



## **Formation of a Multi-Academy Trust – Consultation**

The governing body of Springfield School are consulting on a proposal to form a multi-academy trust with Solent Infant School and Solent Junior School from April 2017. Parents, staff and members of the broader 'Springfield Community' are encouraged to email their views and/or questions to the governing body via the addresses listed below; the initial consultation period closes on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016. A number of consultation meetings are available to parents and staff details of which have been sent separately.

[parentconsultationMAT@springfield.uk.net](mailto:parentconsultationMAT@springfield.uk.net)

[staffconsultationMAT@springfield.uk.net](mailto:staffconsultationMAT@springfield.uk.net)

[communityconsultationMAT@springfield.uk.net](mailto:communityconsultationMAT@springfield.uk.net)

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What is a multi-academy trust?**

A multi-academy trust (MAT) is a group of academies that have come together to form a charitable company (limited by guarantee), with a single group of 'members' (who have an overview of the governance arrangements) and a single board of 'trustees'. It is the direct employer of staff and the holder of land titles.

The role of members is analogous to shareholders of a company, but members of a MAT do not have rights of ownership because revenues and assets cannot be distributed to them. Members control changes in the constitution of the trust, they have an overview of the governance arrangements of a trust and have the power to appoint and remove trustees and governors.

The people who are appointed by the members to sit on the trust board are the trustees. They are responsible for the operation of the trust; they set strategic direction and are directly accountable for finance and standards.

The proposed members and trustees for the MAT are skilled professionals, the vast majority of whom are already governors at one of the three schools (see below).

#### **What is an academy?**

Academies are publicly funded schools, independent of the local authority, held accountable through a legally binding funding agreement with the Department for Education (DfE); academies are also accountable to the Regional Schools Commissioner's Office and performance is inspected by Ofsted. Academies have more control over curriculum design and staff pay and conditions. Over 66% of secondary schools and 19% of primary schools are now academies; only successful schools can apply to convert to academy status or form MATS 'independently'.

#### **Why does the school propose forming a multi-academy trust?**

The Government made clear in its White Paper<sup>2016</sup>, 'Educational Excellence Everywhere', its commitment to developing a 'school-led system with every school an academy'; a strategic programme of schools in Portsmouth forming or joining MATs is supported by the Council and the Regional Schools Commissioner's Office. Although Ministers quite recently withdrew plans for legislation that would compel all schools to become academies, Justine Greening, Secretary of State

for Education, has been quoted as saying that it remains the Government's ambition for all schools to benefit from academy status.

Springfield, Solent Infant School and Solent Junior School have each applied for and subsequently been awarded an 'Academy Conversion Order' by Dominic Herrington, the Regional Schools Commissioner. This means that the plans to convert have been officially reviewed and agreed, *in principle*.

### **What are the three schools coming together to achieve?**

Primarily we believe that coming together with strong, shared accountability can lead to better progress for pupils. Forming the MAT allows the schools to 'refresh' their already strong governance models, strengthen and share expertise at member and trustee level, and develop effective strategies that will impact positively on pupils.

Leaders, teachers and support staff from the three schools can share thinking, develop pedagogy/practice and address challenges together. Professional development and innovative recruitment opportunities can be created to ensure that the schools continue to attract and retain highly effective practitioners, e.g. some staff could be shared across two phases. Expertise e.g. IT systems management could also be shared.

We envisage that economies of scale and opportunities for collective purchasing will allow the schools' budgets/resources to be more effectively deployed. The very close proximity of the three schools will facilitate a 'campus' management approach. This also provides opportunities to develop further our joint extra-curricular offer for pupils and the broader community.

We also recognise that our local authority has limited capacity to support school improvement and therefore see this as an opportunity to develop, in line with the Government's thinking, a school/peer led school improvement system. We will continue to link and work with other schools and academy chains.

### **What is the founding vision of the proposed multi-academy trust?**

- We recognise that the national and local educational landscape has changed; the academies programme offers schools freedom and autonomy to develop independently.
- We see this as an opportunity; as successful schools we are committed to leading school improvement within our own organisations and across the wider system.
- We share a vision of promoting high aspirations and achieving excellent outcomes for all children; our schools are inclusive and exist to serve the children who live in the locality.
- We believe that the school learning environment should deliver a vibrant, creative and relevant education for all pupils; fostering a love of learning is central to what we do.
- We are committed to developing high quality staff and building leadership capacity across our schools; continuous professional development is an entitlement for all staff.
- We recognise that schools are different and have unique identities; our approach is to allow schools to determine their own routes to excellence within the context of their own community.
- We aspire to develop expertise across all phases of education that can be shared within and beyond our trust in order to secure school improvement for all.

### **What happens to the staff employed by the three schools?**

Staff currently employed by the three schools would become the employees of the MAT. Staff have been invited to take part in this initial consultation. If the proposal moves forward, then a further consultation process regarding TUPE will take place; TUPE stands for the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981.

The purpose of the Regulations is to protect employment rights when employees transfer from one employer to another. The terms and conditions of employment of the transferring employees are maintained; the employees' continuity of

service is preserved as well as the original terms. We want to retain our excellent staff and ensure that any transfer process is as 'smooth' as possible.

### **How does this proposal affect the school admissions process?**

The school admissions processes and criteria are unaffected. It is the duty of Portsmouth City Council, not the proposed MAT, to administer fair admissions. Pupils who attend Solent Junior School will not get preferential admission to Springfield, for example. The system will continue to operate as it does now for all children in the catchment area. Springfield has excellent relationships with all of its feeder schools and will continue to do so.

