



Monday 6 March 2017

Dear Parent/ Carer/ Member of the Local Community

BECOMING AN ACADEMY AND FORMING A MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST (MAT) CONSULTATION LETTER FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

We are proud of the reputation our school has earned within the local community for providing a nurturing ethos in which our young people can thrive. Our school, along with other good and outstanding schools in our local area, has been recognised by Lancashire as providing a successful model of collaboration, resulting in improving outcomes for all our young people.

The Governing Body's priority is to enable our school to continue to provide an excellent education for our young people, whilst protecting our school's family ethos and retaining its unique qualities and strengths. Collaborative working with other local schools in a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) offers many benefits for our young people, the school and the wider community. We believe by working together we can accomplish great things and provide a world class educational experience in which all our young people can excel.

To retain our school's identity and its capacity to sustain future improvements, the Governing Body believe it is vital that we work in partnership with a like-minded group of local schools on our journey towards providing a world class education for all young people in our community. The partnership would establish its own MAT and each school would become an Academy. The Trust would be established by the following six local schools:

Blacko Primary School
Colne Park High School
Colne Park Primary School
Laneshaw Bridge Primary School
Lord Street Primary School
West Street Primary School

This formal partnership (MAT) would be built on the strong foundations of a successful informal partnership which has already been established between the schools. We anticipate that the Trust would be known as the 'Pennine Trust', but the schools would keep their own current names. Each school would retain much of its independence whilst benefiting from being part of the Trust. There would also be more opportunities for the young people and staff to work together across the six schools, sharing good practice and delivering an outstanding learning experience. Schools would both support and challenge each other to deliver excellence in all aspects of the education of our young

people. Furthermore, all schools in this partnership would maintain and develop their strong links with other local schools. In the future other schools may join our MAT.

The Governing Body has therefore agreed to consult on forming a Trust with other local schools and converting to Academy status. The earliest date this conversion could happen is the 1st September 2017. The consultation is open to all, including the school's parents, pupils, staff and the wider community. We want to hear your views, which the Governing Body will take into account when making its final decision. The consultation period will end on Monday 27th March 2017.

We have prepared the attached document which includes: some general information; the vision and values of our proposed Trust; and answers to many 'Frequently Asked Questions'. The Chair of Governors and Headteacher at each school will hold a consultation meeting at their school to discuss any questions you may have in the week beginning Monday 13th March 2017. A feedback form is included within the document for you to return. If you wish to provide feedback, please ensure this is sent to the School Office by Monday 27th March 2017.

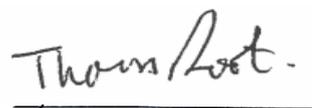
The strength of our school, and of our partnership, means we are confident that we have the vision, skill, talent and resources to serve the best interests of our community and to shape our own destiny. Working together in a MAT will enable our partnership to make a distinctive contribution to school improvement and to educational provision both within our MAT and beyond the confines of Pendle.

Yours sincerely

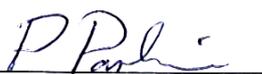
Mr M Harrison
Headteacher
Blacko Primary



Mr T Root
Chair of Governors
Blacko Primary



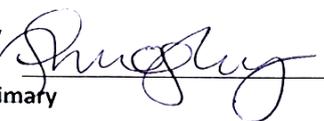
Dr P Parkin
Headteacher
Colne Park High



Mr H Devonport
Chair of Governors
Colne Park High



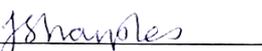
Mrs S Midgley
Headteacher
Colne Park Primary



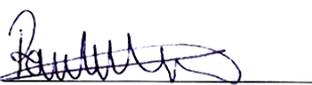
Mr D Franklin
Chair of Governors
Colne Park Primary



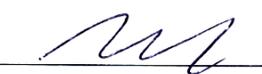
Mrs J Sharples
Headteacher
Laneshaw Bridge Primary



Councillor P White
Chair of Governors
Laneshaw Bridge Primary



Mr D Hetherington
Headteacher
Lord Street Primary



Mrs A Denton
Chair of Governors
Lord Street Primary



Mrs S Burtoft
Headteacher
West Street Primary



Mrs S Simpson
Chair of Governors
West Street Primary





ACADEMY CONVERSION AND THE PENNINE TRUST

Introduction

This document provides you with information about the proposed change to Academy status and the 'Multi-Academy Trust' which six local schools have expressed an interest in establishing. The schools currently involved are:

