



PROPOSED MULTI ACADEMY TRUST ACADEMY CONSULTATION QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FROM STAFF MEETINGS

Introduction

The seven schools proposing to establish a multi academy trust ran a coordinated programme of staff consultation meetings as follows;

Wednesday, April 20 th	4pm	Cropwell Bishop Primary School
Thursday, April 21 st	4pm	Tollerton Primary School

This document is a summary of the questions asked at those meetings, the answers given and where helpful further answers have been added.

1. Will the MAT expand to include other schools? How many schools could it be?

The schools expect it will take at least a year for the Trust to settle down. So new schools are unlikely to join until the second year. There is an expectation from the DfE that the Trust will take another schools and support under-performing schools. However, that will be a decision for the Trust Directors and will be based on compatibility of vision, ethos, values and approach and the capacity and capability of the Trust to support other schools.

The DfE suggest that MATs should ideally be between 10-15 schools.

2. How will Members and Directors be appointed? (H) How many Directors will there be?

The working group of Governors and Headteachers from the seven schools has already agreed that the Trust Board of Directors should have the right blend of expertise and skills across education, child well-being, finance, HR, property, legal affairs and strategy. Subject to Governing Bodies approval there will be a total of eleven (11) Directors, ten (10) appointed by the Members and the CEO.

Existing Governors have been invited to self-nominate to be either or Member or Director. A short-list will be agreed by the working group and presented to Governing Bodies for approval at a joint meeting on May 16th.

3. Will there still be Parent Governors? If, so how many?

Although the recent White Paper suggest that MATs will be given the freedom not to have parent governors, the recommendation to the working group will be that each Local Governing Body has at least two Parent Governors. If the working group agrees then this proposal will be presented to Governing Bodies for approval on May 16th.

4. Who will be the CEO? Will the Trust have an all powerful Executive Headteacher in charge of all schools? Will the CEO structure be forever?

No. The Trust is very much based on all Headteachers being equal and retaining responsibility to run their schools. The Headteachers will form a Trust Leadership Group to plan and manage the programmes to raise standards.

The Trust will, however, be appointing one of the Headteachers as Trust CEO to manage its day-to-day operation. This will be part-time role (perhaps one day per week) for a fixed term alongside the appointee's current Headteacher role with appropriate support to ensure their school is supported. At the end of the fixed term the Trust will review the arrangements and decide what is best for the next phase of the MAT.

5. How will Headteacher be recruited should one Head leave?

It will be proposed to the working group and Governing Bodies that the Local Governing Body will establish an appointment panel with a mix of that school's Governors, Trust Directors and Headteachers. The appointment panel would oversee the appointment process and make a recommendation to the Board for approval.

6. Are primary only MATs unusual? Did you consider joining other MATs for example with a mix of secondary and primary schools?

No. The majority of primary schools are in primary MATs. The schools individually and collectively did consider and investigate other existing multi academy trusts. The Headteachers and Governing Bodies believe first establishing their own MAT would ensure that the Trust's ethos and values were more closely aligned to those of the seven schools, second that being a primary only MAT would have greater benefit for the schools and third that the governance could be designed to meet the schools requirements for balanced autonomy.

7. Will the schools still be inspected by Ofsted?

Academies are inspected in the same way as maintained schools. The Secretary of State has announced that schools and academies judged to be '*Outstanding*' will no longer be subject to routine school inspection. The performance of all schools will continue to be monitored and if there are signs of deterioration, or other factors are a cause for concern, these could trigger an inspection. There are plans for MATs to be inspected but it is not clear whether this means all schools are inspected at the same time.

Current policy is that academies are not inspected for the first two years after conversion unless there are causes for concern.

8. Who owns the school land?

School land will continue to be owned by Nottinghamshire County Council. The Trust will enter into a 125 year lease with a peppercorn rent, which contains obligations for the Trust to maintain the estate.

9. How will school holidays be affected?

Each school will continue to plan its holidays within the Local Authority recommended parameters. There may be slight variations between schools due to local arrangements between families of schools.

10. How will future pay awards be decided?

The Trust is committed to the principle that staff pay will be at least on par with employees of maintained schools. The Trust cannot automatically adopt future national collective agreements on pay and conditions because it will not be represented at those national negotiations.

However, the Trust will seek to adopt the national and local agreements for annual pay awards agreed between unions and employers for teachers and support staff respectively. It will have a separate agreement to recognise and consult with Trade Unions on pay and conditions.

11. What if a member of staff is on a temporary contract?

If a member of staff has a temporary contract that spans the proposed conversion date of September 1st 2016 then that contract will transfer across and continue until its termination date. If an employee has a temporary contract that expires before then the contract does not transfer across.

12. Will teachers move between schools?

Teachers and other staff will continue to work in the school they currently do and their contract of employment naming the school will transfer across.

However, there are three circumstances where staff may work in another school. First, is when a job at another Trust school is advertised and an employee applies for and is appointed to that role. Second, when a staff member voluntarily agrees to a secondment or temporary placement. Third, there may be new

posts created in the future that are Trust-wide and any staff member appointed to such a post would be expected to work across schools.

13. Will the Trust change staff terms & conditions? (H)

Staff have already seen their pay, terms and conditions change as employees of the Local Authority.

When a school becomes an academy, staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions. Like any employer, the Trust could propose to change terms and conditions in the future. As now, there are clear policies on consultation with staff on any proposed changes and rules on salary protection. Because the staff will transfer under TUPE they have the protection that their terms and conditions may never be changed to their detriment if the main reason for the change is the TUPE transfer itself.

However, the Trust will seek to adopt the national and local agreements for annual pay awards agreed between unions and employers for teachers and support staff respectively, and will continue to recognise and consult with Trade Unions on pay and conditions.

14. How will Continuity of Service be affected?

Continuity of Service is protected and continues through the transfer of employment. The Trust will recognise the continuity of service of new employees joining the Trust.

According to information provided by Unison if a member of staff returns to a Local Authority school within five years then their Continuity of Service will be recognised. Otherwise currently, there is no legal obligation for a Local Authority or another academy trust to recognise continuity of service for all aspects of employment. Importantly, however, your previous service will be recognised by any local authority or academy trust for the purposes of pensions and redundancy payments.

So if you take a job with a school outside the Trust your continuity of service may be broken. Your new employer may treat you as a new starter for the purposes of enhanced sickness and maternity or paternity benefits. Unless you negotiate an alternative agreement with them. It is recommended that before accepting any future offer of employment you should check that the new employer would recognise your continuity of service.

15. Which policy would apply in the future if there were redundancy?

It is understood that policies relating to redundancy are contractual. Therefore, the relevant policy at the point of transfer would apply: in this case the Nottinghamshire County Council policy at August 31st 2016.

16. What happens to TAs at the top of their pay scale? Is there a chance of change?

The contract of employment that transfers sets out the pay scale for that post and it is that contracts across. The Trust is likely to continue with the equivalent of the Local Authority pay scales so unless the post was changed the pay scale would remain the same.

17. How will the next steps and possible implementation be announced? (H)

The schools will publish a summary of the questions and answers from both staff consultation meetings on Friday, April 29th. Similarly, a summary of the six staff consultation meetings will also be published.

Once Governing Bodies have considered and approved the consultation report at their meetings on May 16th the reports will also be published by each school, probably with an announcement of the Governing Body decisions.

The working group will consider how best to communicate further decisions and progress to all stakeholders