

Multi-Academy Trust Frequently Asked Questions

For the Parents and Carers of TNLP Trust Schools



General

1. Why is the school thinking of becoming an academy and joining a Multi-Academy Trust?

The TNLP Trust schools have worked as a successful partnership for seven years. Considering the changing nature of the national education landscape, the Trust feels we can face that future better, and more securely, by formalising and strengthening the already existing relationships between local TNLP Trust schools. The structure of education has changed significantly in recent years, so that the majority of high schools are now academies; many have grouped together to form chains of academies or Multi-Academy Trusts.

The Executive Steering Group of the Trust and local Governing Bodies believe it is appropriate to do this for TNLP schools by joining an existing Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), the Red Kite Learning Trust. Schools in the MAT would be able to support each other to improve outcomes for pupils. It is the case that a school, if deemed to be failing could be taken over by a DfE sponsored academy chain, however by being part of a MAT there is increased accountability, opportunity and support to address any development needs a school may have prior to it falling into an Ofsted category.

2. Why join the Red Kite Learning Trust?

The Red Kite Learning Trust is an established and emerging MAT that formed in 2015 through schools in Harrogate, and more recently in Leeds, joining for mutual benefit. In addition, The Red Kite Learning Trust has access to a wider network of school improvement support through the Red Kite Alliance and the Red Kite Teacher Training SCITT. You can find information about the Red Kite Learning Trust on their website at www.rklt.co.uk

3. Can TNLP schools form their own MAT?

The landscape within education continues to change. For many schools remaining under Local Authority control has been a viable option but with government policy focused on increased academisation the levels of

service available to schools from local authorities continues to diminish. The benefits of MAT conversion can be significant in terms of increased efficiency of financial budgets and increased purchasing power for goods and services across the MAT but there is a need for an optimal number of schools combining to form a MAT to ensure financial viability. Joining an existing MAT strengthens the existing links our schools already have with the Red Kite Alliance giving access to teacher training schemes, school improvement networks, innovative staff working practices across the MAT and most importantly increased accountability on school performance focusing on the outcomes of pupils and students within our community. It would be wrong for us not to consider the opportunities a conversion to MAT status could bring given the continued changing nature of the educational landscape in coming years.

4. Which schools within the TNLP Trust are considering conversion to MAT status?

The schools currently considering whether or not to convert to MAT status are Meadowfield Primary, Temple Learning Academy, Temple Newsam Halton Primary, Temple Moor High School, Whitkirk Primary, Colton Primary and Austhorpe Primary.

5. What are the different types of academies?

There are three types of academies:

- Sponsored academies are those normally falling into the Ofsted 'inadequate' category or deemed to be 'coasting'. They require the maximum support within the MAT family and conversion to an academy can be the most appropriate solution as part of a range of measurements to improve educational standards. This does not apply to any of the schools within the TNLP Trust.
- Converter academies are successful schools that have chosen to convert to academies in order to benefit from the increased autonomy academy status brings, having decided that becoming an academy is the best route for the school. This is the case with all schools within the TNLP with the exception of the Temple Learning Academy.
- New schools, like the Temple Learning Academy within the TNLP Trust, are automatically academies when they open and can join a MAT.

6. Will the ethos of the TNLP schools change on becoming an Academy?

No. The ethos of the schools will continue as they always have done. The vision may alter as it will be a more collaborative shared vision taking into account each partner school.

7. Will the school's name change if we became an Academy?

No. The only change may be if the school's LGB decide to use Academy rather than School in its name but this is up to the LGB.

8. Will the school's uniform change?

No. Each school will retain its separate identity and there will be no school uniform changes on becoming part of a Multi-Academy Trust.

9. Will there be changes to the length of the school day?

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 and staff and even then would only be made if it were in the best interests of the learners in each school.

10. Will there be changes to the term times?

There is no intention to make any changes to the term times at present or for the foreseeable future as these would conflict with the opening times of other schools and cause difficulties for parents. No change will be made without fully consulting parents and only then if such change was deemed to be in the best interests of the learners in each school.

11. Has a decision now been made for TNLP schools to convert to Multi Academy Trust status?

No. In July this year, individual Governing Boards agreed to apply to the DfE to register an interest to convert to academy status and join the Red Kite Learning Trust and these applications have been submitted. The DfE will assess whether the TNLP schools meet the criteria to convert to academy status. As part of this process, formal consultation takes place with staff, parents and carers on the proposal to convert. This is now taking place.

Following consultation and due diligence, Governors of each school will make a formal decision to convert to academy status and join the Red Kite Learning Trust at a Governing Board meeting prior to any conversion-taking place. These meetings will take place in January and February 2018. If approved individual Chairs of Governors will sign Funding Agreements with the DfE to confirm conversion to academy status and join the Red Kite Learning Trust.

