



22nd June 2017

Hatchell Wood Primary School Multi Academy Trust Consultation

Dear Parent/Carer/Staff/Community,

This letter asks for your comments on a proposal for our school to convert to Academy status as part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), **The Rose Learning Trust** (www.theroselearningtrust.co.uk), which is a locally formed trust specifically for primary schools.

As Hatchell Wood is rated as good by Ofsted, we are in a position to choose if and when to convert to an Academy on our own terms within a MAT. We are choosing to make this proposal as a positive way forward for our school, which will enable us to continue to improve the opportunities we provide for our children. **There is no external sponsor.**

Academy status is becoming more common and the Government continues to encourage schools to become academies and in particular for primary schools to become academies in groups. As its budget is reduced, the local authority is also reducing the service that it has available to schools. Making this change now means that we can choose how we want our school to develop. Converting to Academy status within a Multi Academy Trust will:-

- Develop the highest quality of leadership and management
- Develop the highest quality of teaching and learning;
- Give us the greater freedoms in developing the school curriculum to make sure that it is personalised to the needs of our pupils ensuring high expectation and total conviction that all pupils can succeed whatever their circumstances, background or previous level of attainment
- Economic benefits such as centralised services;
- Enable us to support each other as the support from the local authorities reduces;
- Increase the flexibility of the school budget and funds which are currently allocated to the local authority to give us more freedom to spend it to best meet the priorities of the schools and pupils
- The opportunity to establish succession planning programmes and in doing so, retaining good staff who might otherwise move on

Whilst we will see real benefits in working closely together, any changes are likely to be behind the scenes. You and your children will see little visible difference when we become an Academy in a MAT.

On the letters page of the website there is a more detailed version of this letter setting out the reasons why we want to join the Rose Learning Trust. If you have any comments about these proposals please email us: admin@hatchellwood.doncaster.sch.uk or send a letter marked "Academy Consultation" to school

Comments should be returned no later than Thursday 20th July

Yours sincerely,

J Harris
Headteacher

What parents and carers need to know

- ❖ Your child's school will not change its character and will continue to look, feel and be the same as it is now
- ❖ The Headteacher and Governing Body will continue to run the school on a daily basis as they do now, and parents will continue to be represented on the Governing Body
- ❖ The school will not change its admissions policy
- ❖ Children with special needs will continue to receive additional support in the way they do now
- ❖ Our local schools will continue to work very closely together for each other as well as your children.
- ❖ The MAT arrangements will share some central services across the schools which will help them be more efficient and make sure that funding is focused on teaching, learning and support for children

What the staff need to know

- ❖ The MAT would be your employer instead of your individual schools' governing body as at present
- ❖ All staff would transfer to the trust under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) regulations, retaining current pay, conditions and pensions
- ❖ The day-to-day responsibility for the curriculum, teaching and learning approaches, and classroom management would rest with the Headteacher, not the MAT.
- ❖ Staff would be based in individual schools unless they wish to apply for and are appointed to a trust- wide role; as now, there would be opportunities to work collaboratively with other staff and schools across the partnership

What the wider community needs to know

- ❖ As now, Headteachers will work closely together to agree shared approaches which will benefit teaching and learning, led by the Chief Executive Officer, Jill Foster, who will have strategic responsibilities across the MAT
- ❖ The MAT will work very closely and co-operatively with local partners, including other schools, community groups and organisations, and the local authority

Governors believe that Academy status within a MAT is the best way to support the school in continuing to develop and improve, and that working together within the Trust will bring benefits to teaching and learning and this will impact on your child's achievement.

The period of consultation will be from **22nd June 2017 to 20th July 2017**

Following this period of consultation the Governing Body of the school will decide whether to go ahead with the conversion. The decision must be taken in the interest of present and future pupils.



Some questions you may have:

Is this the right time to consider converting to an Academy?

Yes. We are rated by Ofsted as a Good school after our last inspection and we can choose whether or not to become an Academy within a MAT. Some schools judged 'inadequate' are forced to join an Academy chain. We are in a totally different situation to them. As Governors, we must consider the option to convert as part of our duty to safeguarding and improving the education we can provide for our pupils.

What is Multi Academy Trust (MAT)?

A Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is an organisation that runs a number of academies under a single charitable company. Academies within the MAT:-

- Each Academy remains a separate school but the governors are responsible to a board of directors established for the Trust. This model is becoming more common, particularly as more primary schools seek Academy status and the Government is encouraging primary schools to choose this route.
- State funded
- Enjoy additional freedoms and opportunities
- Are for local people

So why make the change?

Academy status within a MAT gives us some more freedom to make decisions about how we can best continue to move the school forwards and how best to use the funding we receive to improve opportunities for our pupils. Working within the Rose Learning Trust we will be able to strengthen the existing good relationships between our schools and further develop good practice across the Trust as well as economies of scale.

Who will be able to go to the Academy?

As part of the conversion process the Rose Learning Trust will recognise and adhere to the existing agreed admissions policy, which is in place at the school. This means that the same forms and timescales will be used.

Has the decision to convert to an Academy already been made?

No. Until the consultation has been completed and everyone's views have been obtained a final decision will not be made. The Governing Body has to weigh up the pros and cons of Academy conversion and consultation is part of this.

When will these changes take place?

We hope to be able to complete the process of conversion during October 2017

The Rose Learning Trust



The Rose Learning Trust Structure

Members (up to 5)		
Members have appointed the Board of Directors (8)		
The Board of Directors is chosen by the members on the basis of their relevant skills and experience in education, facilities management, HR, legal matters and finance, as well as their understanding of our schools and communities.		
The Board has appointed a small central staff to support each school.		
The CEO, CFO and CPO		
The Headteachers have full responsibility of their own schools. The CEO works with all the HT and is the link between the schools and the Board of Directors.		
Each school has its own Headteacher and		
Governing Body		
Some services will be shared between all the schools, some will be provided in house, some by external providers including the local authority. There will be a strong-shared focus on teaching, learning and the raising of standards, but very high levels of autonomy in each school.		
Individual schools will keep their unique identity, name and distinctiveness and uniform.	Staff networks will continue and mature. Each school will be a hub lead for a particular area or subject(s)	Individual schools will be led by their headteacher and governing bodies, supported by the multi-academy trust.

Please send us your comments

If you have any comments about these proposals please email us: admin@hatchellwood.doncaster.sch.uk or send a letter marked "Academy Consultation" to school

Comments should be returned no later than Thursday 20th July



Find out more?

The best source of information on academies is the Government's own website:-

<https://www.gov.uk/become-an-Academy-information-for-schools>

The Governors and Leadership Team are committed to ensuring that Hatchell Wood Primary School continues to be a good school, serving all members of the community. It is our duty to explore every opportunity to maintain and improve our already high standards. Your feedback and views really do count and we will keep you fully informed of future developments.

Academies: Some key facts

Inspection

Academies continue to be subject to Ofsted inspections

Funding

The Academy Trust will be funded by the Secretary of State as follows:-

Recurrent expenditure

General Annual Grant (GAG)

The equivalent to that which would be received by a maintained school taking into account the number of pupils at the Academy

Education Services Grant (ESG)

For 2016/2017 academies receive £77 per pupil, based on the number of pupils aged 3 to 19.

Capital Expenditure

Any capital expenditure incurred by the Academy on which capital grant payments are sought from the Secretary of State will require the specific prior written agreement of the Secretary of State

Financial Monitoring

The Academy trust must abide by the requirements and have regard to the guidance in the Academies Financial Handbook.

SEN

Academies should be fully inclusive local schools and in common with all other schools have a clear legal duty to do their best to meet the needs of children with special education needs (SEN) and disabilities.

Admissions

Academies must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than available places.



Academies are required to provide education for pupils of different abilities (i.e. they may not select pupils by ability)

Academies are required to provide education for pupils wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which the Academy is situated.

Converting as a group

Schools can convert together as part of a multi-Academy trust, which allows them to share staff and expertise and make savings when buying goods and services. All academies in a MAT are governed by one trust and a single board of directors. The MAT can establish a local governing body for each of its academies, to which it can delegate some of its functions

The conversion process

The conversion process includes a number of elements. All schools must consult stakeholders; the Academy Trust must be established and funding agreements drafted and agreed with the Secretary of State; staff must be transferred from their current employer to the Academy Trust and their terms and conditions – including pensions – are protected in the process; arrangements must be made for the Academy Trust to have the right to occupy the school site and buildings; contracts must be transferred from schools to the Academy Trust; and new insurance arrangements are required together with new bank accounts and auditors. A grant from DfE will support the costs incurred.