



**Consultation for  
Stakeholders of Gig-Mill Primary School  
Conversion to Academy Status as part of Hales Valley Academy Trust**

The current political landscape has focussed our minds on the future of our school and how best to continue to secure ongoing and sustained improvements for our children. With this in mind, the Governors are seeking to consult with parents, staff and other stakeholders about Gig-Mill academising and joining Hales Valley Trust.

**Why are stakeholders being consulted?**

A number of our staff had the opportunity to work alongside Hales Valley Academy Trust during the past year. This has enabled the leadership team to really get to know Hales Valley and see how schools work once they have joined. The leadership team have seen first-hand the high levels of support that schools receive after joining Hales Valley and also recognise the opportunities to further improve teaching and learning by collaboration and partnership that joining the trust would bring. We have found that they share our approach to education and welfare of students. As such, we feel that Hales Valley Academy Trust is a good match and offers many opportunities to Gig-Mill as we move forward following the government's ambition for all schools to become an academy.

A consultation process must take place with all our stakeholders before any changes can take place. This process involves the school and the Trust, providing information, answering questions and listening to feedback.

The purpose of this statement is, therefore, to provide information about a potential conversion to academy status and about the Hales Valley Academy Trust, signpost you to where you can find additional information and tell you how you can make your views known to the governors.

**What is an Academy?**

An academy is a state-funded school which operates independently within the requirements of national codes of practice for state schools. However, unlike a state school, it receives its funding directly from central government rather than through a local authority.

**What is a Multi-Academy Trust?**

The model involves a family of schools forming a 'Multi-Academy Trust' (MAT) under a Shared Company. The essential principles of the model are that it involves no external business sponsorship and there will be no change to the distinctive and individual nature of any of the schools in the trust

### **Why be part of Hales Valley Academy Trust?**

- Like Gig-Mill, Hales Valley Academy Trust places children and young people at the heart of they do. Their vision “success for all” aligns with that of Gig Mill – “Together we care, together we succeed.”
- Hales Valley Academy Trust respects the distinct character of each of its member schools. Gig-Mill wouldn’t change our name, our uniform, or our own uniqueness. We would still be the friendly, caring school that you know.
- Collaboration and partnership are key to all we do and nothing will change with that. In fact, it will just improve. By expanding that network through Hales Valley we are able to access a wide range of expertise that ultimately ensures the curriculum provision is of the highest quality for our children.
- Gig-Mill Primary School is a Dudley maintained school and we are very proud to be here serving the community of Dudley. That wouldn’t change, we would still access all Dudley has to offer, whilst being part of the family of schools that make up Hales Valley.
- Our funding would come direct from government rather via the Local Authority. We should save money and be able to reinvest that for our children.
- Hales Valley has an excellent track record of securing large building improvement bids, resulting in large scale improvement to their schools including new roofs, new windows and improved security. Gig-Mill could benefit from this access to building condition funds to improve our building and our learning environments.

### **Other areas where working with Hales Valley could bring benefits to Gig-Mill:**

- **Teaching and Learning:** sharing our vision of curriculum development by collaboration with other schools across the trust.
- **School Improvement Strategies:** increased opportunities to work closely with a small group of highly committed schools to develop practice and outcomes for our children.
- **Developing Leadership Potential:** there are opportunities for leaders within Hales Valley to share experience and practice in order to raise achievement.
- **Economies of Scale:** by entering into contracts with suppliers for all schools in the Hales Valley Academy Trust, we will be able to save money (paper, photocopiers, insurance)

### **Which schools are in the Hales Valley Academy Trust?**

Hales Valley was founded in 2017 by two primary schools who had been working in a formal partnership as a Federation for five years. Lutley primary school and Lapal primary school recognised the significant benefits of working collaboratively and were soon joined by Woodside primary school, Hurst Hill primary school and Priory primary school by the end of the year. Hales Valley Trust was the first all-primary academy trust in Dudley Local Authority and they now want to grow by working with more primary schools, sharing good practice for the benefit of children.

## What wouldn't change?

Many things would remain the same and you may find it hard to see how things have changed.

