



Abbot Beyne

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Our Ref: ALS/HMH

18th November 2019

Dear Stakeholder,

Consultation on a proposal to establish a multi-academy trust and convert to academy status

Background

The Governing Boards of five schools have been discussing how our schools might work in closer partnership to provide mutual support, challenge and benefits for each other.

The Governing Boards share the ambition for their schools to continue to provide an excellent education for their pupils while protecting each school's role at the heart of its community and retaining its unique qualities and strengths. Each Governing Board has been considering the future plans of its school in a fast changing and increasingly challenging educational landscape.

Proposal

The Governing Boards believe one of the best ways forward may be to establish a local Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) and for the five schools (all judged Good by Ofsted) to convert to academy status. The proposed MAT would have five founding member schools, listed in alphabetical order below:

- Abbot Beyne High School
- Christ Church Primary School and Nursery
- Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School
- Tower View Primary School
- Victoria Community School

The proposed name of the MAT would be Trent Collaborative Trust.

We believe pupils and staff would benefit from the greater opportunities that formal partnership, through the MAT, would bring, which include:

- extending learning opportunities and activities for pupils
- enriching the curriculum through partnership working and shared resources
- enabling the sharing of excellent practice in teaching and learning
- enhancing the professional development of teaching and support staff
- building mutual support and accountability between the Headteachers and between the Governors
- securing cost and resource efficiencies through joint commissioning of services

Everyone a Learner Everyone Learning

Consultation

We are now consulting with staff, parents, carers, pupils and the community. The consultation period will run between Monday 18th November and Friday 13th December 2019.

Each Governing Board will then consider a report on the academy consultation before making a final decision on whether to proceed with the proposal. If the Governing Boards agree to proceed, the plan is for the Trust to be established and for the schools to convert in the Spring Term 2020. We attach a Consultation Frequently Asked Questions document for your information.

If you have any feedback on the proposal that you would like to share with the Governing Bodies, then please do complete the attached survey form and return to the school by Friday 29th November 2019.

Yours sincerely,

Annabel Stoddart Headteacher Abbot Beyne High School
Victoria Anderson Headteacher Christ Church Primary School and Nursery
Nicola Oliphant Headteacher Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School
Andrew Ridout Headteacher Tower View Primary School
Liz Loughlin Headteacher Victoria Community School

Frequently Asked Questions

Our Collective Vision

We aim to become an outstanding multi-academy trust that builds Excellence through Partnership. Our values are:

- *CULTURE* – committed to creating a positive and supportive learning culture across the family of schools for children aged 2-19 years old
- *COLLABORATION* – committed to learning from and with all schools, and sharing good practice across the Trust through collaboration
- *COMMITMENT* – an overall commitment to involve everyone in raising standards of learning, teaching and outcomes for all pupils across the community.
- *COMMUNITY* – committed [to building a cohesive, inclusive and high achieving community] - providing opportunities for the wider community

1 . What is the proposal?

The proposal is for the five local schools to form a partnership called a multi-academy trust (MAT) and for the schools to convert to academy status. The five founding members of the Trust, in alphabetical order will be

- Abbot Beyne High School
- Christ Church Primary School and Nursery
- Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School
- Tower View Primary School
- Victoria Community School

The five schools have been working closely together for some time and have already benefitted from this collaboration and partnership.

2 . How would this proposal benefit our school?

We believe that stronger partnership between schools that share a similar vision, ethos and values and the same commitment to raising standards, would help our school in a number of important ways, including;

- extending learning opportunities and activities for all pupils
- enriching the curriculum through partnership working and shared resources
- sharing excellent practice in teaching and learning
- enhancing the professional development of teaching and support staff
- building mutual support and accountability between the Head Teachers and between the Governors

We believe that we can bring enhanced benefits and opportunities by formalising these existing working relationships.

3. How will the children benefit?

If the schools convert to academy status and establish the MAT, the children will still wear the same uniforms as before and will be taught in the same classrooms by the same teaching staff, so they won't notice any immediate difference. Each school will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all our children.

In time the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, mostly as a result of new training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the children's education. In particular, the children will benefit from the sharing of excellent and innovative practice in teaching and learning between the partner schools. They will also have wider opportunities to learn new skills and experience new activities.

