received by a maintained school taking account of the number of pupils at the academy. Capital funding is also available, channelled through the Academy Trust. Every academy trust must abide by the requirements of and have regard to the guidance in the Academies Financial Handbook.

#### *SEND*

Academies should be fully inclusive local schools and in common with all other schools have a clear legal duty to do their best to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

#### *Admissions*

Academies are required to provide education for pupils wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which the academy is situated. Academies must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than available places. Academies are required to provide education for pupils of different abilities (i.e. they may not select pupils by ability).

## Specific questions raised by parents as part of consultation

*Please articulate in more depth the proposed benefits?*

The leadership of the college will work with governors to focus **strategically** on securing both the future stability and continued improvement of the College. An outward facing approach to **collaborative** working will align the College with the wider government education agenda. Being in a Trust means having a structured supportive organisation who care about students and staff.

The Ted Wragg Trust's mission and values aligns entirely with those of Sidmouth. After a rigorous process we believe this is the right Trust to support Sidmouth on the next step of our journey.

Some of the key benefits of being part of this particular Trust are:

- Working collaboratively on a formal basis with other strong schools in the region whose values are aligned
- Strong professional development at all levels
- Having high- quality professional networks
- Being stronger together with collective power to tackle the big issues
- Financial resilience
- Efficiencies in procurement through collective resourcing
- Human resource (to support with unexpected vacancies/ absence)
- Access to national strategic partners to support our outward facing agenda

*How can the college guarantee the protection of its budget and demonstrate how the additional costs associated with a trust's administration can be offset by any savings which may come from economies of scale etc.? Does the size of the Trust and its associated governance and management structure add additional bureaucracy?*

The Trust can provide a greater financial stability by working together as a collective. As an ambitious and inclusive Trust of schools, the Ted Wragg Trust works in collaboration, sharing both school-based and professional capacity. We achieve economies by working together, such as our own in-house Education Welfare Officer service and Speech and Language Therapy.

Additionally, resources are levered as being part of a Multi-Academy Trust such as condition funding and TCAF. By working together, we create capacity which can be shared across all schools.

During the current financial crisis, the Trust is also able to accept a higher level of risk than a single school and look at finances over a number of years. Administrative overheads are minimal – we work together, with a body of professional staff who are located across the school network.

*Will the Trust impose a narrowed curriculum in Sidmouth and will the time for art, music and other creative subjects be reduced?*

The curriculum at Sidmouth will not be changed. The Trust believes maintaining a high minimum standard across all schools, whilst enabling excellence in each local context. Headteachers are empowered to make the right decisions for their local communities.