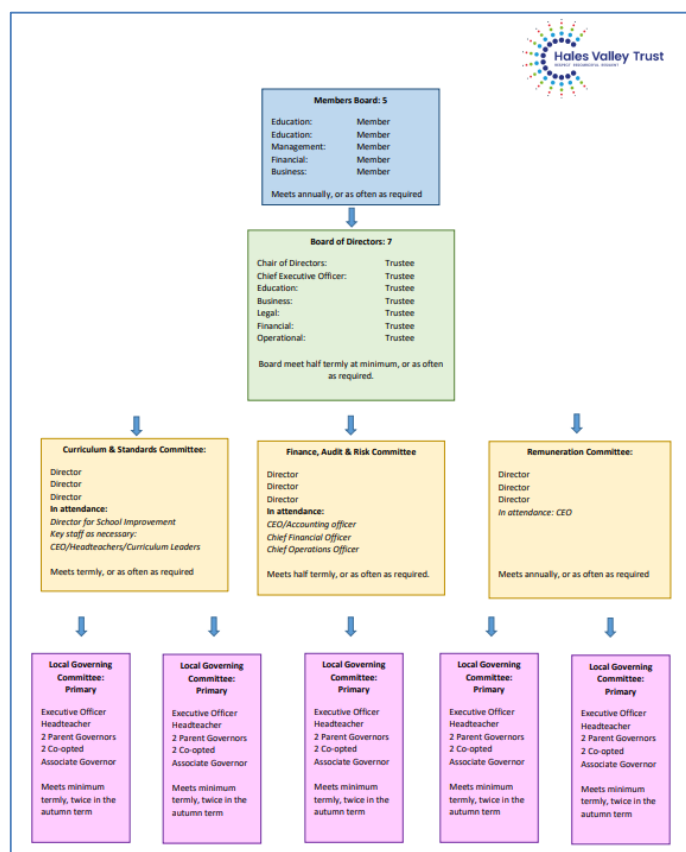
- Gig-Mill would remain a school in Dudley, teaching Dudley children. The partnerships we have made with other schools and external agencies over the last few years would continue.
- The school would also continue to have the same holidays as other Dudley schools.
- Gig-Mill would still be bound by the statutory codes for Special Educational Needs and would continue to work closely with Dudley's SEND services.
- The school would continue to abide by School Teachers Pay and Conditions and the National Joint Council terms and conditions including pay recommendations.
- The school uniform would remain the same. And so would our school's name.
- Gig-Mill staff would remain the same.
- School admissions would continue to be through Dudley

The schools have excellent relationships and also work well in partnership with other schools. That commitment to wider partnership working is what we want to be part of.

## What will be the governance structure for Gig-Mill?

Should Gig-Mill take the decision to academise, common with the other schools in the Hales Valley Academy Trust, we would be governed by a 'Local Governing Committee (LGC). The governance structure for each academy within the multi-academy trust also includes a Trust Board with responsibility for all schools in the Trust. This Trust Board are in turn accountable to the Members of Hales Valley Academy Trust. Existing Gig-Mill Governors would continue in their role.

## Current Governance Structure for the Hales Valley Academy Trust:



All schools are run by their own Local Governing Committee, including representation from parents. Under the delegated powers the LGCs would keep the responsibility for high standards and maintaining the particular culture and ethos associated with the school.

**How do I make my views known?**

The consultation period will cover the five week period from Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 to Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and welcome views from parents, carers and families.

You are invited to submit your comments and views using the following e-mail address:

[consultation@gig-mill.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:consultation@gig-mill.dudley.sch.uk)

Alternatively, letters should be marked 'Confidential - Academy Conversion' and sent to the school office.

In addition, you are welcome to attend the information event listed below. Any views expressed at the meetings will be captured and included in the final considerations of the Full Governing Body

**Stakeholder Consultation Meeting:**

Parents and other Community Stakeholders: Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2.00 pm at Gig-Mill

This is an open meeting with a presentation from the CEO of Hales Valley and the opportunity to ask questions and verbally express views.

**Before I give my views, where can I find out more information?**

Further information generally on Academies provided by the DfE can be found on their website.

Hales Valley Academy Trust also has a website [www.halesvalleytrust.org.uk](http://www.halesvalleytrust.org.uk)

where you can find further information about the Trust's values and about the directors and members.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs A Hannaway  
Headteacher



Mr D Edgar  
Chair of Governors