



**“Education is the most powerful weapon which  
you can use to change the world.”**

**Nelson Mandela**

**Additional Parental consultation document  
In respect of Converting to a Mixed Multi Academy Trust**

**From: 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

**To: 4.00pm on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016**

Benfield School  
Central Walker Church of England Primary School  
Tyneview Primary School  
Walkergate Community School  
West Walker Primary School

As you know, we carried out a consultation process earlier this year in relation to our proposal to set up a mixed Multi-Academy Trust (or MAT) comprising our 5 schools. This was undertaken on the same basis as other schools in Newcastle, who have subsequently then become academies.

Our proposal is an innovative approach, involving local schools working together with the local Diocese with the aim of delivering the best possible educational experience for the children attending our schools. We feel that it is vitally important that our parents and other stakeholders fully understand the new organisational structures that are being proposed. We have therefore decided to provide an additional period of consultation to ensure that this is achieved.

We have worked successfully as Riverside Learning Trust since 2014, although we have worked informally as a group of schools for a number of years. During that time we have achieved a number of things including:

- All schools being rated GOOD in their most recent OFSTED.
- Standards across all schools improving
- Attendance across all schools improving
- Welfare support developed across the Trust to support our most vulnerable families
- Alternative provision being developed in the form of Spaces, to enable us to support our most vulnerable children

As set out in our previous document, in order to formalise the partnership further, we are proposing to set up a **Mixed Multi Academy Trust**. In this situation this will be a trust made up of 4 community schools and a church school. This will enable us to strengthen our partnerships and continue making a difference to the families in the East End of Newcastle.

Due to significant changes in the funding to Local Authorities, there have been a number of cuts to services and there is a real need for schools to work even more closely together. Furthermore, the current Government has made it clear that it wants all schools to be academies. We feel the time is now right to take more control of the future direction of our group of schools.

### **What will this mean?**

- All schools will have their own Local Governing Body
- Every school will keep their own individual identity
- A group of members will be formed. They will meet annually and they will ensure the group of schools is working effectively and improving outcomes for the community.
- A board of directors will be appointed, based on the skills they can share with the schools. The board will help ensure the schools continue to improve.

Some further information is also provided in the FAQ document accompanying this consultation document so please ensure you also read that document and let us know if you have any queries. We are proposing a 'Mixed MAT' because there are four community schools and one church

school. This will mean that just three of the five Members who sign the company documents will have links to the Church and the company documents will be based on template documents agreed nationally between the Department for Education and the Church of England.

The five Members will have the responsibility for appointing the majority of Directors of the MAT. Some more explanation about the role of Members and Directors and how this will work in the situation is set out below. In light of issues raised by some councilors during and after the initial consultation period we have also explained how the individual character and ethos of each school will be protected within this structure below. A diagram showing how the structures work is also attached.

### **The Members board**

The standard structure for multi-academy trusts (MATs) is five members who are similar to shareholders in a company, there is then also a board of directors (essentially governors) who are responsible for the strategic running of the trust. The members sign the company documents for the company (which set out its core purpose, i.e. provision of education etc); they also appoint the directors and amend the company documents. They should attend one annual general meeting each year and sign off the audited company accounts. The chairperson of the board of directors should also be a Member of the company to ensure a link between the two layers.

In our proposed MAT the Bishop of Newcastle and the Newcastle diocesan Education Board will be members along with a member of the clergy or lay person from the NE6 community and agreed between all of the schools and the Newcastle Diocesan Education Board. There would then also be the chair of the board of directors (who is not appointed by the church) and another member chosen and agreed by the community schools, again who will not have church links. This means that the 3 'church' members have enough of a majority vote to appoint directors but would not be able to force through any change to the company documents or change the ethos or unique status of the community schools or their land.

### **Role and basis for appointment of Directors**

The core governance functions of the Multi-Academy Trust, (i.e. setting the direction of the Trust, holding the headteachers to account and ensuring sound use of finances) are carried out by the multi-academy trust board of directors (who are also charity trustees).

It has been expressly agreed by the Church and all of the schools that Directors should be appointed on the basis of the skills they can bring to the trust board as it is essential that this is made up of skilled individuals to ensure the success, both academically and financially, of the trust and the best outcomes for the pupils within the trust.

