

# PRESS RELEASE



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## Approval for New School in Cofton Park

An application to open a new Primary School by Victoria Academies Trust has been approved by the Department for Education.

Austin Park Primary Academy, a new two-form entry primary school; with a Mainstream Autism Base and a full-time fifty-two place nursery has been approved to open in Worcestershire. The new school is targeted to open in the Cofton Park area of the county in September 2023 and will be run by Victoria Academies Trust.

**Gurinder Singh Josan CBE, Chair of Trustees at Victoria Academies Trust said,** “This is excellent news for the children, families and community of Cofton Park. The free school application process is rigorous and demanding and we are proud to have been successful, all testament to the hard work of the team behind the bid. This will be a purpose-built school tailored for the specific needs of the children. We look forward to welcoming the children, parents and community of the Cofton Park area into the school over the years to come.”

**Sharron Philpot, CEO of Victoria Academies Trust said,** “We are absolutely delighted to be successful in this bid. Victoria Academies Trust are passionate about ensuring that every child has access to a quality education enabling them to be the best they can be. By answering the call to provide much needed places in this area, including provision for a Mainstream Autism Base, we really do believe we can impact on the lives of many more children in the West Midlands area. We look forward to working in partnership with Worcestershire County Council to ensure we open a school that truly ‘stands out’.”

Austin Park Primary Academy will provide 420 (age 4-11) much needed places in the area and will be underpinned by the Trust aim ‘To create Standout schools that ensure everyone is the best they can be’. The free school is part of the latest wave of primary, secondary and all-through schools to be approved to open, joining more than 550 already open and over 220 in the pipeline.

**Ends**

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**Notes for Editors:**

- *Victoria Academies Trust opened in 2014 and currently has nine primary schools in Birmingham, Sandwell, Staffordshire, Walsall and Worcestershire.*
- *We successfully opened Poppyfields Primary Academy as our first free school in September 2019 and is due to open a tenth school; Elm Tree Primary Academy, a Special School for Autistic children in Sandwell in 2022*
- *Free schools are newly-established state schools that are independent of local authority control.*
- *Free schools are more likely to be judged Outstanding when compared to other state schools (31% Outstanding).*
- *Link to DFE announcement <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-phase-of-school-transformation-launched>*