



## ACADEMY CONVERSION AND ESTABLISHING A MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

This document provides you with information about the proposed change to academy status and the 'Multi-Academy Trust' which eight local schools are proposing to establish. The schools currently involved are Abbey Hill School & Performing Arts College, Abbey Hulton Primary School, Etruscan Primary School, Forest Park Primary School, Kemball School, Oakhill Primary School, St Mark's CE (A) Primary School, and Watermill School. They have all received their academy orders from the Secretary of State for Education. All of the schools are "good" according to their latest Ofsted inspections. Other schools may come on board and join the multi-academy trust in the future, subject to agreement of the founding member schools.

As you may be aware, the Government is keen to encourage all schools to become academies and be part of a multi-academy trust, either by joining an existing one or setting up a new one. We believe that our best option is to form our own multi-academy trust with like-minded colleagues as this will enable us to:

- Establish a structure together with procedures and policies that best suit all of our needs
- Develop quality-first education to meet the needs of all
- Protect and retain our individual ethos, identity (including school name), qualities and strengths
- Enhance the professional development of staff including talent spotting, succession planning and networking
- Maximise opportunities to support and challenge through a Trust-wide school improvement strategy
- Retain our local governing boards
- Give greater financial control to obtain the best value and greatest choice of services by maximising our funding

### OUR VISION/VALUES:

**C** Curiosity, creativity, courage, character, confidence, challenge  
**R** Resilience, rigour, reflection, respect, rehearsal, relationships  
**A** Adventurous, aspirational, achievement, ambitious, articulate, accountable  
**F** Families, freedom, fearless, fairness, famous, future proof  
**T** Togetherness, tireless, teamwork, trust, the next thing (research)  
**S** Success, sharing, sensational learning, support, shining, safe

**TRUST**

**RESPECT**

**INTEGRITY**

**LEARNING**

**OPENNESS**

**EXCITEMENT**

**DIVERSITY**

**COOPERATION**

**FUN**

**RELIABILITY**

**REPUTATION**

**ACHIEVEMENT**

### **OUR KEY PRINCIPLES:**

- Autonomy: keeping individual identities
- Manageable/responsive but large enough to be sustainable
- Avoid “one size fits all”
- Respect heads’ expertise/integrity
- Importance of local context – communities
- Getting the structure right
- Avoiding too much bureaucracy
- All schools to be equal partners
- Celebrating diversity
- Senior Executive Leader with a focus on school improvement
- Collaborative working: “give and take”
- “Fair and honest”

### **OUR STRENGTHS:**

- Positive relationships
- Community Cohesion and PREVENT agenda
- “Can do” attitude/problem solving
- Support for children with English as an additional Language
- Special educational needs
- Vulnerable pupils
- Transitional communities: strategies for coping with high mobility
- Pupil ambition
- Expertise in behaviour management
- Leadership expertise and capacity
- Commitment to school/community
- Initial teacher training expertise
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Early years provision
- Celebrating diversity
- Breaking down barriers
- Attachment awareness
- Governance
- School improvement

### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Teaching School Alliance model i.e. school led initial teacher training, workforce development packages for newly qualified teachers, middle leaders and teaching assistants, succession planning, school to school support
- Challenging perceptions of staff via networking/placements/exchanges
- Greater “fluidity” between special schools and mainstream schools e.g. satellite classes, extension of the special schools’ OUTREACH Programme
- Pooling/sharing specialist resources such as IT
- Sharing expertise across governing boards e.g. mentoring new governors and developing chairs of the future
- Provide senior and middle leaders with governance experience across the MAT
- Economies of scale through group business management and collective purchasing

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1 What is an Academy?**

An academy is a 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 Trust is charitable, which means it must operate much like a charity and not for the profit of individuals or businesses.

### **2 What is a Multi-Academy Trust?**

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is when 2 or more academies come together in partnership. Our Governing Body believes that the best option is to form our own multi-academy trust with like-minded schools rather than join an existing multi-academy trust. Through partnership our Trust will support member academies in:

- developing and sharing best practice in teaching, learning and curriculum
- creating a skilled, motivated, expert workforce
- ensuring high standards through mutual challenge of performance
- making optimum use of our resources.