Ultimately the members have the power of appointment and removal of the majority of directors. However, the church members have agreed that they will appoint on the basis of skills to ensure the best and most skilled MAT board. The members would be likely to appoint one out of [9] directors for the purpose of promoting and protecting the church school ethos of Central Walker but this individual would also bring other skills to the MAT board. The other Directors would not be required to have church links. The proposed church members have agreed to sign a document called a memorandum of understanding confirming that this is the way in which Directors will be appointed and this means that in reality the church will not have any significant involvement in the daily running of the MAT. The Members could ultimately remove directors if there were genuine concerns about how the MAT was being run but this would only be likely to be necessary in very exceptional circumstances and in any event new directors would need to be appointed in accordance with the skills requirements set out in the memorandum of understanding. As a further protection the Secretary of State needs to approve any change to members and be kept informed of new directors.

### **Legal Protections of unique school character**

Each of the schools and the church are fully committed to ensuring each school's own unique ethos and character is protected, ie that the community schools cannot be turned into church schools and vice versa. However, as part of our proposals we have also carefully looked at the formal legal protections available to ensure the continued individual unique character of the community schools within the proposed MAT. As well as the memorandum of understanding document making it clear the appointment of directors will be based on skills, the Department for Education template funding agreements (which set out how funds are paid to the MAT) offer further protections. These state that the MAT must maintain the non-religious character of a community school. To do otherwise would breach the funding agreements and hence risk losing the MAT's funding from the Secretary of State. The Company documents also make it clear that the MAT board must protect the individual ethos of any academy within the MAT and this is the responsibility of all directors.

The local governing bodies set up for the schools within the MAT, will reflect the ethos of that school so there would no church appointed representation if a community school and responsibility would be given to the local governing body to protect that ethos. There will be the opportunity for parents to be elected to these local governing bodies and so maintain an input into the governance of their school. However, as mentioned above it will also be the responsibility of the MAT board of directors overall to ensure it protects the individual ethos of each school within the MAT (whether church or community) in accordance with the company documents and the Members should also be assured this is happening.

Individual Local Governing Committees and Head Teachers will remain responsible for the day to day running of their own school. Staff appointments will still be made by individual schools without any reference to the church in the case of community schools, employment terms and conditions will remain unchanged and schools will retain links with the Local Authority. The Trust will commit to paying the Newcastle Living Wage and will recognize Trade Union Facility time through the arrangement brokered by Newcastle Schools Forum. Furthermore, every school will keep their own uniform and the aspects that make each school special.

### **What will be different?**

Schools will be funded directly from the Department for Education. Schools can be more flexible around the curriculum and we can tailor this far more to meet the needs of our learners. We will have a forum to develop even stronger links with businesses and other providers within our community. There will be even more accountability for good outcomes which we feel will only help ensure we continue to go from strength to strength.

### **What happens next?**

This additional period of consultation will run from 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016 to 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016. All views are very welcome and can be shared using the attached 'consultation response form' found at the end of this document or from any of the schools websites (details below). We would urge you to please respond to this consultation if you have any comments at all or if you have any queries on anything outlined within this document. It is really important that this proposal is clear and we would welcome the chance to discuss any concerns with you.

### **What do we want to achieve?**

Since the last period of consultation we have worked hard on a joint mission statement for all of the schools whilst also enabling each school to retain its own unique aims and mission within our structure. This joint mission is set out below:-

## **Our Aims, Vision and Mission**

### **Our Vision**

Our young people and their families will be healthy, happy, achieve well and be given the opportunities to make the most of their talents and fulfil their potential.

### **Our Mission**

To make a *real* difference to the outcomes for our families through real partnerships and engagement.

## **Our Aims**

- To hold the welfare of our young people at the heart of everything we do.
- To deliver outstanding learning and teaching which engages pupils and is active, collaborative and encourages independence
- To ensure the achievement, personal development and well-being of children and young people no matter their starting point and thus develop well rounded young people who are responsible, respectful and resilient.
- To promote parent and carer engagement in the development of effective learning opportunities
- To fulfil a commitment to community involvement with our schools and to lifelong community learning
- To be academically secure with an aspiration to be the best, not just nationally but internationally
- To empower student voice by the involvement of young people in the development and delivery of their own education and the life of their academy
- To provide a modern curriculum which meets the needs of all learners, has clear progression routes internally and to both employment and further and higher education
- To have an Academy voice and be a driving force within the local community, Local Authority and Nationally
- To ensure the professional development and welfare of all the staff who are employees of NEAT through professional networks- within our group and beyond, providing school to school support, opportunities for pupils and sharing professional development.

