

1st April 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

FORMING A MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST - CONSULTATION

I am writing to update you with news about some important developments which are being proposed for Barnby Dun Primary Academy and for education in Doncaster, and to give you an opportunity to express your views.

Our school, along with a group of local primary schools, many of which form our Pyramid of schools, wish to strengthen our collaboration and support each other further to give improved learning opportunities and outcomes for all our young people, and to further raise educational standards. The Governing Body's priority is to enable our school to continue to provide the best education for our students in a time of unprecedented financial cuts whilst protecting our school's ethos and identity, and retaining its individual qualities and strengths.

It is vital in the coming years that the school finds strong partnerships with like-minded schools and similar values to ensure continued excellence in terms of its educational outcomes. Our school wishes to retain its identity but is mindful of what it must do to sustain future improvements; it can only achieve those aims through strong collaboration with other schools.

For these reasons, we are proposing to form what is called a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) which initially would include the following local schools:

- Hungerhill School
- Kirk Sandall Junior and Infant Schools
- Barnby Dun Academy
- Dunsville Primary School
- West Road Primary School

The formal partnership (MAT) would be built on the strong foundations of a successful, informal pyramid arrangement which has been established for some years between the schools - known as the Brighter Future Learning Partnership Trust. Each school would retain most of its independence whilst benefitting from being part of the Trust. There would be more opportunities for students and staff to work across the schools, sharing good practice and delivering outstanding learning experiences. All schools within this partnership will continue to maintain and develop strong links with other local schools.

Working together, with other local schools in a Multi-Academy Trust offers many benefits for our students, school and the wider community. We believe that by working together, we can achieve even greater things and provide a first-class educational experience with more learning

opportunities through shared expertise and resource. In the future, other schools may wish to join our MAT. The strength of our school and of our local partners is that we have the skills, vision and resources to serve the best interests our community and to shape our own destiny. We believe that working together as a MAT will enable the schools in the MAT to make a distinctive contribution to school improvement both within and beyond the MAT.

The Governing Board have therefore agreed to consult on forming a MAT with other local schools. The consultation is open now and will run to 10th May 2019. It is open to all, including the school's parents, students, staff, and the wider community. We want to hear your views, which the Governing Board will review and respond to where necessary. Please find attached some general information about the proposed Trust; and answers to some frequently asked questions.

If you would like make contact with regards to our plans to join Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust we ask that you contact Lesley Millard, Project Manager at GLK Solutions. Lesley will answer any questions you may have or arrange for a member of the school or Trust to contact you if further conversations are required. You can contact Lesley on:

Telephone: 07921 645 756

Email: lesleymillard@glkgroup.co.uk

Another important development in Doncaster

We are also working with the local business community, The University of Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University, other local partner schools, and other interested parties such as Doncaster Chamber of Commerce to develop an 11-18 University Technical College (UTC). It is provisionally planned that this will open in September 2020. You can read more about the UTC at www.doncasterutc.co.uk.

The UTC will be built in the centre of Doncaster (Waterdale) and would become part of our Brighter Future Learning Partnership Trust. The UTC would offer a rich curriculum linked to science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM) with a myriad of job and apprenticeship opportunities for students, both during and at the end of their formal education.

We believe that by opening a UTC with STEM specialisms and cutting-edge facilities, our students will have even greater opportunities to access a different type of learning experience, studying adjacent to the best undergraduates and local employers. The specialisms have been chosen to address the skills shortage not just locally, but nationally, and will give students an excellent route into higher education and employment. The curriculum will provide more authentic work-related learning opportunities.

I hope that the attached further information will be useful and answer any questions that you may have about these developments. Please may I again invite you to contribute your views for the Governing Board to take into account in reaching their decision about these developments.

Yours sincerely

Miss C E Robinson Head Teacher

FORMING A MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST - CONSULTATION

This document provides you with further information about the proposed change to forming a Multi-Academy Trust.

Under these proposals:

- Each school will remain focussed on delivering excellent teaching and learning within its local community.
- Each school will continue to have its own Headteacher with less administration and more time to focus on the teaching and learning within their school.
- Each school will continue to have its own local governing board.
- All schools will work together on projects to improve education and learning for all.
- All schools will share administration, technical support and resources to reduce costs and improve effectiveness.
- A Trust Board will exist to provide oversight of the performance of each school and ensure effective and equitable investment in improvements across all schools.

Why change?

We believe a formal partnership will establish a clear vision and systems for working effectively together, as we move to the future, for the benefit of all our children. We are determined to take whatever action is needed to maximise the achievement and personal development of all our children. The Headteachers and Governors of the schools have worked together to establish a shared vision for improvement whilst retaining what we value most in each individual school.

