

Solihull Formation Collaborative Trust, Spring 2024 Consultation

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between a local authority (LA) maintained school and an academy?

Local authority maintained schools receive their funding from the local authority, who retain some of the monies to support centrally provided services. Academies receive their funding directly from the Department of Education, through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Academies have more control over how they do things but they are still inspected by Ofsted and must follow the same rules on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as LA maintained schools.

What is a multi academy trust (MAT)?

A multi academy trust is a not-for-profit company that runs more than one academy. It is a legal entity and has responsibility for the governance of all of its schools and for the performance of each school in the trust. A MAT has three levels of governance; Board of Members, Board of Trustees and Local Governing Boards (see below).

Which schools will be in the Solihull Formation Collaborative Trust?

Initially, the MAT will comprise of Langley School, Coleshill Heath Primary School, Oak Cottage Primary School and Haslucks Green Junior School. Other local schools may join the MAT in the future and the Board of Trustees would be pleased to have discussions with governing bodies in schools that may be interested in joining us.

Isn't Langley School already an academy, and if so, why does it want to be part of a MAT?

Yes, Langley School is a Single Academy Trust (SAT) and has been since 2010. Langley School is keen to develop strong collaborative partnerships with other schools for the benefit of all pupils and staff.

What are the benefits of being part of the Solihull Formation Collaborative Trust?

Solihull Formation Collaborative Trust is a family of schools that has children and young people at the core of all that it does. The MAT will provide excellent opportunities for collaboration, support and continuing professional development across all the schools. The schools will benefit from MAT wide purchasing and financial management to deliver economies of scale, ensuring that there is as much funding as possible to spend on classroom resources to support students' learning.

As Langley School has been an academy since 2010, it already has experience of working as an Academy. This will be of significant benefit to the other schools joining the trust as many of the systems and processes are in place and well established.

How will the other schools in Solihull Formation Collaborative Trust be represented within the Trust?

The current chairs of the governing boards will all be on the board of trustees; in addition, all current governors were asked whether they would like to be considered and a selection event has taken place. There are currently seven trustees appointed; additional trustees will be recruited to fill identified skills and knowledge gaps.

What happens to our governing body?

The governing body of each school will remain in place, as we see it as an important part of how a school moves forward. At Langley School, the current board will relinquish its Trustee Board responsibilities.

Our scheme of delegation will clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of our Local Governing Bodies (LGBs). The LGBs will have a focus on:

- **Safeguarding:** monitoring safeguarding practice, ensuring compliance with school and trust wide policies and statutory requirements;
- **SEND:** ensuring pupils with special educational needs and disabilities get the support they need and seeking assurance that staff are adequately trained;
- **Quality of Education:** the local governing board will monitor and challenge the standards and delivery of the curriculum for all pupils;
- **Standards:** monitoring school performance – reviewing data, including exam and national test results, attendance rates and pupil progress; working with school leaders to identify areas of improvement; and
- **Stakeholder engagement:** developing communication channels, consulting stakeholders and working in partnership with the local community to ensure stakeholder views are accounted for.

How much will come from each school's budget to fund central services?

It is anticipated that the Trust will take a 'top-slice' from each school budget to fund central services such as School Improvement, Finance and IT. This will mean that each school in the Trust should be financially secure whilst having access to high-quality services. The top-slice will exclude any pupil-related funding such as funding for SEND as well as Pupil Premium, etc.

Will all the schools in Solihull Formation Collaborative Trust be expected to be the same?

No. It is really important to the MAT that all our schools offer a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to their communities. We encourage the individuality that exists in our schools and where they are performing well, there will be little intervention from the trust.

Will being part of Solihull Formation Collaborative Trust mean lowering our own standards or possibly limiting resources available to our own school?

No; by working closely with other schools in the MAT, we will be raising standards for everyone and there will be increased accessibility to a greater range of resources.

Will the Trust change the name of our school?

No, all schools will retain their current names.

Will the Trust change our uniform?

There are no plans to change the uniforms at any of the schools in the trust.

Will there be changes to the term times or the length of the school day?

Term dates for all our schools are the same and broadly in line with Solihull MBC term dates. There may be some differences in the dates of inset days, but we will look to align these as soon as possible.

There are no plans to change the length of the school day. Changes could be made but these would only be done after full consultation with parents/ carers and staff.

Will staff be expected to work in other schools in the Trust?

The trust will not move current staff from school to school, unless the member of staff requests it or successfully applies for a position in one of the other schools. Staff that join any of the schools from September 2024 onwards will have a trust-wide contract, although they will have a base location in one of our settings.

Will the terms and conditions of employment for staff change?

Under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) regulations, the pay and terms and conditions of staff transferring into the trust are protected. The trust follows the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions and works in line with NJC pay rates for support staff. Our staff will continue to benefit from the Teachers' Pension Scheme and the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Please send further questions to the headteacher of your child's school.