## **Who is involved in the consultation?**

Students on roll at Benfield School, Central Walker Church of England Primary School, Tyneview Primary School, Walkergate Community School and West Walker Primary School.

Parents and carers on roll at Benfield School, Central Walker Church of England Primary School, Tyneview Primary School, Walkergate Community School and West Walker Primary School.

Staff from Benfield School, Central Walker Church of England Primary School, Tyneview Primary School, Walkergate Community School and West Walker Primary School.

Governors at Benfield School, Central Walker Church of England Primary School, Tyneview Primary School, Walkergate Community School and West Walker Primary School.

Head teachers and Chairs of Governors of all schools within Newcastle upon Tyne

Principals and Chairs of Governors of Local Further Education Providers and Sixth Form Colleges

Work based learning providers

Trade Unions

Local MPs

Local Councillors

Local community groups

Local residents

Newcastle Local Authority

Newcastle Diocesan Education Board

Any other interested parties

**What happens after the consultation period?**

All of the responses will be reported to and considered by all Governing Bodies at the end of the additional consultation period. If the Governing Bodies decide that they wish to continue with the formal proposal to become a Mixed Multi Academy Trust this proposal will then be considered by government officials to make a final decision.

**Sharing Information**

We are very keen to hear your views and again, urge you to respond to the consultation.

Governing Bodies may not be able to respond to every individual query but we will ensure that all questions are answered.

You may respond via e-mail to [projectmanager@benfield.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:projectmanager@benfield.newcastle.sch.uk)

Or directly to the following schools:

School Details	Additional Information
Benfield School Benfield Road Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 4NU	E: <a href="mailto:admin@benfield.newcastle.sch.uk">admin@benfield.newcastle.sch.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.benfield.newcastle.sch.uk">www.benfield.newcastle.sch.uk</a>  <i>Head Teacher: Mr Neil Walker</i> <i>Chair of Governors: Mrs E Bohill</i>
Central Walker Church of England Primary School Lancefield Avenue Walker Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 2NP	e. <a href="mailto:admin@centralwalkerce.newcastle.sch.uk">admin@centralwalkerce.newcastle.sch.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.centralwalkerce.newcastle.sch.uk">www.centralwalkerce.newcastle.sch.uk</a>  Head Teacher: Mrs Barbara Redhead Chair of Governors: Mrs C Leith
Tyneview Primary School Off Titan Road Walker Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 3QP	e. <a href="mailto:admin@tyneview.newcastle.sch.uk">admin@tyneview.newcastle.sch.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.tyneview.newcastle.sch.uk">www.tyneview.newcastle.sch.uk</a>  <i>Head Teacher: Mr Steve Gittins</i> <i>Chair of Governors: Mr A Mirza</i>
Walkergate Community School Sutton Street Walker Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 4SD	e. <a href="mailto:admin@walkergate.newcastle.sch.uk">admin@walkergate.newcastle.sch.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.walkergate.newcastle.sch.uk">www.walkergate.newcastle.sch.uk</a>  <i>Head Teacher: Mrs D Bailey</i> <i>Chair of Governors: Mrs K Heslop</i>
West Walker Primary School Church Street Walker Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 3XW	e: <a href="mailto:admin@westwalker.newcastle.sch.uk">admin@westwalker.newcastle.sch.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.westwalker.newcastle.sch.uk">www.westwalker.newcastle.sch.uk</a>  <i>Head Teacher: Mrs Nichola Draper</i> <i>Chair of Governors: Mrs A Charlton</i>

*“Alone we can do so little;  
 Together we can do so much.”*

Helen Keller

## Consultation Response Form

Proposal to establish a Mixed Multi Academy Trust

### Newcastle East Academy Trust

Please return to one of the addresses above by  
**4.00pm on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016**  
or alternatively return via post to:

FAO Project Manager  
Newcastle East Academy Trust Proposal  
Benfield School  
Benfield Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE6 4NU

Name of Person responding:

Interest (tick all that applies)

Current Pupil

Community Responder

Parent / Carer

Staff Member

Other: Please state \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond to the following two questions:-

1. Do you want your school to convert to become an academy?
2. Do you agree with your school joining the proposed Mixed Multi Academy Trust?

Please also let us have any further comments in the space below.

Thank you for your response.