It remains Government policy to encourage all schools to become Academies and part of a larger Trust. Sole converter Academy schools are being encouraged to become part of a MAT by joining an existing MAT or by forming their own MAT. We believe forming our own MAT is the best option because it will enable our schools to:

- Develop first-class education to meet the needs of all.
- Protect our schools' ethos.
- Retain our individual identities, qualities and strengths.
- Maximise the autonomy of each school in shaping their own future.
- Enable and enhance the professional development of all staff.
- Give greater financial control to obtain the best value and greatest choice of services and ensure funding can be maximised.
- Enhance opportunities to network, to support and challenge.

Our Vision:

- To create a learning journey from 3 to 18.
- All learners will be challenged to be responsible and successful 21st Century citizens with a passion for lifelong learning.
- For every child to become confident, capable, resilient, aspirational members of their communities.

We will develop an effective learning community that provides an excellent education for our pupils through highly effective collaboration based upon mutual support and challenge.

Frequently asked questions:

1. What is a Multi-Academy Trust?

A Multi-Academy Trust is when 2 or more Academies come together in partnership. In our case we are looking to form a cross phase MAT covering children and young people, aged 3 -18 years. Each school will keep its own name and the MAT will probably be known as the 'Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust'. It will be possible for other schools to join the MAT in the future.

2. Who will be responsible for running our school?

The MAT will have an overarching Board of Trustees which may include some individuals drawn from the current schools' Governing Bodies. The Trust Board will ensure that each school has a Local Governing Board (LGB) and propose to delegate many powers to them. The Local Governing Board will continue to work as part of the Leadership of the school.

3. What is involved in becoming a Multi Academy Trust?

The Governing Board is considering forming a MAT. We have registered our interest with the Department of Education. Each school will complete a period of consultation with parents, pupils, staff and the wider community which the Governors will take into consideration when reaching their decision.

4. Would the school change its name, logo or uniform?

The school is not required, and has no plans to change its name, logo or uniform.

5. How will being an Academy affect staff?

Currently, the employer for staff is Barnby Dun Primary Academy Trust. After conversion all staff will be employed by the Multi Academy Trust. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. Their continuity of service is protected and all staff will be consulted in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations.

6. How are the students affected?

The students will not notice any immediate differences. They will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms, with the same teachers. We will continue to strive for outstanding education for all our students. Over time the students may notice some changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from greater training opportunities for staff and innovative learning opportunities.

7. Will we get more money as part of a MAT?

The school will receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as part of a MAT as they would have previously as a sole converter academy. All funding comes directly from Government to the MAT which controls the overall budget and then distributes the money to each of the schools within the MAT. Each school does not have more money but, as a group of schools, the MAT can enhance the economies of scale and choose to share services that benefit all the schools within the MAT.

8. What are the risks of becoming a MAT?

It is difficult to quantify the risks involved in conversion to a MAT, as every conversion process is different. Some stakeholders involved in any conversion situation may be concerned about the

financial arrangements which will be put in place in case these adversely affect their own school, about the degree of independence their school will have in managing and recruiting staff and in setting a curriculum, and about the way that leadership and governance will function within the MAT. The way to ensure that these possible concerns do not place any of the schools involved at risk is to set up the MAT in a mutually beneficial way with a strong and positive ethos in place, and to ensure that it is well-run. There has been a great amount of collaborative groundwork done by representatives of all the schools involved in this proposed MAT to ensure that all of the schools agree with the proposed structure for the MAT and its proposed Scheme of Delegation, which defines how the leadership and Governance of the MAT will operate. From the beginning it has been clear that all of the representatives have been determined to preserve the independence and unique character of their schools, and to make sure that key decisions on staffing, curriculum and the use of resources will be made so as to benefit the students and families of each individual school, as well as the local community as a whole. It should also be noted that there are risks in not becoming a MAT. In the future, any school could be influenced to become part of a broader Academy chain. We believe that creating a local MAT, under local direction, offers the best opportunity to sustain vibrant, successful local schools.

9. How will admissions to the school be affected?

Each school in the MAT will be its own admissions authority, as they are now. They will continue to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and school admissions code. The LA will continue to be responsible for making sure there are enough places locally and will coordinate the admissions for all schools. Parents will continue to complete one application per child for each school place. The proposed MAT has no intentions to change the current admissions arrangements for our schools.

10. Does becoming part of a MAT change the relationship with other schools?

No. Each Academy within the MAT will continue to collaborate and share best practice and expertise with all other local schools and the wider community.

11. Will Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) responsibilities change?

No. Responsibilities as part of a MAT in relation to SEND will be the same as they are now. A child with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) can still nominate an Academy as their school of choice.