### **3 How would converting to an Academy benefit our School?**

As detailed above, these changes are about enhancing teaching and learning for all children. They would allow us to share skills and operate more effectively.

### **4 Who will be responsible for running our school?**

The Trust will have a Board of Directors. The Trust Board will delegate responsibilities via a Scheme of Delegation to the Local Governing Board (LGB), which will have a role similar to that of the current School Governing Body. The Headteacher and Local Governing Board will continue to lead our school on a daily basis as they do now, and parents will continue to be represented.

### **5 What is involved in becoming an Academy?**

The Governing Body has voted for this proposal in principle and the Secretary of State for Education has approved our application in principle and issued an Academy Order which allows the school to convert if the governors so decide in due course. The school must complete a consultation with parents, pupils, staff and the wider community which the governors will take into account in reaching its decision. Our target date for becoming an academy is 1 January 2019.

### **6 Would the school have to change its name, logo or uniform?**

There is no obligation for a school to change its name. We intend to keep our name as St Mark's CE (A) Primary School. We will not be changing our uniform as we want to preserve the identity of the school. Our school will retain its character and will continue to look, feel and be the same as it is now. Most of the changes will be behind the scenes. However, we will be including the name of the multi-academy trust in our branding as we want it to be clear that we are part of a family of schools who are working closely together.

### **7 How will being an Academy affect staff?**

Staff will be transferred to the MAT on existing terms and conditions, under TUPE regulations i.e. Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations. We hope that the new opportunities afforded by the MAT will reassure and encourage staff that they remain a vital part

## **8 How are the children affected?**

In many ways the children will not notice any immediate difference as they will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. We will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all our children. However, in time the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the pupils' learning.

## **9 How will the academy be funded?**

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. They also receive additional funding in the form of the Education Services Grant to cover the services that are no longer provided for them by Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority and to cover the costs of academy status. All funding comes direct from Government to the Multi-Academy Trust. Each school does not necessarily have more money, but as a group the schools are better able to control that part of the budget currently "top sliced" by the Local Authority.

## **10 What are the risks of becoming an Academy?**

The change to Academy takes a school out of Local Authority control, but does not exclude the school from Local Authority support. For example, academies can continue to receive finance, HR and other services from the Local Authority and where these represent 'best value' the MAT would use these services. Where the MAT feels that others can provide better services or better value the change to academy increases the freedom to make these changes. There are risks associated with not changing to academy status. At some stage in the future, any school might be influenced to become part of a broader academy chain. We believe that the ability to create a local MAT, under local direction, offers the best opportunity to sustain vibrant, successful local schools

## **11 How will admissions to the school be affected?**

The school will become its own admissions authority but will be required to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements 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 places locally and will coordinate the admissions process for all schools. This means parents will still only have to complete one application per child.

## **12 Does becoming an Academy change the relationship with other schools and the community?**

No. Academies must ensure that they continue to be at the heart of their community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other schools and the wider community.

## **13 Will our responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and exclusions change?**

No. Responsibilities as an academy in relation to SEND and exclusions will be just the same as they are now.

## **14 Can a child with a statement nominate an academy as his or her 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.

**15 How will becoming an academy affect the Christian character of St Mark's CE (A) Primary School?**

The Christian character at St Mark's CE (A) Primary school will not change. St Mark's will remain a Church of England aided primary school.

**CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS AND ESTABLISH THE "TRENT COMMUNITY TRUST"**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

About you (Please tick one that applies to you)

Parent / Carer  
Local resident  
Teacher  
Support staff  
Other (please state)

1 Do you support our School converting to an Academy and establishing a multi-academy trust?

Please answer:

Yes  
No  
Maybe

2 Do you have any other suggestions for the name of our proposed Multi-academy trust?

3. Is there anything else you would like to say about the proposed Academy?

On completion of this questionnaire, please drop it into the School Office or post it to the school by Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

Thank you for your feedback.