

Multi-Academy Trust Parent/Carer Consultation

A consultation event was held for Parent/Carers and other potential stakeholders on Thursday 4 May 2017.

In attendance:

Miriam Fredrickson – Headteacher, Geoff Mountjoy – Business Manager (Headley Park Staff)

Katie Maule, Nikki Cotterill, Neil Todman, Tara Webster, Vicky Gallett (Governors)

Neil Blundell, Annie Williams, Alison Calvert (Cathedral Schools Trust)

13 additional parents attended.

After a short opening from Neil Blundell the following questions were taken.

Q Why are CST interested in Headley Park (HP)?

A *CST wanted to create its own MAT and visits/discussions with HP made it clear that both shared the same Vision & Values so that there was a good strategic fit. This was really important.*

HP Governors have been looking at academisation for many years. In the past there seemed no benefit financially and we have always wanted to be clear that whoever we worked with shared our vision and values and was Bristol based.

Q What are the advantages of being an academy or part of a chain? Are there really any changes?

A *The difference is not about the name/academy but working in a true partnership that is right for the individual school. It is not possible now to become a single convertor academy, must join a MAT if changing. Funding changes means that Local Authorities cannot do the same support these used to and Trust offer the chance for schools to look for better value for money. Trusts also create a better chance for formalised working across primary and secondary levels.*

Some schools, for educational or financial reasons, may be required to join a MAT. We are not one of those schools. Our decision is more based on opportunities for being part of a Trust and not seeing any continued advantage from remaining a maintained school.

Q How is funding allocated in a MAT is it by Trust or School and could primary funding be used to subsidise secondary?

A *The government has a pupil led funding system so allocations would remain with the individual school. Each school will contribute to a central Trust fund, as they currently do to the LA, as this can be used for Trust initiatives and support of individual schools.*

Q How transparent will finances be to parents?

- A** *As an Academy, or Trust, finances are more transparent as it is a requirement to file detailed annual accounts.*
- Q** **What about the money schools have lost this year will MAT change this?**
- A** *The government sets a funding formula for education which is pupil led. Being part of a MAT will not change the pupil- led funding but it will give us the chance to make additional spending decisions and explore ways that as a Trust we can be more efficient.*
- Q** **Do funding cuts impact on academies as well as maintained schools?**
- A** *Yes. However, monies that would have gone to the LA will now go to the Trust so we can make decisions how it can be best spent for schools in the Trust.*
- Q** **As a Trust where does money come from?**
- A** *Like a maintained school funding is pupil- led with allocation to an individual school who will make a contribution to central costs. The Trust will look to pursue other funding pots like grants or selling its services.*
- Q** **What will be the difference for our children if HP is part of a Trust?**
- A** *Children should not notice a huge difference as we don't look for a name change, uniform change or general CST branding. However, we expect children to be able to access a wider offering as the Trust can develop specialisms that would not be possible in individual schools.*
- Q** **So would kids still see this school as Headley Park?**
- A** *Yes, we don't intend to go the way of some Trusts of being too centralised. We want strong local schools in the community.*
- Q** **Does the Trust mean that there will be less individual competition between schools and more cooperation?**
- A** **Yes**
- Q** **Will kids from HP be able to access activities in other Trust schools?**
- A** *The intention is to explore activities where cooperation makes sense. As an example we have already had a joint music trip to Cardiff and shared development for staff through the Middle Leaders Programme.*
- Q** **Will older kids in the Trust be able to visit other Trust schools to see how they operate?**
- A** *That would be really nice and a benefit of the Trust. We could establish a joint pupil voice group like the one that has existed across the Malago Learning Partnership (MLP).*
- Q** **How will the Trust proposal benefit children, will there be cross school events?**

- A** *Yes, the Trust intends to broaden the experience for children and provide additional opportunities*
- Q** What about pupils who excel in core subjects, would they be brought together across the Trust?
- A** *We would look to share best practice and help them prepare for secondary education. Smaller schools often find it difficult to get subject specialists and we could achieve this across the Trust. Even if we are part of the Trust we will continue to work with other local schools where it is sensible to do so.*
- Q** Parents big concern is not having a massive change. When the previous HT left there was a disruptive period.
- A** *We fully understand that children must be at the heart of everything we do. Staff continuity is important to pupil outcomes and we think that the additional opportunities for staff across the Trust will be attractive.*
- Q** So staff won't be shifted to help other schools?
- A** *We want to share best practice across the Trust but current staff remain appointed to current schools.*
- Q** As a community school we feel that having good teachers is very important will that change?
- A** *We expect to retain the same values and aspirations.*
- Q** Will schools keep autonomy over recruitment?
- A** *Yes but there may be times when joint advertising makes sense. Recruitment would remain at school level to address local need.*
- Q** TUPE is not always that solid and job titles can be changed.
- A** *We agree that looking after staff well means they will also look after children. It is only if staff look to seek a Trust appointment which is different to their current job that TUPE would cease to apply. However, we would hope that staff will see benefit from additional opportunities.*
- Q** How long as the Trust existed?
- A** *Only since September 2016.*
- Q** The Trust proposal offers some economies of scale but where would you stop in terms of size?
- A** *The Trustees set the ambition of establishing a modest Trust of 6-8 schools. We want a number of local schools with shared vision and values but different characteristics/faiths. We are not looking to recreate a LA.*

Q You have mentioned a multi-faith Trust, what are the origins of the Cathedral School?

