

Forefield Junior School

Academy Conversion Consultation Questions & Answers

Parent / Carers meeting, Monday 26th June 2023 at 5.00pm

Question: Will there be any changes to the existing staffing structures? E.g. fluidity across schools/ specialist subjects?

Answer: There will be no changes to the existing staffing structures as a result of the transfer.

Question: Will SEND provision stay the same?

Answer: Yes. SEND funding from the LA will remain the same as it is now.

Feedback Received through feedback form or consultation email

Parents/ Carers

Question: Who will be in control of the budget and how will this be divided up between schools?

Answer: The schools within the MAT will decide collectively what functions they would like to centralise which are likely to be back office functions and school improvement. They will then contribute an agreed 'top slice' portion of their budget towards centralised services (currently there is a top-slice by the Local Authority for core services instead). A 'scheme of delegation' will be developed by the schools within the MAT to determine how the remainder of the budget will be managed. The principle of subsidiarity will apply meaning decision making will remain within individual schools as much as possible within a local governing body arrangement.

Question: The document says there will be a CEO of the trust is this likely to be one of the headteachers? If not who would it be and will they be paid out of the schools budget therefore reducing the amount of funding for each school?

Answer: The appointed CEO will be the current headteacher from Chesterfield High which is converting from a single academy trust, to a multi academy trust. Other schools will then join the trust. The CEO will be paid from the top-sliced school budgets.

Question: Where will any profit go? Does it go back into MAT?

Answer: The MAT will not be for profit. However, any savings generated centrally will be channelled back into schools improvement.

Question: Referring to the Q&A section of paperwork: Will Mersey View Learning Trust employ non-qualified teachers? All class groups of pupils will be registered to a qualified teacher, as is the case in schools currently.

Answer: We will never employ non-qualified teachers and will always try to ensure, wherever possible, that all teachers are specialists. All teachers will be appropriately qualified.

The response to this question is not clear. It states that pupils will be **registered** to a qualified teacher, however could this mean that although they are registered with a qualified teacher they may be taught in the main by non-qualified teachers? (I am aware that currently TA's do take classes to cover PPA etc, however I am concerned that Academy/MATs may employ non-qualified staff to teach to save money)

Comment: As a parent of pupils at Forefield Juniors and a Governor at a potential partner school in this MAT (Valewood), I wholeheartedly support this proposal. I am convinced that this is the best way to ensure properly resourced education that meets the needs of every child. It is also a unique opportunity to be a part of a new MAT with its roots firmly in the Crosby area, uniting schools of similar values but each with a distinct character and ethos.

Staff meeting, Monday 26th June 2023 at 3.30pm

Question: Does each school have governors as well as trustees?

Answer: If this proposal progresses, the Local Governing Body of the school would remain unchanged. There will be Local Governing Bodies (LGB) for each school which converts to an academy and forms part of the new proposed MAT to be known as 'Mersey View Learning Trust'. Parent representatives will be on the academy LGB just as they are now on the Governing Body.

The LGB will have very similar powers delegated to it as the governing body does now – the main difference being that it will be the MAT delegating the powers to the LGB rather than the local authority, as is the case now. The role of the LGB will be clearly defined in the MAT's Scheme of Delegation which will be developed with input from all six schools looking to form the proposed MAT.

Question: Who will appoint trustees and who is responsible for nominating people to take on the role of trustee?

Answer: The Members will appoint the Trustees. The Board of Trustees has a range of skills and expertise. All six schools looking to form the new proposed MAT have had the opportunity to put nominations forward for Trustees.

Question: Would all schools in the trust have the same provision i.e. Bases for autistic children?

Answer: Sign post parents to the best provision. Not looking to replicate.

Question: CHS is already an academy - how does that work?

Answer: CHS is currently a Single Academy Trust (SAT) who has submitted a formal application to the Regional Director to become a Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

Question: Is the pension fund going to be managed by the same people? I.e. teachers pension scheme and Scheme for TA etc

Answer: The school will provide pension fund membership for the Teachers Pension Scheme and the Local Government Pension Scheme for staff transferring.

Question: Is there a legal timeframe for how long pension terms and conditions remain unchanged?

Answer: TUPE applies with any change that is in connection with the transfer. You can make changes down the line but not if the sole reason for the change is the transfer. TUPE is a never-ending position and cast in time that way. Changes to T&C would need to follow another consultation process and Unions would be involved. Chesterfield High School became an academy 12 years ago and have never changed their T&Cs and have never wanted to.