Blacko Primary School
Colne Park High School
Colne Park Primary School
Laneshaw Bridge Primary School
Lord Street Primary School
West Street Primary School

Under these proposals:

- Each school will remain focussed on delivering excellent teaching and learning within its local community.
- Each school will continue to have its own local Headteacher with less administration and more time to focus on the teaching and learning within their school.
- Each school would continue to have its own local governing body.
- All schools will work together on projects to improve education and learning in all schools.
- All schools will share administration and technical support in order to reduce costs and improve effectiveness.
- A Joint Trust Board will exist to provide oversight of the performance of each school and ensure effective and equitable investment in improvements across all schools.

Why Change our Existing Schools?

Our schools along with other good and outstanding schools in our local area have already established an informal partnership, resulting in improving outcomes for all our young people. This has been recognised by Lancashire as an exemplary model of collaboration.

We believe a formal partnership is now required to establish a clear vision and systems for working effectively together for the benefit of all our young people by enhancing their:

- Ambition and aspiration
- Attainment and achievement
- Personal development
- Personal well being

We are determined to take whatever action is needed to maximise the achievement and personal development of all our young people. The Headteachers of our schools have worked together to establish a shared vision for improvement whilst retaining what we value most in each of our schools.

It remains Government policy to encourage all schools to become Academies. Currently schools can either become an Academy by joining an existing Multi Academy Trust (MAT) or by forming their own Multi Academy Trust (MAT) with other schools. We believe forming our own MAT is the best option because it will enable our schools to:

- develop bespoke world class educational provision to meet the needs of all our young people.
- protect our schools' family ethos.
- retain our schools' individual identities, unique qualities and strengths.
- maximise the autonomy of our schools in shaping their own future.
- enable and enhance the professional development of all staff.

The strength of our schools, and of our partnership, means we are confident that we have the vision, skill, talent and resources to serve the best interests of our community and to shape our own destiny. Working together in the Pennine Trust will enable our partnership to make a distinctive contribution to school improvement and to educational provision both within and beyond the confines of Pendle. We are determined to embark on a journey to transform education in Pendle to match world class standards, and collectively we have strength to do so.



Our Vision

We have an unswerving determination to ensure no-one gets left behind by:

- Creating a culture of ambition and high aspirations.
- Transforming education to match world class standards.
- Overcoming barriers to social mobility.
- Fostering a sense of understanding and compassion for others.
- Developing the courage to question, challenge and change existing norms.
- Nurturing active and creative minds to promote a life-long love of learning.
- Securing the future wellbeing of all young people.
- Ensuring a highly effective family partnership reflecting our ethos.

Our Values

By forming a trust and working in partnership we will further improve the current educational outcomes, social mobility and wellbeing for all young people in our area. There are 3 core values at the heart of our trust:

Innovation: Visionary leadership prepared to take radical decisions to bring about long-term, sustained improvement.

We believe innovation is the key to unlocking the potential of our young people, which will be driven forward by the unique qualities of each school. Our young people will follow distinctive learning pathways and support and personal development programmes matched to their individual needs. Common rigorous accountability procedures will ensure gaps in performance can be quickly identified and addressed.

Inspiration: A culture of risk taking founded on cutting edge research creates a dynamic learning environment in which all young people excel.

We believe igniting the ambition and markedly raising the aspirations of young people, staff, parents and others in our local community will ensure a self-sustaining drive for social mobility. This is modelled by inspirational staff and leaders dedicated to academic excellence for all, unlocking the imagination and creativity of all young people. Learning experiences, provided by leading universities and successful companies, will engage our young people in the possibilities of their future educational and career pathways.

Inclusion: Unfailingly reassure young people that by working together there are no barriers to success that we cannot overcome.

We believe that through close partnerships with parents, schools, other agencies and the local community the outcomes for our young people will be enhanced. The success of all groups working together in our trust provides a model for building future social collaboration. We recognise, value and celebrate differences and will provide personalised learning and support for all. Our young people will have the skills and understanding to promote, lead and work as part of diverse teams which will shape their future.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is an Academy?

