



PROSPECTIVE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST (MAT)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We are proposing a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) partnership involving:

- Thomas Jolyffe Primary School (*currently a maintained school run by the Local Authority*)
- Stratford upon Avon School (*currently a Single Academy Trust*)

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WHAT ARE WE PROPOSING AND WHY?

1. What is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)?

A MAT is a group of schools that have come together to be governed by a single trust board, rather than by the Local Authority. In doing this they share a common ethos and vision, with the intention of driving up standards of education for all the children in their care, by supporting and challenging each other to continually improve and by pooling skills and resources. To be members of the MAT, schools need to become academies.

What is an Academy?

An academy is a school that is no longer run by the Local Authority, although its funding still comes from the government. Instead it is run by an 'Academy Trust', which is a legal entity that operates like a charity and is able to manage its own budget. This means that academies have more freedom and control over the way in which they run, although they enter into an agreement with the Department of Education, to ensure they effectively fulfil all their responsibilities and are accountable for their performance.

2. Why do we want to become a MAT?

We believe that structural collaboration will ensure sustainable school improvement and high quality all-through educational provision for local families in our community. We have common inclusive values

serving many of the same families. Being geographically close we will find it easier to access the benefits of collaboration. Setting up a MAT means we get to shape it from the start, enabling us to decide what is bespoke & mandatory.

3. Why set up a MAT now?

We feel the time is right to establish a MAT on our own terms with a key partner school. This gives us an equal voice and a chance to tailor the MAT to best support our local community, as opposed to joining an existing MAT. The political landscape suggests that MATs are here to stay regardless of which political party wins the next general election.

4. What is our mission, ethos and aims as a MAT?

MISSION

- We strive to provide the right education for every child. We are aspirational for all and will inspire, challenge and support pupils and staff alike, so that we are the school(s) and employer of choice.

ETHOS

- Our model of primary partner school(s) around a secondary school will ensure high quality provision for local families throughout their educational journey.
- We believe that everyone is entitled to feel safe, happy and successful.
- We treat people with respect and positivity.
- We provide a welcoming, nurturing environment where we collaborate effectively.
- We want every young person who comes through our schools to be well prepared socially, emotionally, culturally and academically, for the next stage of their life.

AIMS

- We will provide high quality of learning and teaching by sharing excellent practice
- We will deliver a rich and innovative curriculum and improve the opportunities & outcomes for our young people
- We will improve cross-phase links
- We will enhance the professional development of teaching and support staff
- We will ensure sustainable school improvement by working together and finding the right approach to raise standards in different settings
- We will work together to review and revise our approaches to keep improving and ensure they are fit for purpose in an ever-changing world.
- We will be givers and receivers of support and believe that our sum will always be greater than our individual parts.

5. Will individual schools lose their identity within the MAT?

No, the unique identity of each of our schools will remain – as will our school logos and uniforms. We are clear that an obligation of the MAT would be to protect these important distinctions.

Each head teacher will continue to be responsible for the leadership of their individual school.

6. Will schools within the MAT still work with and support schools that are not part of the MAT, as we do now?

Absolutely. All schools within the MAT will respect and value their existing relationships with other schools.

Schools will continue to engage with others, whilst ensuring that the underlying ethos and culture of the MAT is maintained. The MAT will work to strengthen the relationship with other schools in the area to the benefit of all of our children, schools and the wider community. We will still work closely with the Local Authority to support the best opportunities and outcomes for all young people in the area. We believe very strongly in a self-supporting and self-improving education system.

7. Will admissions to the schools or progression to other secondary schools be affected?

No. Each school will retain its current admission arrangements. Primary school parents will still be able to apply to whichever secondary school they choose, as they do currently.

8. When would the MAT be formed?

It usually takes approximately 6 months to be approved by the Department of Education, however it can take longer. There is not a fixed deadline and it is more important to get it right than to rush it through.

HOW WILL PUPILS AND PARENTS BE AFFECTED?

9. How are pupils affected on a day-to-day basis?

In many ways, the children will not notice any difference. The school will keep the same uniform, with the same teaching staff in the same classrooms. They will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all children. However, in time the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater collaboration and training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the experience for the children.