Question: Could staff be interchangeable between schools - specifically will staff be compelled to work in other schools in the MAT?

Answer: Staff will not be transferred to other schools within the proposed MAT. The current school will remain their place of work. There will be opportunities for development across the schools in the proposed MAT. The plan is to retain our staff.

Question: If children are to be assessed quicker where are the resources coming from to support children when needs are identified? At the moment high needs funding comes from Sefton so how will this work?

Answer: Funding will continue via the standard channels, however, with economies of scale it is anticipated that resources can be centralised to enable the commissioning of a single resource to work directly with our schools to assess children, rather than the current piecemeal approach.

Question: How will the salary 'staying the same' work? Will staff remain on the same pay scales and will pay rises etc be honoured by the MAT?

Answer: On conversion to academy status, teachers and staff employed by Sefton LA will transfer with the same terms and conditions and pay, via a formal TUPE process.

Question: As I believe I am the only full time ICT technician in a MAT school will I be deployed to other MAT school when all the IT systems are incorporated?

Answer: Staff will not be transferred to other schools within the proposed MAT. The current school will remain their place of work. There will however be opportunities for development across the schools in the proposed MAT. We would very much like to retain our staff.

Question: It sounds like staffing structures will stay the same in individual schools but on another level who will employ staff such as an educational psychologist who will work across all MAT schools and who will pay their salary?

Answer: The new proposed MAT will be the employer of staff. The school would pay the MAT a top-slice in place of what the school currently pay the local authority. The top-slice will pay for any new roles centrally within the MAT.

Question: How likely is it that we would be able to employ a good educational psychologist?

Answer: development of the MAT is at an formative stage and consideration of financial models has not yet taken place, although this is the ambition.

Question: Is there any intention for the MAT to get bigger in time?

Answer: It is called Mersey View for a reason and plans are that schools within it are within sight of the Mersey. It is a localised we may consider more local schools but most have already joined a MAT.

Question: Who decides on the school budget and how is it shared equitably between schools in the MAT?

Answer: The schools within the MAT will decide collectively what functions they would like to centralise which are likely to be back office functions and school improvement. They will then contribute an agreed 'top slice' portion of their budget towards centralised services (currently there is a top-slice by the Local Authority for core services instead). A 'scheme of delegation' will be developed by the schools within the MAT to determine how the remainder of the budget will be managed. The principle of subsidiarity will apply meaning decision making will remain within individual schools as much as possible within a local governing body arrangement.

Question: Will new staff who join the school after conversion be on a different pay and conditions?

Answer: To attract best staff, following conversion it is intended for new joiners to be brought in on the current, existing terms and conditions that are presently in place.

Question: Will the likes of Jaqui Patterson (who works for Sefton supporting schools) still work with school?

Answer: The school may retain such services. The school will only pay Sefton LA for the services it will be using. The MAT is planning to run its own best practice network.

Question: How will support for ECTs work?

Answer: Development of the MAT is at an formative stage and consideration of support for ECTs has not yet taken place, although this is planned.

Question: What is the role of the CEO?

Answer: The appointed CEO will be the current headteacher at Chesterfield High which is converting from a single academy trust, to a multi academy trust. Other schools will then join the trust. The CEO will be paid from the top-sliced school budgets.

As CEO of the Trust, the current Headteacher at Chesterfield High School will be the Accounting Officer for the Trust and the strategic support for schools. The Board of Trustees will have responsibility for the effective running of the Trust and the individual academies within it. All schools within proposed MAT will have a Local Governing Body (LGB). On the ground, the LGB includes people who know the school best. The LGB play a very important part to ensure that the school runs smoothly.

Question: Will Paul still be the headteacher of the school?

Answer: Yes

Question: What level of involvement will the CEO have in school e.g. lesson observations, appraisal etc?

Answer: the role of the CEO is central and strategic and is therefore less focussed on day-to-day school operations and more around quality assuring school development plans and working at a local level to help schools deliver their improvement plans. However, the CEO is very keen to maintain a presence with all of our schools, but how this works in practice is still at formative stages. There is also an ambition to develop a central school improvement team who will work directly with schools.

Question: From a SEN point of view is there going to be quality assurance about transition from KS1 in terms of children who need additional support?

Answer: Yes, quality assurance is a key priority.