

Information about the Multi-Academy Trust proposal

Stronger together

Senior Leaders and Governors at Millthorpe are aware that education is experiencing a time of economic and strategic challenge. We are facing tighter budgets from central government and the Local Authority is shrinking; austerity measures have resulted in reduced services being available to schools. Schools across the country are being encouraged to work more closely together, to provide mutual support and share expertise across partnerships, with the added benefits of creative solutions that reduce back-office costs. This proposal would be a positive and proactive step that would help to address all of these issues.

What is a Multi-Academy Trust ?

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is a group of Academies forming a legal partnership. They are overseen by Members and a Board of Trustees to take strategic decisions across the group of schools. Under this Board sit the Governing Bodies of each individual school, who still retain autonomy in making decisions that affect the children in that school.

What are the benefits of a MAT?

There are a number of benefits linked to the quality of education, including sharing expertise across the MAT for curriculum design, school improvement strategies, subject specialisms, resources and staff development. Shared expertise would also benefit effective Leadership, Governance and policy design. Academies receive an additional grant in recognition of the fact that they will have greater costs in some areas, as they will not be able to tap into a range of Local Authority services. These additional costs can be offset, however, by aligning services and contracts across the Trust, resulting in some overall savings. This could include aspects such as Human Resources, Legal Services, IT provision, Administration and Site Management.

What would stay the same?

The day-to-day running of the school would remain largely unchanged. Each Governing Body would continue to monitor the quality of education, safeguarding, and Health & Safety in its own school. Each Governing Body would continue to have parent and staff representation, as it does now. The MAT would also maintain the current positive working relationships with the Local Authority and other schools within the City.

What would change?

- The MAT would make decisions for the benefits of children and families across the Trust, in order to meet the needs of the whole local community.
- The Primary Schools would benefit from staff expertise in subject specialisms at Secondary level and a range of more innovative transition activities to support the move from Year 6 into Year 7.
- Millthorpe would benefit from staff expertise in Years 5 & 6, to support the highest possible standards of attainment as pupils transfer to Millthorpe.
- The Senior Leaders of all three schools would work more closely together to plan training and curriculum development.
- The Senior Leaders of all three schools would benefit from peer challenge within a culture of mutual support and trust.
- There would be economies of scale that generate savings across the MAT for a range of services.

What happens next?

As part of the decision-making process, the Governing Body are committed to a full consultation with our stakeholders and will take their views into account before any final decision is taken. The purpose of this statement is, therefore, to introduce the proposals to you, signpost you to where you can find additional information and let you know how you can take part in the consultation.

The consultation process

On 8 May 2015, we will place a series of information documents on the school website. We will also issue dates for a range of meetings, to give parents the opportunity to hear more about the proposals and to ask any questions they may have. We will then issue a survey to every family and every member of staff, which will allow Governors to gauge opinion. **It is important for parents to be aware that no final decision has yet been taken – your views will have a strong bearing on what Governors ultimately decide to do.** The consultation period will close on 19 June 2015. Governors will then review the responses before making their decision.

Trevor Burton, Millthorpe School, March 2015