



Windhill21 FAQs

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

What is Ivy Learning Trust?

Ivy Learning Trust is a multi academy trust of 14 primary schools in Enfield and Hertfordshire - please see ivylearningtrust.org for more information. It consists of the following primary schools:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Brimsdown | brimsdownprimary.org |
| Churchfield | churchfield.school |
| Crabtree Infants and Junior | crabtreejm.herts.sch.uk |
| Eastfield | eastfieldprimary.com |
| Larkspur | larkspurprimary.org |
| Lavender | lavenderprimary.org |
| Martins Wood | martinswood.herts.sch.uk |
| Peartree | peartreeprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Round Diamond | rounddiamondprimary.net |
| The Wroxham | thewroxhamschool.org |
| Walker | walker.enfield.sch.uk |
| Watchlytes | watchlytesprimary.org |
| Woodside | woodside.herts.sch.uk |

What are the main characteristics of Ivy Learning Trust?

Each school that joins Ivy retains its own individual character and uniqueness, has its own local governance and continues to serve its local community. The CEO provides strategic leadership across the Trust, taking into account the different needs of each school. Within Ivy, good practice is shared 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.

Why are we proposing to join Ivy Learning Trust and what other options have been explored?

Our central motivation for expansion is a desire to improve pupil outcomes for the children attending Windhill21. We seek operational efficiency and financial sustainability to maximise the funding spent directly on teaching and learning, resources, and enrichment.

Ivy has a demonstrable track record of school to school support and has reached critical thresholds in terms of scale and central operational capacity. Equally importantly, close interaction between executive leaders, Governors and Trustees has also provided assurance that the ethos and beliefs of Windhill21 and Ivy are well aligned. It is this combination of critical mass, high standards of teaching & learning and likeminded colleagues which create the specific appeal of Ivy to Windhill21.

We believe bringing Windhill21 into Ivy would provide the opportunity to create the capacity and platform to continuously improve the outcomes for the children who attend our school by ensuring:

- continued access to the best teachers,
- leadership has the capacity and challenge to adopt best practices as these develop within the education sector,
- opportunities for continuing professional development and promotion for all staff would support with recruitment and retention challenges,
- learning takes place in a well-resourced and safe environment,
- governance and financial capacity exist to develop and execute a long term sustainable operational strategy.

As a single academy trust, Windhill21 is unable to fully benefit from the economies of scale available to larger institutions. Whilst the current financial position of Windhill21 is secure, by becoming part of Ivy we believe our school would benefit from access to a wider range of financial resources, operational specialists, and economies of scale when spending. Ivy's access to annual capital funding through the annual School Condition Allocation ('SCA') would ensure that any Windhill21 capital projects can be planned and funded by the Trust.

What other options have been explored?

The Windhill21 Governing Board has considered the possibility of joining a number of other multi academy trusts in the surrounding area.

What are the benefits for the children of this proposal?

As was the case when Windhill21 converted to an academy in 2015, we would expect no visible changes to school life for the children. Windhill21 would remain Windhill21 as we all know it, the impacts largely in the background and incrementally securing the long term sustainability of the school.

However, there are some additional, enrichment opportunities which everyone at Windhill21 would benefit from. These include a number of special events and activities run by Ivy across the Trust to give children a variety of opportunities they may not otherwise have.

These include:

- Ivy Parliament - Windhill21 children would be involved in a children's parliament. This body meets for one day every term, provides training on debating and campaigning skills and decides on what the children want to change and how they want to change it.

[Ivy children go to Parliament](#)

- Ivy's Got Talent - This is a bi-annual talent show showcasing all the talent from across the trust. The finalists from each school get to perform in a large theatre.

[Ivy children wow the crowds](#)

- BSL - All Ivy children learn British Sign Language

[Breaking down barriers with BSL](#)

How would this affect SEND provision?

It would not have any adverse effects and could have positive benefits. For example, working so closely with other schools would mean we would be able to benefit from experts in all fields of SEND. Regular meetings are held to which all SENCOs are invited at which they can share their expertise in a supportive environment.

