



## Heaton Park Primary and Nursery School

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Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022

Dear Parents/ Carers

### **Forming a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Consultation Letter for Parents and Carers**

Our school, along with other good and outstanding schools within Bury, have worked closely together for over six years within the Beacon Alliance Cluster, to provide high quality education, resulting in improving outcomes for all our children. It is a cluster of 15 schools, all with different local contexts. (6 community schools, 1 Jewish school, 4 Church of England schools and 4 Roman Catholic schools)

Our Governing Body's priority is to enable our school to continue to provide an excellent education for our pupils, whilst protecting our school's ethos and identity, and retaining its individual qualities and strengths.

Due to a diminishing of the LA's overall services and provision, and the fact that the recent government White Paper has said that all schools have to be part of an academy by 2030, we feel we need to be proactive in the acadamisation agenda, to take ownership and control of the process, rather than having it 'done to us' and being forced to join an existing academy trust that does not suit our ethos and identity. Therefore, the six community schools within the Beacon Alliance have decided to apply to become an Multi Academy Trust (MAT). We already work very closely together and we feel as a Trust we would bring even more benefits for our children, the school and wider community. We believe by working together we can achieve great things and provide a first-class, educational experience in which all our children can excel.

The six school are:

Heaton Park Community Primary and Nursery School

Woodbank Community Primary School

Whitefield Community Primary School

Butterstile Community Primary School

Head Teacher **Mr P Lord**

Ribble Drive Community Primary School

Cams Lane Community Primary School

We anticipate that the Trust would be known as **The Collective Learning Partnership** but **each school would each keep its own name, logo and uniform**. Each school would retain much of its independence whilst benefiting from being part of the Trust. There would be more opportunities for the pupils and staff to work together across the six schools, sharing good practise and delivering an outstanding learning experience. Schools would both support and challenge each other to deliver excellence in all aspects of the education of our pupils. All schools within this partnership would also continue to maintain and develop their strong links with other local schools, and still work very closely with all schools within the **Beacon Alliance**. In the future other schools may wish to join our MAT.

The Governing Body has therefore agreed to consult on the forming of a MAT with other local schools. The earliest date this conversion could happen is in February 2023. The consultation is open to everyone, including the school's parents, pupils, staff and the wider community. We want to hear your views, which the Governing Body will take into account when making its final decision. The consultation period will end on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**There is some general information attached and answers to some 'frequently asked questions'.**

**A school email has been set up if you wish to email your questions or thoughts to us:**

[academyconsultation@heatonparkbury.com](mailto:academyconsultation@heatonparkbury.com)

You are also free to call me at school if you have any questions and I am usually available at the front of school each morning.

The strength of our school and that of our partners, means we are confident that we have the vision, skills and resources to serve the best interests of our community and to shape our own destiny.

Thank you

Yours sincerely,

Mr P.J.Lord

Headteacher

Mr A Vogt

Chair of Governors

Head Teacher **Mr P Lord**

## FAQ

This document provides you with information about the proposed change to forming a MAT between the six schools listed above.

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 body.
- All schools will continue to 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.

It remains Government policy to encourage all schools to become Academies by 2030. 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.

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 will operate as a charity and not for the profit of individuals or businesses.

### **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 MAT of 6 schools covering children and young people, aged 3 - 11 years. Each school will keep its own name and the MAT will be known as The Collaborative Learning Partnership. 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 and Management 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 in reaching their final decision.

The process involves applying for Academy Trust status to the Regional School Commissioner (RSC). The application is assessed by the DfE and RSC and if in agreement the process starts. This will include legal work to set the Trust up, details of how the Trust will operate and transfer of the school site to the Trust, which protects the site for 125 years ensuring the education for our locality for generations to come.

**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 Bury LA. 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 pupils affected?**

The pupils 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 and outstanding education for all our pupils. Over time the pupils 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 LA maintained school. 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 can enhance the economies of scale and choose services that benefit all the pupils within the MAT schools.

**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. 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 become its own admissions authority but will be required 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 practise 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.

**12. How will parents be affected?**

Parents will not be affected; however, they may start to see and hear more information about the MAT. Parents may notice that correspondence sent by the academy, e.g. letters and emails, will include the MAT's logo.