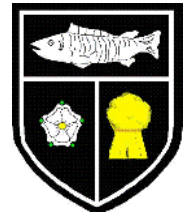


ELVINGTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Working Together We Can All Achieve Success'



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The Full Governing Body has given full consideration to the following points raised during the consultation period.

1. There are no educational advantages to Multi Academy Trusts

The Full Governing Body agree that a MAT will not raise standards however, the MAT that is to be formed is borne of a will and desire to formalise and strengthen our current cluster working partnership. This is a long standing network of schools who already support each other with the sharing of best practice, CPD and staff with specific expertise which in itself goes to support the raising of standards.

The history of some conversions to academy status has been through forced conversion of inadequate and underperforming schools. In the future the trend of underperformance should shift as more good and outstanding schools convert.

2. Converting to academy status and forming a MAT will not prevent budget cuts at Elvington CE Primary School

The governors agreed that academy status will not prevent budget cuts. The potential for greater and more specific buying power is where we hope to recover some of the budgetary restraints we know are to come in the future. For example, the cluster has been able to employ specialist staff together which some smaller schools alone would not have the capacity to do so. It also allows school to carry out joint procurements of contracts such as photocopying, cleaning, catering and HR.

We have chosen not to join the Pathfinder MAT because we would have their terms and conditions and ethos applied to us rather than us having input into the initial Memorandum of Understanding. This provides the School with a voice within the MAT. Also, the schools within the Pathfinder MAT are not schools that we have worked with previously and so we would be venturing into unknown relationships with imposed regulation that may not suit our school.

3. If Elvington CE Primary School joins the proposed MAT, there will be a clear loss of control and accountability.

It is not agreed that there will be a clear loss of control or accountability as all decisions will be rooted in the principle of 'earned autonomy' where maximum authority is delegated to good and outstanding schools. This will include arrangements to maintain governing bodies in each school which will retain both elected parent and staff members. We would expect and welcome expertise from the Board when making critical appointments such as a Head Teacher for our School; this is not particularly different to the input of the Local Authority in such a case.

4. MATs leave parents and communities without a say in education



The governors believe very strongly that it would not be in the best interests of the schools to exclude parents with the right skills from the Governing Boards as ultimately these people are significant in our future improvement and development. It is certainly not the intention at local level that this would change as we welcome and value the views of our parents who currently sit on our Governing Body. Equally, they too have to undergo a skills audit so that we can maintain a balance of skills.

There is no intention of having a lead school in the MAT. It will be a partnership of equals.

5. A South York MAT would undermine partnership working

The aim of the MAT is to strengthen partnership working built on already excellent and inclusive working relationships. That is not to say that we would not continue to look beyond our own MAT for good practice; the School is currently committed to working alongside other schools across York and beyond and would continue to be an outward looking School.

6. Pay and conditions for staff in MATs and academies are poor

It would not be in the best interest of the MAT to offer poor pay and conditions when wanting to attract excellent teachers from an already limited pool. There will also be greater opportunity for staff to progress beyond their local school whilst remaining with the same employer. It has been acknowledged by the Governing Body that some MATs have chosen to make savings through the reduction of pay to support staff. This is not the intention of our MAT as we strive to attract the best staff for all school roles.

7. Academies can determine their own admission arrangements

The Full Governing Body will support the current admissions arrangements for the foreseeable future. In fact, admissions have already been agreed by the Governing Body with The Local Authority as far in advance as 2018/2019. There have been no changes made to admission numbers or catchment area. The School has previously experienced a request to change from the Local Authority proving that we are not immune to such a change in either circumstance.

Above all this, the Governing Body strongly believes that, the School must take control of its own destiny as the Government takes all schools through to Academy status and not be in a position, through lack of Local Authority support, to be forced to join an already established MAT with a potentially different ethos and terms and conditions not agreeable to us. There is greater risk in not joining the MAT and leaving the School exposed and isolated from its current partnerships. We truly believe our MAT is a unique proposal from a home-grown group of schools with a desire to formalise their working relationships.

The Full Governing Body hope that this response has gone some way to reassuring you that the formation of the MAT has been taken in very serious terms by all the schools involved and that we want to create a group that will provide the best outcomes for our staff, children, parents and communities.