What are the benefits for the staff of this proposal?

The staff would have access to bespoke training and development which would help them to be up to date with the latest educational practice. Regular meetings are held to bring together school leads to share their expertise in areas such as attendance/ early years/ SEND and to introduce new joint initiatives.

- More CPD opportunities would help retain the excellent staff at Windhill21. This would help the children to have continuity in their learning and to benefit from a school with stable staff. Ivy is a partner of 3 Teaching School Hubs and staff from across the Trust act as facilitators for Early Career Teacher and National Professional Qualification training.
- The staff at Windhill21 would contribute and benefit from outstanding innovative practice.
- Being part of a larger trust would provide additional promotion prospects for staff.

What would happen to staff pay and conditions?

All pre-existing terms and conditions would be honoured. We plan to keep everything the same through TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) arrangements and continue to mirror the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document and the Burgundy Book for teachers and the National (Green Book) for support staff.

A consultation period would take place, which would include a meeting for staff members with representatives from the local authority and the main unions involved (NEU, NASUWT, NAHT and Unison). Although TUPE involves statutory consultation with staff representatives, informal discussions would 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. It should be noted that no existing staff would be asked to move to a different school within the Trust against their wishes.

What would happen to staff pensions?

If staff are currently a member of either the Teachers' Pension Scheme or the Local Government Pension Scheme, then membership would 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. Therefore, nothing would change.

Any member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (support staff scheme) can continue to or opt to make additional pension payments.

If we became part of the MAT, could staff be asked to move to other schools within the trust?

No. Existing staff would not be asked to move to other schools within the trust. However, new staff who join after the transfer (if it takes place) could be asked to move to other schools. This would be a rare occurrence because it makes no sense to move a member of staff between schools against their wishes. The only staff who have moved between schools have done so because of promotion or to be closer to home.

Would Windhill21 still recruit its own staff or would Ivy have a say in recruitment?

Windhill21 would recruit all new staff itself. The decision about who to appoint is down to the Head/Senior Leadership Team at Windhill21.

Would Windhill21's leaders still be able to run their schools as they see fit?

Windhill21 would retain its own individual character and uniqueness, have its own local governance and continue to serve its local community. We would 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.

- Your child's class would have:
 - the same teacher
 - the same number of children
 - the same teaching and learning strategies
- universal free school meals for R, Y1 & Y2 would continue
- children in Y3, Y4, Y5 & Y6 who qualify for free school meals would still receive them
- there would still be breakfast and after school clubs
- there would still be extracurricular clubs
- the local admissions arrangements would remain the same

How would local governance work?

The Local Governing Boards ('LGBs') in Ivy are made up of up to nine members (two elected by parents, one elected by staff, up to five Trust-appointed and the Head), although there may be a transition period to move to this number after Windhill21 joins.

The main priorities of the LGBs within Ivy Learning Trust are school improvement and safeguarding, which it could be argued are the fundamental functions of any school. Their focus on school improvement means that they have the vital role of holding the leadership of the school to account for pupil outcomes, including the use of the Pupil Premium and Sports Premium.

To enable two-way communication, there are regular meetings between the Chair of the Trust, the Chair of each LGB and the Head of each school to ensure issues can be escalated both upwards and downwards. In addition, a member of Ivy's Executive SI Team would attend each school's LGB to help facilitate this.

Would there still be parent governors?

Yes. The LGB of the school would continue to include at least two parent representatives – this is the same as under the current arrangements at Windhill21 where a minimum of two parent governors are required.

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?

The Ivy Complaints Procedure is available on the Ivy website and details the arrangements for any complaints. Ultimately, once they have exhausted the Trust's procedure for complaints and remain dissatisfied, parents can take their complaint to the DfE.

Would the schools still be subject to OFSTED inspections?

Yes – this situation would not change.

Would we adopt Ivy's policies? If so, what sort of policies would they be?