4. What will be the impact on staff?

Currently, all staff are employed by Staffordshire County Council. After conversion, all staff will be employed by the new MAT. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. Staff will be provided further information on how they are affected. Being part of the MAT will also provide greater opportunities for career progression and development. Staff are already working together on a range of teaching, learning, curriculum and pupil support projects.

5. What is an academy and what is a multi-academy trust?

An academy is an independent state school that is run by an academy trust. The academy trust enters into an agreement with the Secretary of State for Education that sets out its responsibilities and accountabilities for the effective running of the academy. The academy is funded directly by the Government and is no longer run by the Local Authority. The academy trust is given charitable exemption, which means it must operate much like a charity. A MAT has two or more academies as members.

6. How will the MAT trust and the schools be run?

The MAT will have a Board of up to eight Trustees made up of a mixture of current Governors and people with particular skills and expertise to help it run efficiently, effectively and compliantly. Although the Board would have a number of legal and regulatory powers it would delegate many of its powers to Local Governing Bodies and Committees. Local Governing Bodies would continue to have a mixture of representatives from parent, staff and local communities. Each Headteacher would still be responsible for running their own school. The five Headteachers together would form a leadership group to develop plans for partnership working and collaboration.

7. Would the school have to change its name, logo or uniform?

No, none of the schools will be changing their name, uniform or logo.

8. Will the distinctive aspects of our school change?

No. Each school will remain a unique place. For example Holy Trinity will continue to have its Christian ethos at the heart of its school

9. Will we get more money as an academy?

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. The whole of the school budget would come direct to the school from central Government allowing the school to control the whole of their spending. As part of a multi-academy trust, we may also achieve greater efficiencies through increased buying power and joint commissioning of services; such as school equipment, catering and cleaning.

10. How will admissions to the school be affected?

The application process for parents and carers will remain the same. The MAT will become the admitting authority for the five schools but each would have its own admissions policy as now. Any future policy changes would need to be clear and fair and in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The Local Authority will continue to have responsibility for making sure there are sufficient school places locally and to coordinate the admissions process for all schools.

11. Will our responsibilities in relation to SEND and exclusions change?

No. Responsibilities as an academy in relation to Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) and exclusions will be just the same as they are now.

12. Can a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan nominate an academy as their school of choice?

Yes. Schools converting to academy status can retain the admissions criteria they currently use. These arrangements and related processes must at all times comply with the School Admissions Code.

13. Will academies be free from the Ofsted inspection regime?

No. Academies are inspected in the same way as maintained schools. Each school will continue to be inspected individually. The performance of all schools will continue to be monitored and if there are signs of deterioration, or other factors likely to cause concern, these could trigger an inspection.

14. What is the process to become an academy?

The five schools established a working group of Governors and Headteachers and, over the past few months, they have been exploring MAT status. The working group presented proposals for the governance, leadership and management structure of a MAT to the five Governing Bodies. All five Governing Bodies have agreed to consult on the proposals with parents, carers, pupils, staff, unions and the wider community.

The five schools are sending out consultation information and have organised a programme of consultation meetings.

School	Date	Time	Audience
Abbot Beyne High School	Monday 2 nd December 2019	4.30pm Evershed Hall	Parents and carers

When the consultation period is over, the Governing Boards of the five schools will consider a report on the consultation. They will then decide, individually, whether or not to proceed with the proposal. If the decision from all schools is to go ahead then subject to some legal tasks, such as completing the agreement with the Secretary of State, the MAT would be established and the schools would look to convert in the spring term 2020.

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A MULTI ACADEMY TRUST AND TO CONVERT THE SCHOOL TO ACADEMY STATUS

SURVEY About you: (Please tick which school applies to you)

Abbot Beyne High School
Christ Church Primary School and Nursery
Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School

Tower View Primary School
Victoria Community School

About you: (please tick one that applies to you)

- Parent / Carer
- Member of Local Community
- Teacher
- Other (Please state) _____

1. What do you like about your school?

2. What questions do you have about the proposal?

3. Do you support the proposal of your school converting to academy status and establishing a multi academy trust

Please circle one of the responses

Yes No Maybe Don't Know

4. Can you explain your response to Question 3?

On completion of this questionnaire, we would ask you to either drop it into your school reception/office or post it to the school by 29th November 2019.