All local authorities are required to take part in a cross-border co-ordinated admission scheme for main round admissions, known as a 'Common Application Form'; Portsmouth operates an 'Equal Preference' admissions scheme in line with government requirements:

<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/learning-and-schools/schools/school-admissions.aspx>

### **What is the name of the multi-academy trust? Will the schools change their names?**

We have a provisional shortlist of names for the MAT and ultimately the members will decide on the choice. However, we would welcome additional suggestions from stakeholders as part of this consultation; we would ideally like a unique name that reflects the partnership working approach and/or high aspirations of our schools.

We want to enable our schools to retain their character and individuality and not be overtly 'branded' by the MAT. That being said, we would hope that the final choice of name will, over time, become a recognised and respected company in the area. All schools within the MAT must uphold its vision and ethos and accept key elements of its operating model.

With that in mind there are no plans for the schools to change their names or for pupils to change their uniforms etc.

### **How will the formation of a multi-academy trust impact upon the pupils?**

Pupils should notice very few, if any, initial changes to their 'day to day' school experience as a result of the formation of the MAT. However, underpinning this proposal is the conviction that adopting a new approach to governance across the three schools is the most effective method to secure ongoing school improvement and excellent standards for all our pupils.

### **How can I find out more information regarding this proposal and the progress of the consultation?**

Springfield, Solent Junior School and Solent Infant School have arranged consultation meetings for staff and parents during which further information will be shared. Updates will be posted on the schools' respective websites at regular intervals over the coming months.

### **Why was this consultation not conducted before the schools applied to convert to academy status?**

The schools are following the Department for Education's recommended process and timeline for academy conversion. We needed to know that the plan to form a MAT had provisional approval such that we had a concrete proposal to take to our stakeholders for consultation.

### **Why is the proposed date for conversion 01<sup>st</sup> April 2017?**

The Department for Education suggests that it takes at least five months for the conversion process from the point of application. Although the schools submitted their application during August 2016, it was not reviewed by the RSC's panel until mid-October. The schools need to ensure that there is sufficient time for consultation, review and administration of the proposal; it is possible that the proposed timeline/deadline may change slightly.

**If the proposed MAT goes ahead, how might the MAT develop/change over the longer term?**

Post conversion we would like a period of time to establish the new governance model and develop/formalise effective working practices across the three MAT schools. We would then anticipate possibly being in a position to grow the MAT to include other schools in the locality; we would aim to be system leaders, but would not anticipate working with schools beyond the immediate geographical area. Ensuring that any expansion is sustainable and effective is a key priority; at this juncture we would not anticipate expanding beyond the size of a small/medium MAT over the longer term.



## Overview of the Multi-Academy Trust

### Members

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Steve Cook      | Director of the CBS Group  |
| 2. Derek Good      | Police Superintendent (Retired)  |
| 3. Cheryl Lincoln  | District Council Governance and Information Manager                                    |
| 4. Richard Parnell | Policy Consultant, The Adolescent and Children's Trust                                 |
| 5. Bernie Topham   | Chief Operating Officer, University of Portsmouth<br><i>Members' Independent Chair</i> |

### Core Responsibilities

- Responsible for achieving the charitable objectives of the multi-academy trust
- Sign articles of association
- Power to appoint / remove trustees
- Requirement to attend at least one formal annual general meeting

### Trustees

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Chris Batstone | Senior Executive, IT Infrastructure and Project Management (Retired)                                      |
| 2. Anders Bohea   | Owner/Founder of 'boxChilli'  |
| 3. Sharon Brueton | Deputy Coordinator for Hampshire Governor Services, Ofsted Inspector<br><i>i/c MAT School Improvement</i> |
| 4. Alan Cufley    | FRICS PCC Director of Transport, Environment and Business Support<br><i>i/c MAT Human Resources</i>       |
| 5. Derek Good     | Police Superintendent (Retired)<br><i>Trustees' Independent Chair, Member</i>                             |
| 6. Lucy Sinnott   | Chartered Institute of Management Accountants – Associate Member<br><i>i/c MAT Finance</i>                |
| 7. Sara Spivey    | Headteacher, Springfield School<br><i>MAT Chief Executive Officer</i>                                     |
| 8. Tessa Webber   | Journalism, Law and Local Government  |
| 9. Lucy Wilby     | Executive Headteacher of Solent Infant School and Solent Junior School                                    |

### Core Responsibilities

- Deliver three core functions of governance: vision, educational performance, finance
- Ensure compliance with company and charity law and the Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State (DfE)
- Determine structure and function of MAT; must meet *at least* three times per year
- Delegate functions to Academy Committees and hold them to account
- Board required to have finance committee for financial oversight and scrutiny and an audit committee for financial systems and operational controls
- Development of the medium term business plan and operating model
- Specific project leadership and allocation of funding

### Academy Committees

Each of the schools will have at least three academy committees to which core responsibilities will be delegated by the MAT's trustees; these are akin to 'local governing bodies'.

### **Resources Committee**

- School budget monitoring/budget
- Site review/development, health and safety compliance (site)
- Personnel (local recruitment, CPD, appraisal, pay progression in line with policy)

### **Curriculum and Standards Committee**

- Progress of pupils
- Attainment of pupils
- Curriculum offer/development
- Raising achievement plans
- Outcome data
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### **Behaviour and Safety Committee**

- Safeguarding/child protection,
- Attendance of pupils,
- Alternative provision,
- Pupil attitudes to learning,
- SEN/D provision,
- Welfare provision (including links with external agencies),
- Exclusion

It is envisioned that the academy committees will include trustees and committee governors, but not members.