Parents and Carers

12. How will this affect the governing body structures?

The MAT Board would have overall accountability for the operating of academies within the Trust, and would delegate much of the responsibility for running the schools down to local Governing Bodies (LGBs).

13. What will the new local governing bodies look like?

The Board of Directors will delegate authority and responsibility for running schools down to local Governing Bodies (LGBs). LGBs will be focused on

the interests of the individual academy and include parental and staff representatives.

14. What will be the role and responsibility of the local Governing Bodies?

Local Governing Bodies will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day running of each individual academy, spending the funding allocated to it, the school's admissions, pastoral support and teaching and learning. The full scope of the LGBs authority will be documented in a Scheme of Delegation agreed by the Directors, but with input from Heads and LGBs.

15. Would an academy receive extra funding above that allocated to Local Authority (LA) schools?

No. The funding allocation to both academies and schools would be the same, but academies receive this money directly. An academy may spend this money directly on services, rather than the Local Authority providing services at a cost determined by the Local Authority. The purchasing power of the MAT may however allow for economies of scale and therefore best value on purchases.

16. What happens if one school in the Multi-Academy Trust has a budget deficit?

No schools within the TNLP Trust have deficit budgets. However as would be expected the Directors of the Red Kite Learning Trust will be carrying out prior due diligence investigations on our schools. Should any academy within the MAT have a deficit, plans to eliminate the deficit would need to be in place if such a position were forecast to arise.

17. Who is going to be on the Board of Directors? How can you be sure they will know how to run a Multi-Academy Trust?

The Board of Directors of the Red Kite Learning Trust are already appointed and details can be found on the Red Kite Learning Trust website www.rklt.co.uk

18. Would the Directors be paid?

No. The Directors will not be paid for fulfilling their roles as Company Directors and Charity Trustees.

19. Will the Directors include representatives from some of the schools in the MAT?

Possibly depending upon whether vacancies exist and skills required for the Board. However all schools will be represented on RKL's Education Board by their Chair of Governors and Head Teacher on the Executive Board of the MAT.

20. What about the Local Authority?

Each school within the TNLP currently works closely with the Local Authority, and will continue to work with the Local Authority even after conversion to Academy status.

21. If the school becomes an Academy and part of a Multi-Academy Trust when is this likely to take place?

April 2018 is most likely. It does not have to be at the beginning of an academic year.

22. When Ofsted arrive, who will they want to meet with?

Ofsted would inspect each school individually and would expect to meet with the school's Headteacher and its local Governing Body.

23. Could the Multi-Academy Trust grow with more schools joining?

Yes, it would have the potential to have other schools join but only with the consent of the MAT Board and the DfE.

24. Will the schools admissions criteria change?

No. The schools will continue to follow the School Admissions Code as laid down by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Local Authority.

25. Would admissions arrangements for Looked After Children (those in the care of the Local Authority) change if the school were to become an academy?

No. Looked After Children would continue to be prioritised within the admission arrangements, as required by the School Admissions Code.

26. Would the school rules change?

No – there would be no change to school rules.

27. My child has special educational needs. Will the change to academy status mean any changes for her/him?

No. The Local Authority will continue to have overall responsibility for Special Educational Needs budgets. There will be no difference in the support given for individual pupils whether schools remain under Local Authority control or are part of a Multi Academy Trust.

28. What inspection regimes and assessment data information do academies have to provide?

All academies are inspected by Ofsted using the same framework and timescales as for maintained schools.

Academies will still have to take part in national tests and in teacher assessments of pupils' performance as they apply to maintained schools. The results are reported in performance tables in the same way as they are now.

29. What will happen to the Nursery and/ or Children's Centre the school runs?

There is no intention to make any changes to the local provision of these services providing they continue to meet the needs of the local community. The collaborative approach taken by TNLP schools in meeting

local need is an excellent example of how membership of a MAT can lead to other and similar benefits for its members and wider communities.

30. How will becoming an Academy affect the curriculum?

There is no intention to make major changes to the current curriculum as it supports our pupils extremely well. Academies do have greater freedom over determining the curriculum but still need to have regard to any proposed changes by Government.

The MAT will co-ordinate and promote its academies to work together more closely to encourage curriculum innovation and sharing of good practise.

31. What opportunities are parents given to engage in the decision for the school to become part of Red Kite Learning Trust MAT?

All schools are required to carry out a consultation process. Typically that will include staff, parents, the local community, and the local authorities. This process has already started and there will be consultation events held in November for parents/carers to attend.

32. What happens next?

Following this period of consultation Governors of each school will be invited to make a formal decision regarding academy status and on forming a Multi-Academy Trust at a Governing Body meeting in January and February 2018.

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