

Consultation on a proposal for Sitwell Nursery & Infant School to join Central Learning Partnership Trust (CLPT)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is an Academy?

Academies are state schools, funded directly from central government, no longer under the control of the Local Authority. Academy status gives schools more freedom to be innovative and creative with the curriculum, timetabling, staffing and governance.

All academies continue to be inspected by Ofsted and comply with the same rules as other schools on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), exclusions and admissions. An academy is part of a charitable trust (the MAT) run by a board of trustees. Trusts and their academies are rightly expected to work with and support other schools, including vulnerable schools. Should you wish to know more about the Government's policy, the Department for Education has its own academies bookmark on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/convert-to-an-academy-information-for-schools>

What is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)?

A Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company and is responsible for overseeing the running of a number of schools. It has three layers of governance: the Members; the Directors; and the Local Governing Bodies.

A MAT is formed when its articles (legal document) are approved by the DfE and it is registered at Companies House as a company. MATs are made up of a number of academy schools – some are just primary school MATs, others will have secondary schools in them and some will include Special Schools too. It is usual for MATs to have periods of growth, when a number of schools might join and then some period of consolidation. There isn't a set number of schools that makes a MAT. The partnership established between all schools in the MAT ensures that the schools can share skills and best practice and make optimum use of resources ensuring best value for money for each school.

In many ways the children will not notice any immediate difference, they will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. However, in time the children will perhaps notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn due to greater links with each school within the Trust.

What additional responsibilities will Academy status bring?

Currently the Local Authority employs our staff – going forward the Multi-Academy Trust would be the employer rather than the LA.

The Academy Trust would be responsible for admissions rather than the LA (although the Local Authority would still co-ordinate and ensure the Trust adopts clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code).

What are the benefits that the school feel will be achieved from joining CLPT?

CLPT is currently 16 schools, serving communities across 3 geographical areas: Rotherham, Wolverhampton and Worcestershire. The Trust is underpinned by a moral purpose: *to change lives for the better*. They are committed to improving the life chances of the children in their schools, which is clear by their incredibly impressive achievements. As a Trust their main priority is to raise the attainment of children and young people, wanting all pupils to

attend schools judged 'Good' or better. CLPT want to equalise opportunity, create challenge and enhance the life chances of their communities.

The CLPT Mission

As a Trust, the main priority of CLPT is to raise the attainment of young people. The Trust wants all pupils, of both primary and secondary age, to attend schools judged 'Good' or better. They want to equalise opportunity, create challenge and enhance the life chances of young people, well beyond their school years. CLPT are committed to addressing inequality; believing that all schools, and in turn their achievements, can improve incrementally, continually building on the improvements of the previous year.

CLPT are committed to making a real difference to the lives of everyone within the CLPT "family", pupils and the workforce alike. The Trust aims to significantly enhance life chances and to imbue children with the characteristics that will enable them to contribute positively to society, by becoming active advocates for the social cohesion that is pivotal to all CLPT settings.

CLPT states it will:

- add value to the outcomes of all pupils
- maintain highly effective judgements from Ofsted
- ensure all settings are oversubscribed or on a significant upward trend
- through a sustainable model of education for all pupils, maintain an inclusive culture
- continue to be recognised nationally as an organisation of high quality, producing outstanding results within a culture of innovation
- celebrate the unique characteristics and ethos of all schools within the Trust and support their growth, whilst protecting their individual identities within their respective communities
- facilitate the sharing of good practice across Trust schools and beyond
- develop high quality, committed professionals and future leaders for CLPT academies, through national and CLPT Professional Development Programmes

You can find out more about Central Learning Partnership Trust via their website:

<https://www.clpt.co.uk/>

Does Sitwell Nursery & Infant School have an existing relationship with CLPT?

Senior leaders at Sitwell Nursery & Infant School have worked collaboratively with senior leaders at Coleridge Primary School and East Dene Primary School for a number of years. This has been based around key school priorities, which are similar due to the similar contexts of the school. Joint collaborative working is encouraged within Rotherham to ensure schools are learning from one another for the benefit of the children in their care.

How are decisions about school holidays and term dates currently coordinated between Sitwell Nursery & Infant School and Sitwell Junior School?

School holidays and term dates are agreed together with senior leaders of Sitwell Junior School prior to these being agreed by Rotherham LA. The schools work together to ensure this is the same for both schools, providing consistency for families. This will not change if Sitwell Nursery & Infant School joins CLPT.

Are INSET days planned jointly or independently?

As with term dates, INSET days are planned collaboratively and agreed by both schools. This ensures that parents do not have issues arising from different INSET days. This will not change if Sitwell Nursery & Infant School join CLPT.

How do you ensure consistency for families with children in both schools?

As we do currently, Sitwell Nursery & Infant School will continue to work closely with Sitwell Junior School to provide a smooth transition for our children and families. Senior leaders meet regularly to discuss key shared responsibilities, such as fire drills, INSET days, term dates etc. Both schools are committed to ensuring our children, families and community are at the forefront of any decisions we make.

What is the current process for deciding on site closures due to snow or other emergencies?

The Headteachers of Sitwell Nursery & Infant School and Sitwell Junior School work together to decide if the school site is safe to open when there are emergencies, such as bad weather. Both schools will agree if the schools will close for snow days etc. This will remain the same if Sitwell Nursery & Infant School join CLPT.

How do the current leaders of Sitwell Nursery & Infant School and Sitwell Junior School communicate and collaborate on shared site issues?

Leaders of both schools meet regularly to discuss and work together on shared issues, to support and maintain our relationships with our families.

Is there a formal agreement or memorandum of understanding governing shared use?

Yes, there is a Shared Use Agreement already in place that will continue to be used if Sitwell Nursery & Infant School join CLPT. This will be reviewed during the academisation process to ensure it is fit for purpose.

How are shared spaces (e.g., sports facilities, dining areas, parking) managed between Sitwell Nursery & Infant School and Sitwell Junior School?

This aspect of our collaborative work will continue to be the same should we academise. We will follow the protocols in the Shared Use agreement to ensure any work completed or changes being made are being done so legally and consistently.

What support is in place for pupils transitioning from Sitwell Nursery & Infant School to Sitwell Junior School?

Senior leaders from both schools plan an extensive package of support for children transitioning into Year 3. This is done with the best interests of the children in mind and enables all children to feel confident about the move to a new school. Children with additional needs and/or anxieties about transition receive an enhanced package of support during this time to ensure a seamless transition.

Will any changes to the school be made as a result of conversion?

We do not intend to make any changes to the day-to-day work of the school following conversion, other than to adjust the governance arrangements and accountability that comes with working within a Multi-Academy Trust and to bring closer working practices between the schools in the Trust. We will continue to work closely with Sitwell Junior School to ensure a seamless transition for our children and families.

How do I learn more, and how do I respond to the consultation?

You can find out more about Central Learning Partnership Trust via their website:

<https://www.clpt.co.uk/>

The Governing Board would very much like to hear your opinion. There will be an online form for stakeholders to complete, which will be made available on the school website on Thursday 16th October.

If you wish to respond in writing to the consultation, we ask that you let us have your views by emailing them to office@sitwellinfantschool.co.uk by 3.15pm on Thursday 13th November 2025. Please include your name and contact details.

Whilst we do not anticipate responding to each and every communication, we will provide answers to questions via the FAQs document on the school website. These will be updated on a regular basis.