A *When the Cathedral School was originally formed it was very much a faith school to develop choristers. The school retains its origins but has pupils from all faiths and no faith. Across the Trust we really want to support diversity.*

Q There are currently discussions of Grammar schools, where do you see that going?

A *You just can't predict at the moment and who would have thought a few years ago new grammars would be on the agenda. However, can't see how grammar schools could be helpful for Bristol.*

Q Will the government force schools to be part of massive MATs?

A *We are not setting out to build a massive MAT. Trustees don't want us to grow too quickly or get too big. There are some advantages of growth through economies of scale and a Trust getting its own Capital Improvement allocation.*

Q Is there only one secondary school in the Trust?

A *Yes currently, but when we open the Enterprise school with a 6 form entry, there will be a second. This will give primary children a chance to experience secondary before they leave Y6 and also for older children to gain work experience across the Trust.*

Q Where will the Enterprise school be?

A *We are not able to say at present but there is a shortage of secondary places across Bristol. We expect the design of the Enterprise school to allow us to add facilities not currently available in the Trust.*

Q Do any Trusts have links with local industry?

A *We expect the Enterprise school to have links with local industries and the location of the Cathedral School is ideal to cooperate with businesses around the harbourside. Often premium partners will give time and expertise rather than money to schools. We hope links will be made with all schools and businesses.*

Q Does the focus on music impact on the rest of the curriculum?

A *No that is not the intention at all.*

Q Note that being part of the CST would be no guarantee pupils would get into Cathedral School. Would curriculum freedom of being an academy mean that if a CST pupil went to another secondary they might have curriculum problems?

A *This would be very unlikely and we would not expect many curriculum differences. We would continue to expect many HP pupils to go to the same range of schools as they do now and will continue to work closely with them.*

Q Would HP pupils be at a disadvantage in getting into non CST secondary schools?

- A** *This is very unlikely and every school needs to show their admissions policy is fair.*
- Q** **What will the impact be of the Trust on the LA and other local schools?**
- A** *The LA just does not have the same capacity to do previous tasks. LA are now more positive of school conversion.*
- Q** **What about the future of the MLP?**
- A** *It is bound to be different but we will continue to work with schools where it makes sense. Some of the MLP schools are already part of MATs or considering different groupings.*
- Q** **As a Trust would the same type of support be available to children like mine who have special educational needs.**
- A** *Yes, we would not be looking to make any reductions to the level of support we offer pupils with additional needs. The Trust might be able to look at different ways of delivery for instance possibly employing a specialist speech and language expert.*
- Q** **When might the school become part of the Trust, timescales?**
- A** *There is a lot of work and due diligence to do but by September (new academic year) would be sensible.*
- Q** **If VP also join the Trust what strengths would they bring?**
- A** *VP has very high academic results and shares the same vision and values as HP. The fact that VP are also interested in CST is an important consideration for HP.*
- Q** **What voice would we have on the Trustee Board?**
- A** *Trustees are not school representatives and the most important things is that they have the range and depth of skills to perform their role. The Chair of each local governing board will meet regularly with the Trustee Board and additional people can be co-opted as and when required.*
- Q** **What consultation has been received from parents so far?**
- A** *We have had some really helpful question in these consultation events and two written responses, one of which asked for more information on what an academy entailed and the other saying they welcomed the initiative.*
- Q** **If the government has a change of mind is there a back out clause for HP?**
- A** *We would always have to abide by prevailing rules but the Regional Schools Commissioner has endorsed the possibility of HP joining the Trust as a good idea.*

Multi-Academy Trust Pupil Consultation

A cross section of Headley Park pupils attended a “Pupil Voice” consultation meeting on 5 April 2017. The Headteacher, Miriam Fredrickson, and Business Manager – Geoff Mountjoy were in attendance.

The following items were discussed.

1. There was a general discussion of what consultation means and pupils voiced their views on the importance of listening to them about school changes.
2. Pupils explained their understanding of different types of schools, maintained, academy, independent and faith. Local schools falling into these groups were discussed and pupils recognised that a number of their siblings were already attending a secondary school which is a Bristol academy.
3. There was a discussion of how Headley Park has traditionally worked with groupings of schools through the Malago Learning Partnership and that these include maintained, academy and faith schools.
4. Thoughts on joining CST
 - a. Would like the opportunity to do more music
 - b. We need more instruments
 - c. Would like to learn more songs
 - d. If we are part of a Trust we can share our sports and maths and help others
 - e. We could share our best writing
 - f. It would be nice to be in a Trust that has a sixth form
 - g. Would our logo change as we spent a lot of time choosing the current one? **No**
 - h. Would we be called an Academy? **There are no current plans to change the school name.**
 - i. Do you have to fill out lots of forms to become part of a MAT? **Yes quite a lot, Mr Mountjoy is working on this.**
 - j. Is becoming a MAT a secret or can we talk to others? **It’s not a secret and we have already started consultation with parent/carers and others. It would be good to talk to other pupils and your parents.**
 - k. Should we stand up in front of the class and say we may become an Academy? **You can feed back to your class anyway you like but there is no need to be too formal.**
 - l. When would we change? **We have not got a definite date but it could be from the next academic year.**
5. Have you any concerns?

No.