



Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School & 6th Form College

National Teaching School
designated by



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Friday 17th June 2022

Dear HCCS Parents, Carers and Community Stakeholders,

In 2021 the Secretary of State for Education set out the government's vision for all individual schools and academies to become part of a family of schools within the structure of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). The academisation of the education sector has been underway for more than a decade but the move towards larger, multi school organisations has gathered pace over the past few years. It has been reinvigorated by emerging research that strongly suggests that the best educational outcomes for children come from groups of schools working together. These groups of schools or MATs have been increasingly successful in raising standards across all of their schools by investing time and resources in both pupils and staff.

Thinking about the future, the Headteachers, Members, Trustees and Governors at Shavington Academy (SA MAT) and Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School (HCCS SAT) share a view that there is a strong sense of synergy between the values and ambitions of the two schools and are therefore exploring the potential to come together to form a MAT. The academies in Shavington and Holmes Chapel have a strong track record of working together as part of the Chimney House Teaching Schools Foundation. Collectively, our schools have been part of highly successful programmes delivering initial teacher training, continuous professional development for teachers and offering tailored school to school support in less successful schools

The development of the MAT is centred around improving the educational experiences and outcomes for our pupils and we believe that as a MAT the more effective use of staff development, shared practice and financial efficiency would all enable this to occur at an even greater level. As with all key decisions our governors are committed to putting the best interests of our children, our staff and the wider community at the centre of the process. We are therefore keen to involve you, as a valued partner; in the consultation process that will take place prior to the summer break this academic year, as this process proceeds to the next stage of a potential merger.

The consultation proposal is to form a new MAT, built and designed together, with a clearly articulated underpinning set of values. The MAT would then look in the future to develop and grow via an associate model where schools would be brought into the MAT when they were able, with support, to match the values and expectations of the MAT. The underpinning values of the two establishing schools remain solid and in place over time as the central governance model wouldn't change when other schools apply to join the MAT. The joint values and identities of our schools become the core of the new umbrella organisation as

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both schools are very clear that their identity within the local community is very important and something that they do not wish to see diminished.

If the formation of the new MAT goes ahead, the current Holmes Chapel Single Academy Trust will cease to exist and the current Shavington MAT will be reformed under a new name to indicate the merging of the two schools. The names of the two schools themselves will not change and they will continue to operate very much as they do now with the authority to operate delegated to the school's Local Governing Bodies and the Headteachers. In technical terms, Shavington MAT is described in this process as the transfer and HCCS Academy Trust the transferor. The new MAT will be held to account by its Members and Trustees.

Members, Trustees, Governors and Leaders believe that this next step will support both schools to explore a range of questions that stakeholders often ask during consultation periods and provide the opportunity for parents and carers, our community and our partners to raise further questions for consideration regarding the proposal.

The Trust and Governing Boards wish to consult with our stakeholders including:

- Staff
- Pupils
- Parents/Carers
- Trade Unions
- Local Primary Schools and Pre Schools
- Local Secondary Schools
- The Local Authority
- Parish Council
- Local Community

The consultation window will run from 17th June 2022 to 2pm on 15th July 2022

A detailed FAQs document has been attached to this letter, providing responses to questions and matters that have been raised through the process so far and there will be opportunity for a face-to-face Q&A session at each school within this consultation period:

Shavington Academy: Tuesday 5th July 2022 5.00pm – 6.00pm

Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School: Thursday 7th July 2022 5.00pm – 6.00pm



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Your views and comments on this proposal can be shared here: [MAT Consultation Form](#)

We look forward to receiving your feedback regarding this proposal.

Yours Faithfully,

Nigel Bielby
Headteacher

Christina Burgess
Chair of Governors

Shavington Academy and Holmes Chapel Academy Merger

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)?

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is when 2 or more Academies come together in partnership. Within a multi-academy trust all schools are governed by one Academy trust. Each school retains its own governing body, which is represented on the multi-academy trust board. The school's governing bodies operate subject to the control of the trust which has ultimate responsibility for the running of the individual academies. The trust is accountable and responsible for the performance of each of the academies and may delegate its decision-making powers to the governing bodies of the individual academies. As the multi-academy trust is a single entity, it is envisaged that schools can achieve strong collaboration and drive-up standards by providing a cohesive strategy and vision across all of the schools working together.