An Academy 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 the Academy. The Academy is funded directly by the Government and is no longer run by the Local Authority. The Trust is charitable, which means it will operate as a charity and not for the profit of individuals or businesses.

2. What is a Multi-Academy Trust?

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is when 2 or more Academies come together in partnership. Our Governing Body believes that the best option is to form a cross phase school partnership of six schools to establish a MAT. Each school will keep its own name and the MAT will be known as the Pennine Trust. Each school will convert to an Academy. In the future, it will be possible for others to join the Trust. Through partnership the Pennine Trust will support member Academies in:

- developing and sharing best practice in teaching, learning and curriculum
- creating a skilled, motivated, expert workforce
- ensuring high standards through mutual challenge of performance
- making optimum use of their resources.

3. Who will be responsible for running our school?

The Pennine Trust will have a Board of Trustees which may include some individuals from the Local Governing Bodies of the schools. The Trust Board will delegate many powers to a Local Governing Body (LGB), which will have a role similar to that of the current School Governing Body. The scheme of delegation of powers will initially be agreed by Governors from all six schools.

4. What is involved in becoming an Academy?

The Governing Body has voted in principle to move forward, taking first steps, in the process towards becoming an academy and form a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). We have registered our interest with the Department for Education. The school must complete a consultation with parents, pupils, staff and the wider community which the Governors will take into account in reaching its decision. If the final decision to convert is made by the Governing Body we would expect to become an Academy within the Multi-Academy Trust no earlier than 1st September 2017.

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

There is no obligation for a school to change its name. Consequently, the school will not be changing its name, logo or uniform as we are proud of our school's history and this would be an unnecessary expense for parents.

6. How will being an Academy affect staff?

Currently, the employer for staff at our school is Lancashire County Council. After conversion all staff at all the schools will be employed by the Pennine 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.

7. How are the pupils affected?

In many ways the 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 young people. However, in time the pupils may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the pupils' learning.

8. Will we get more money as an Academy?

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. They also receive additional funding in the form of the Education Services Grant to cover the services that are no longer provided for them by the Local Authority and to cover the costs of Academy status. All funding comes direct from Government to the Multi Academy Trust which controls the overall budget and then distributes the money to the schools. Each school does not necessarily have more money, but as a group the schools are better able to control that part of the budget currently retained by the Local Authority.

9. What are the risks of becoming an Academy?

The change to Academy takes a school out of Local Authority control, but does not exclude the school from Local Authority support. For example, Academies can continue to buy into finance, HR, behavioural support and other services from the Local Authority and where these represent 'best value' the MAT would use these services. Where the MAT feels that others can provide better services or better value the change to Academy increases the freedom to make these changes. There are risks associated with not changing to Academy status. At some stage in the future, any school might be influenced to become part of a broader Academy Chain. We believe that the ability to create a local MAT, under local direction, offers the best opportunity to sustain vibrant, successful local schools.

10. How will admissions to the school be affected?

The school will become its own admissions authority but will be required to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The Local Authority will continue to have responsibility for making sure there are sufficient places locally and will coordinate the admissions process for all schools. This means parents will still only have to complete one application per child.

11. Does becoming an Academy change the relationship with other schools and the community?

No. Academies must ensure that they continue to be at the heart of their community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other schools and the wider community.

12. 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.

13. Can a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan nominate an Academy as his or her school of choice?

Yes. Schools converting to Academy status can retain the admissions criteria they currently use. These arrangements and related processes must at all times comply with the School Admissions Code.

Multi-Academy Trust Consultation Response Form

School: Please tick the name of the school to which your response refers:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Blacko Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Laneshaw Bridge Primary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Colne Park High	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lord Street Primary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Colne Park Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>	West Street Primary

Name of Person Responding (optional)

Please indicate below the reason for your interest in the MAT consultation:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent / Carer of Student (s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent / Carer of prospective future student	<input type="checkbox"/>	Former Student
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of school staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff of other local school or college
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Authority Employee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of local community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)		

Comments / Questions

Please return this form to the school office by Monday 27th March 2017