We will continue to be open for 38 weeks per year for pupils as required by current legislation.

All schools will continue to be responsible for their own curriculum development. Any changes that occur over time will be made in the best interests of the pupils in each school.

10. Will the schools' responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) change?

No. Responsibilities in relation to SEND are covered by the same Code of Practice as with maintained schools. A child with an EHCP (Education Health Care Plan) can nominate an academy as their school of choice. All schools will retain their commitment to inclusion as a core value.

11. How will parents have a say in the running of the school?

Parents and families will continue to be represented on local governing bodies by parent governors and will also have the opportunity to share their views through engagement groups and the usual channels.

HOW WILL STAFF BE AFFECTED?

12. How will being an academy affect staff?

After conversion, all staff at the school will be employed by the MAT. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. This is explained further below. The Trust will adopt in full the National Pay and Conditions for teachers and local government workers (Green Book). The Trust will recognise unions and professional associations.

13. How are the staff's contracts of employment protected?

Legislation known as the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employees) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) is a piece of legislation designed to protect the rights of employees who may be subject to a change in the legal identity of their employer. These regulations set out that employee terms and conditions such as pay, pension and policies are protected at the point of transfer, and the Academy inherits all rights, liabilities and obligations in relation to them. The regulations also provide that the current employer must consult with unions, professional associations and staff on the transfer.

14. Can the MAT alter staff pay and conditions?

As explained above, these terms are protected for staff transferring under TUPE but for new staff appointed after the transfer, the MAT could, in theory, offer alternative rates of pay. Like any employer, the Trust could propose to change terms and conditions in the future. Unlike maintained schools, academies are not bound to follow nationally agreed conditions such as the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, Conditions of Service for School Teachers (Burgundy Book) or the NJC National Agreement on Pay and Conditions in Local Government (Green Book). We are not proposing to change this in any negative way. We want our MAT to be attractive in terms of recruiting and retaining high quality staff.

15. How will future pay awards be decided?

The MAT will seek to adopt the national and local agreements for annual pay awards agreed between unions and employers for teachers and support staff respectively. The MAT will consult with staff, unions and professional associations on these pay awards each year. We will ensure that all staff across the MAT are equitably treated.

16. Will staff be made to work in other schools in the MAT?

Staff will have the opportunity to request to work in other schools to gain professional development as opportunities arise. Anybody who is currently employed by one of the schools cannot be forced to move to another school due to TUPE arrangements. New employees will be employed by the MAT and may be asked to work in more than one school. There will be opportunities for more shared CPD and another benefit is the potential pipeline for future career progression.

17. If these schools become a MAT, who takes responsibility for the pension arrangements of staff?

The MAT will have an agreement with the Secretary of State making it a requirement to offer participation in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) to all teaching staff and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to all support staff, just as if you were employed in a Local Authority maintained school.

The TPS runs teachers pensions on behalf of the DfE. As your employer, the MAT would be responsible for collecting and paying employer and employee contributions to the TPS and for all other administrative responsibilities set out in the Teachers' Pensions Regulations. The TPS determine the employer and employee pension contributions which cannot be varied. Any future changes will be decided by the TPS not the MAT. Benefits paid to teachers on retirement are not affected by academy status. There are similar arrangements for all staff who are part of the local government pension scheme.

HOW WILL WE ENSURE CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS?

18. How will we be sure that all schools maintain their strengths and continue to improve?

Building strength and skills among our staff will be a priority to make sure we undertake school improvement work successfully. Any joint initiatives will be considered carefully and adopted sensitively, with respect for individual schools. We will monitor and evaluate the impact of any changes to make sure they are leading to improvement for all pupils and staff in the MAT.

We believe that our sum will always be greater than our individual parts.

19. Will the current school leaders spend more time running the MAT rather than focusing on the teaching and learning at their school?

Setting up and running a MAT will require extra strategic and administrative work particularly in the early stages. However, we will be using start-up funding from the government to project manage this

process and to get the MAT up and running. A few members of staff across the schools may split their time between MAT activities and their responsibilities in their own schools. The leaders of each school will continue to be fully focused on delivering high quality teaching and learning and will benefit from developing their skills as they work across the MAT.