Shavington Academy (SA) is currently an 'empty' Multi-Academy Trust (MAT).

2. What is a Single Academy Trust (SAT)?

A Single Academy Trust 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 one school. The Academy is funded directly by the Government and not through the Local Authority. The school's governing body has decision-making powers and is responsible for the running of the SAT. Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School (HCCS) is currently a Single Academy Trust (SAT)

3. Is this the right time to consider a merger of SA MAT and HCCS SAT?

Yes, both schools have been considering further MAT development and have spent considerable time looking into options. The close working relationship between both schools places this as a strong option for further development at this time. Other schools locally are progressing on MAT development journeys which reflects the climate we are in.

4. Has the decision to merger already been made?

No. Until the views of our parents and carer, staff, the local community, Trade Union and other stakeholders of our school have been obtained, a final decision will not be made. The formal consultation process is extremely important and will inform future decision making. The Trust and Governing Body has to weigh up both the pros and cons and then make a final decision as to whether to proceed. At anytime within the process, any party can withdraw, until the Funding Agreement is signed, as this is a legally binding document.

5. What is the time scale for the merger to happen?

It is expected that this would occur in the next academic year 2022/2023, assuming the Trustees and Governors finalise the decision to merger, after the consultation process.

6. Is there a cost to this process?

Yes, there will be costs as the DfE do not provide money for this process. Any costs for the merger will be met by both schools equally.

7. How will being an Academy affect staff?

All staff will automatically transfer to the new Academy Trust, on their current pay and conditions agreements. Strict TUPE arrangements would be followed.

After conversion all staff at the schools will be employed by the 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.

8. What is TUPE transfer?

TUPE regulations protect your rights as an employee when you transfer to a new employer. TUPE stands for Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment).

A 'TUPE transfer happens when:

An organisation or part of it is transferred from one employer to another

A service is transferred to a new provider; for example, when another company takes over contracts for office cleaning

You may be affected by a TUPE transfer if:

You're transferring from your current employer to a new employer

Other employees are transferring to a new employer but you stayed employed with your current employer and do not transfer

Other employees have been transferred to the organisation you work for

9. Who will be responsible for running our school?

The Headteachers of each school would still be responsible for running the school. The school would also retain its own governing body. The newly formed Trust will have a Board of Directors including individuals from each school's governing body. Headteachers from all the schools would be accountable to the Trust Board.

10. Will the Curriculum change?

We currently teach to the National Curriculum (last amended September 2014) and we already have the power to change this if we wish. Our main consideration is to continue with a broad and balanced curriculum that helps us to instil in children a lifelong love of learning.

11. Would the school have to change its name, logo or uniform?

No, there will be no change to the name, logo or uniform of either school. Each school is committed to the retention of its individual identity.

12. Would there be any changes to the admission policy/criteria?

No, there will be no changes to admission policy or criteria.

13. Will our responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and exclusions change?

No, responsibilities as an Academy in relation to SEND and exclusions will be just the same as they are now.

14. Would the term and holiday dates or the timings of the school day change?

Academies, free schools and voluntary aided schools are able to set their own term dates but are asked to set the same or similar dates in the interest of parents who may have children at different schools. Our calendars have always been very much in line with local schools and other schools locally and this will continue. Synced calendars allow us to potentially plan share training and development on the five-teacher training days each year.

15. How are pupils affected?

Pupils will not notice any immediate difference; they will be in the same uniform in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. We will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all our children. However, in time the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn which will result from greater training opportunities for all staff and wider opportunities for all pupils.

16. Will we get more money through this process?

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. All funding comes direct from Government to the Multi Academy Trust which controls the overall budget. Each school does not necessarily have more money, but as a group the schools are better able to control their part of the budget and seek economies of scale.

17. Does this merger change the relationship with other schools and the community?

No, we are both committed to being at the heart of our community, local schools for local children. We will continue to collaborate and share expertise with other schools outside of the proposed MAT and wider community.

18. What is the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC)?

The responsibilities of the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) include;

- Monitoring the performance of Academies and intervening where underperformance is found
- Making strategic decisions on the creation of MATs and granting academy orders
- Ensuring there are enough academy sponsors to meet local demand