Yes. All common policies (apart from those relating to HR which are confidential) are available on the Ivy website. Each school would decide its own procedures for specific policies (e.g. behaviour, curriculum, accessibility).

What are the financial benefits?

With a greater ability to share resources between schools and greater economies of scale as part of a Trust, there would 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 would be able to respond to new initiatives, always be ahead of the game and not waste time re-inventing the wheel.

As it has in excess of 5 schools and 3000 pupils, Ivy qualifies for the School Condition Allocation ('SCA') - a significant amount of annual capital funding provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (part of the DfE). Since 2021, this has amounted to £2.3m with the annual allocation increasing each time the trust grows (it is currently £920k p.a.). Projects have been funded for all schools, allowing them to provide a better and safer environment for all children within the trust to enjoy.

Who would pay for the transfer?

Government funding through the Trust Capacity Fund would be applied for, to offset the principal costs of the transfer, which would be legal fees, audit costs and staff costs.

What percentage of the school budget would Ivy Learning Trust use?

Currently the contribution to central services taken from each school's budget is 6%. This pays for the salaries of and services provided by the Central Team, which include finance, HR, premises, Health and Safety, IT and governance.

Is there a cap on the growth rate of the contribution to central services?

It is not anticipated that the top slice level of 6% would be increased, particularly given Ivy's short and medium-term growth prospects. At the end of each school year, the Trust Board would meet to confirm whether any rebate is possible based on the actual spend for the year across the Trust.

Would this change reduce the amount of funding/ donations needed from parents or would this increase?

The money raised from parents and carers would remain with and solely for the use of Windhill21.

Who would own the land and the buildings?

The existing long-term lease (125 years) from Hertfordshire would be transferred to Ivy. Each school would continue to receive a capital allocation as part of its funding. In addition, Ivy's SCA funding would allow it to invest in capital projects to enhance the land and buildings of all schools within the trust. All schools would continue to pay for their site maintenance.

No. Existing staff would not be asked to move to other schools within the trust. However, new staff who join after the transfer (if it takes place) could be asked to move to other schools. This would be a rare occurrence because it makes no sense to move a member of staff between schools against their wishes. The only staff who have moved between schools have done so because of promotion or to be closer to home.

When and how would the final decision be made?

After the six week consultation period, trustees would meet to review all comments and to vote whether to transfer. Parents and staff would be informed the following day.

Why does the school wish to transfer to Ivy in April 2024 rather than wait until Sept 2024, in line with the school's financial year?

There is significant advantage in delaying the transfer until Sept 2024.

Has Ivy got their own catering contract with a private catering company for providing school meals or will the school remain with Hertfordshire Catering?

The school will continue to use Hertfordshire Catering post transfer.

Would we be forced to do things that the other schools are doing as part of a group? example, school rules/policies or learning?

No in terms of school rules although there are central generic policies but each school has their own procedures e.g. behaviour.

Would we be prevented from doing things that we would like e.g. rules/policies or learning?

No.

Will the Wonder fund or WSA contributions be affected? Will they need to be shared with other schools?

No.

How will the school manage the cost incurred? Will this be lost from the budget? The Ivy Learning Trust will apply for Government funding through the Trust Capacity Fund will be applied to offset the costs of the transfer.

How will the 6% shortfall be recouped? Through not paying for central services as we do now e.g., HR, finance, premises, H&S, IT, governance, through procurement.

How can the school afford the 6% top slice from its budget?

The 6% top slice pays for the services provided by the Central Team at ILT, which includes finance, HR, premises, Health and Safety, IT and governance. The benefit analysis indicates an estimated saving of £19k for the Windhill21 budget.

What happens if the Ivy group close?

Windhill21 could either become maintained by the Local Authority or consider joining another MAT.

What happens if WH21 change their mind? Can we leave?

Yes, but it would not be straight forward.

We have the pros of joining but what are the cons?

Nothing is always 100% good so what would be the downside? There are mostly pros – but less control of central services could be seen as both a pro and a con