



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Exploring the possibility of Westmoor Primary School joining Centurion Multi-Academy Trust

This FAQ document should be read alongside the consultation letter.

Governors are committed to an open, balanced, and transparent consultation. **No decision has been made.**

### 1. Why is Westmoor Primary School considering joining a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)?

The Governing Body has a responsibility to plan for the long-term future of the school. The education landscape is changing rapidly, and local authorities are increasingly limited in the level of support and financial resilience they can offer.

By exploring the possibility of joining a strong local MAT, governors are considering how best to:

- Secure long-term stability and sustainability
- Strengthen school improvement capacity
- Protect high standards and outcomes for pupils
- Access shared expertise and resources

This exploration is about future-proofing success, not responding to failure.

### 2. What type of school is Westmoor Primary—are we an LA-maintained school?

Westmoor Primary School is a **Foundation Trust School**, which means we are still legally **maintained by the local authority**, but we also work in partnership with the **North Tyneside Learning Trust (NTLT)**. Foundation Trust Schools follow the National Curriculum, are funded in the same way as other maintained schools, remain subject to Ofsted inspection, and stay within the local authority family of schools.

### 3. What does it mean that Westmoor is part of the North Tyneside Learning Trust?

Being part of the **North Tyneside Learning Trust (NTLT)** means the school benefits from the support of a charitable foundation that strengthens our governance, brings additional expertise into the school, and provides long-term partnerships with employers, universities and education specialists. While we remain a local-authority-maintained school, NTLT appoints some governors and helps enhance leadership, enrichment opportunities and pupil experiences across partner schools.

### 4. Why is this being considered when Westmoor is already a successful school?

Governors fully recognise that Westmoor Primary School is a successful, well-regarded school with a strong ethos, committed staff and supportive community.

This proposal is **not driven by school failure**. Instead, governors are considering how best to **protect and sustain the school's success over the long term**, particularly in a challenging and uncertain financial and educational climate.

### 5. Why Centurion Multi-Academy Trust?

Centurion Multi-Academy Trust is a **local, primary-only trust based within North Tyneside**, established by schools with a shared commitment to high standards, collaboration and community identity.

Centurion's vision aligns closely with Westmoor's ethos of *"Learning together through truth, opportunity and celebration."* The Trust focuses on:

- Collaboration and shared expertise
- Bespoke, high-quality curricula
- Strong safeguarding and governance
- Financial responsibility so funding benefits pupils
- Staff wellbeing, development and retention

### 6. Why not continue collaborating with the Local Authority instead?

Westmoor already collaborates successfully with other schools and values its local authority networks.

Governors are exploring whether a **more formal partnership structure**, such as a small local MAT, could provide greater long-term stability, shared accountability, and access to specialist expertise. This does not imply that current collaboration is ineffective.

### 7. Why move away from a democratically accountable Local Authority?

Governors recognise and respect the democratic accountability and support provided by the Local Authority.

Joining a MAT would represent a **change in governance arrangements**, with accountability moving to the Trust Board and the Department for Education. This is a significant factor in the decision-making process and is being carefully weighed.

#### 8. What is the national direction of travel for schools, and how does joining a MAT fit into this?

The Government's 2026 White Paper sets out a clear ambition for all schools to become part of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) over time, as ministers believe MATs strengthen collaboration and help raise standards. The wider national focus is on improving inclusion and reducing the disadvantage gap, with trusts expected to play a key role in delivering these improvements.

Exploring MAT membership now ensures we understand what this direction means for our school and can plan for the future in the best interests of our community.

#### 9. Is this a form of privatisation of education?

No. Academies are **state-funded schools**, free to attend, and cannot operate for profit. They remain part of the public education system.

However, governors acknowledge that academisation is a subject of national debate, and that differing views are valid and welcomed through consultation.

#### 10. What evidence is there that joining a MAT improves outcomes for children?

National research on academisation presents a **mixed picture**. Some MATs are highly effective under the right conditions; others show no clear advantage, particularly for already successful schools.

Governors are not assuming automatic improvement. The focus is whether joining **this specific local trust** could add value to Westmoor.

#### 11. What are the risks or disadvantages of academisation?

Governors acknowledge that there are potential disadvantages, including:

- Changes to governance and accountability
- Reduced Local Authority involvement
- Financial risk being held by the Trust
- The fact that conversion is effectively irreversible

These risks are being considered carefully alongside potential benefits.

#### 12. Will the National Curriculum still be followed?

Yes. Westmoor would continue to offer a **broad, balanced curriculum** that meets statutory requirements.

While academies have curriculum freedoms, governors are not proposing changes to curriculum intent.

### 13. Will children be taught by unqualified teachers?

No. Governors and leaders place a strong emphasis on **high-quality, qualified teaching**.

Although academies may legally employ staff without Qualified Teacher Status, there is no intention to reduce teaching quality. Pupil outcomes remain a priority.

### 14. What happens to staff pay, conditions and pensions?

All staff would transfer under **TUPE regulations**, which protect existing pay, conditions and pension arrangements at the point of transfer.

Any future changes would require formal consultation. Staff wellbeing and stability are recognised as vital to pupils' success. Westmoor is proud of its committed staff.

### 15. Will staff be required to move between schools within the MAT?

There is **no expectation** of routine staff movement between schools.

Any collaboration involving staff would only occur where there is clear educational benefit, appropriate agreement and no detriment to continuity for children.

### 16. Could one school's financial position affect another school?

Governors recognise this concern and are undertaking thorough financial due diligence.

This includes examination of current budgets, future forecasts, and how collective working would be managed fairly and responsibly.

### 17. Will Westmoor lose its identity or community feel?

Governors are clear that Westmoor's ethos, values and strong community identity are fundamental.

Any trust arrangement being considered is intended to **protect each school's individuality**, not remove it.

### 18. Will the school name, uniform or site change?

No.

- The school name would remain the same
- There are no plans to change uniform
- The school would remain on its current site

### 19. Will term dates or the school day change?

No. There are **no plans** to change term dates or the length or timings of the school day.

## 20. Why now? Is there an urgent need to convert?

There is **no immediate requirement** for Westmoor to convert.

Governors are considering whether proactive planning may help secure long-term sustainability, while recognising views that more time and further exploration may be appropriate.

## 21. Has the decision already been made?

No. This consultation is genuine. Governors have not reached a final decision and will carefully consider all feedback.

## 22. Can the decision be reversed later?

Academy conversion is effectively **irreversible**, which is why governors are approaching this decision with caution, due diligence and extensive consultation.

## 23. What happens next?

The consultation period is open. Governors will review all feedback alongside professional advice before making a decision, which will be communicated clearly to families and staff.