20. Will schools in the MAT still be visited by Ofsted?

Yes. Academies are inspected in the same way as maintained schools and 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.

HOW WILL THE GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE MAT WORK IN PRACTICE?

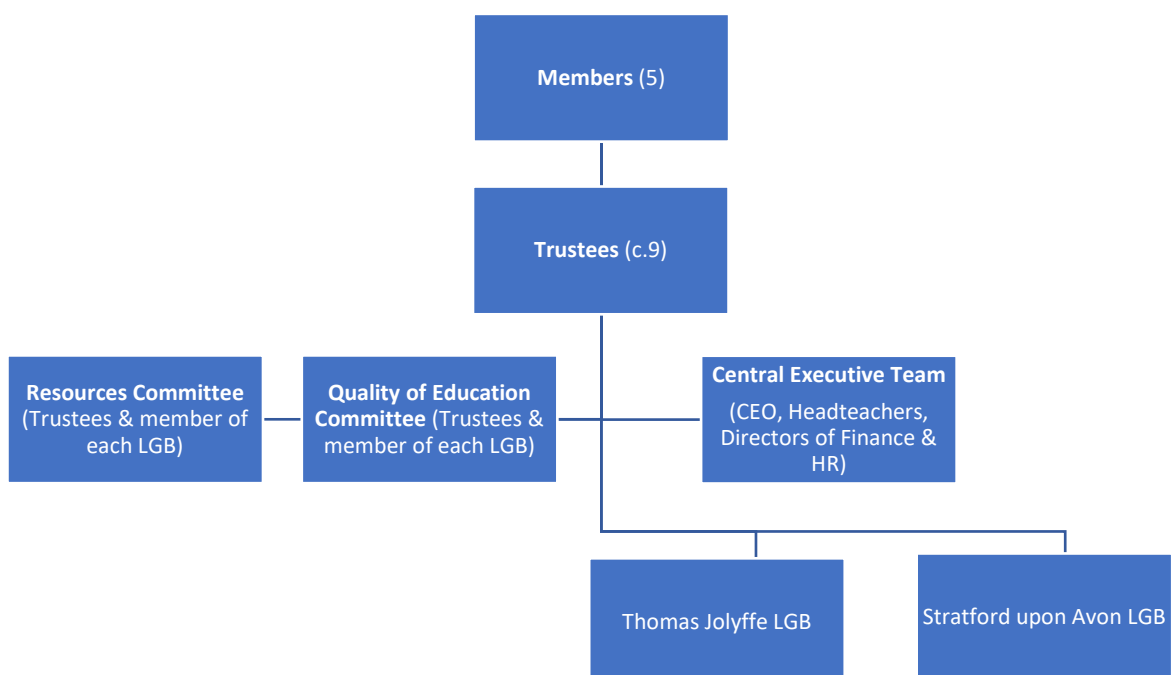
21. How is a MAT run?

There is a board of Trustees that is set up to manage the MAT at an overall level. This board usually makes strategic, operational decisions that affect all of the academies as a collective. This board will appoint a Chief Executive Officer of the MAT (Accounting Officer), who will provide a single point of accountability, as required by the Department Of Education. In our case we envisage that this position will be filled by one of the school headteachers. The Headteacher of the other school will remain as the leader of their individual schools.

A Local Governing Body is established for each individual school, which tends to make day to day decisions about that school, much like the governing bodies that currently operate in non-academy schools. We envisage that this board will be responsible for ensuring that each school’s individual visions and goals are achieved and will focus on curriculum, behaviour and other school-specific areas. The local governing body of each school would be able to have governors from a range of backgrounds and in particular will continue to have both parent and staff governor representatives as currently.

22. What is the proposed governance structure within our MAT?

This is still to be confirmed however a draft MAT structure is shown here. The individuals have yet to be appointed within each tier.



23. What is the role of the Members?

- Meet once a year at the AGM. Appoint and remove Trustees
- Amend and approve changes to the MAT's Articles of Association (*our written rules as a Trust*)

24. What is the role of the Trustees (The Trust Board)?

- Set the strategic direction. Create robust accountability.
- Make sure all public money is spent fairly and effectively.
- Ensure high quality of educational provision by monitoring standards, achievement and plans for improvement and making sure there is rapid progress for all pupils.
- Ensure compliance with charity and company law and make sure the funding agreement is met.

25. What is the role of the Local Governing Bodies?

- Support and challenge the leadership of the school.
- Ensure high quality teaching and learning and excellent outcomes for all groups of children.
- Ensure outstanding personal development and wellbeing for pupils.
- Support the vision of the MAT.

26. How do the different tiers interact?

- The structure would ensure that there was representation from each school at every level from LGB – Quality of Education and Resources Committee – Trustees.
- Head Teachers from each school and executive staff (HR & Finance Directors) would recommend the strategic direction (for individual schools) and be a bridge between both Trustee committees and LGBs.
- The pipeline of recruitment of future trustees would be based on need (skills). Succession from LGB to trustee/members is a likely reality.

HOW IS THE MAT FUNDED?**27. Does a school receive financial assistance to convert to an academy?**

A converting Local Authority school may receive a grant paid by the government to cover legal and other costs incurred during the conversion process.

28. How is a MAT funded?

A MAT is funded by the government just as Local Authority maintained schools and Single Academy Trusts are. The difference is that for a maintained school the government pays the money to the Local Authority who then pay it to the school, whereas both Single Academy Trusts and Multi Academy Trusts get their money directly from the government. The basic level of funding is calculated in exactly the same way whether the school is a Local Authority maintained school or an academy. Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as local authority maintained schools but they have greater freedom and autonomy on how they spend the funding to ensure better value for money.

None of the governors, trustees or members are paid for their responsibilities to the MAT, unless they are employees, therefore the governance structure will not take money which should be spent on teaching and resources.

29. How will you ensure the MAT continues to be financially viable?

The aim is for the Trust to deliver high quality education which is cost effective and value for money. There will be opportunities to challenge and support existing practice and build on what we know works well. We will be able to coordinate the effective use of staff, including improving the quality of professional development. It may be possible to generate income through providing services to other schools outside the MAT. Trustees will have the responsibility to ensure the Trust, including all schools,

are fully compliant in all financial matters. There can be some efficiencies in procurement and in the way we organise support functions such as finance, facilities management, IT support and human resources. There will be robust financial planning and due diligence before expanding or taking on new schools.

HOW MIGHT THE MAT EVOLVE OVER TIME?

30. Will other schools join the MAT?

Given the government's desire for schools to become academies, it is likely that other schools will join the MAT over time. However we feel that time is needed to allow the original schools effectively to develop and consolidate before expanding. Other schools wishing to explore joining the MAT can do so at a later date. The MAT is likely to grow in a sustainable manner when suitable opportunities present themselves.

The MAT is open to enquiries from all schools, of any or no faith, speciality and of any age range, whether selective (e.g. grammar schools) or non-selective. The shared values and vision is critical to the success of the partnership and schools wishing to join will be expected to demonstrate commitment to these. All schools expressing an interest in joining the MAT will be subject to a due-diligence evaluation in order to understand the contribution the school would make to the MAT and the support needs of the school.

31. How large will the MAT grow?

Any prospective future growth would need to be managed in a sustainable manner.

MORE FACTS ABOUT MATS

32. What is the legal status of a MAT?

In terms of its legal status, a Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company, limited by guarantee. This means that it is registered at Companies House

33. How many academies are there nationally?

There are nearly 10000 academies in England. Approximately 40% of primary schools and 80% of secondary schools are now academies.

There are a variety of MATs across the country – some are made up just of primary schools, or just secondary schools, some are just made up of faith schools (Church of England or Catholic) and some contain a mix of cross-phase schools.

34. Next steps?

- Thomas Jolyffe school submits an academy conversion form
- Stratford School submit the application form for a SAT to become a MAT
- The Regional Delivery Team then work with us to process the application and conduct due diligence to ensure the MAT is sustainable
- The application goes to the Advisory Board for approval
- Following approval, the legal work to undertake conversion begins
- MAT opens

35. Further reading and information about Multi Academy Trusts can be found from the Department of Education website