



Academy Parent Carer Consultation Question Responses – Autumn 2024

Question	Response
<p>Will the formation of a MAT mean that schools have to ensure their curriculums are aligned or will schools still have the autonomy to choose their own curriculum?</p>	<p>Schools will still have autonomy over the curriculum to ensure it matches the needs of the pupils. Curriculum development ideas will be shared and training disseminated to support all schools.</p>
<p>Will schools see a significant reduction in their budgets to facilitate more tiers of leadership?</p>	<p>Though there will be more tiers of leadership, the savings we make as a Trust due to economies of scale, grants that we can apply for, the sharing of resources/expertise and not having to pay the ‘top slice’ of funding to the LA will more than cover additional costs.</p> <p>We will also be able to internalise many core functions that are currently outsourced, such as payroll and contracts, and this can lead to cost savings.</p> <p>Academies have much more flexibility to ‘shop’ around for the provision or service that is best value for money.</p>
<p>What plans have you got to ensure that the formation of a MAT doesn’t lead to increased staff workload?</p>	<p>Each school will be responsible for staff workload as they are now, however, we can pool ideas to support staff. Workload will be a focus for us all as schools, as we need all staff to be as good as they can be in front of our children. We can share activities for positive well-being amongst our schools.</p> <p>Sharing expertise, central roles, and cutting down on repeated processes and procedures will lead to a reduction in workload in many areas, e.g. the writing of policies that can be Trust level and adopted by individual schools.</p>
<p>Why with first schools, not middle schools?</p>	<p>We believe that a blended Trust offers our pupils, staff and families a wealth of opportunities for sharing expertise, supporting transition and inclusion. We will be looking to grow the Trust in time to include all schools across all phases including Middle.</p>

	<p>There are also plenty of opportunities to work across different Middle School settings through the Worcestershire Association of Middle Schools and the Peer Review Network that exists within that, as well as being part of the National Middle School Forum. Schools also do not have to work in isolation within their own Trust but can do so across different Trusts. We will work closely with Middle Schools that are already in other Trusts.</p>
<p>What are the benefits for the pupils actually going to be? What are the risks? Have you done analysis of this?</p>	<p>Inclusion and equality for all. Increasing staff expertise through training opportunities, professional dialogue and peer observations, joint moderating of work, subject knowledge across the Trust to maximise positive outcomes for all pupils. Access to more funding – many extra grants available through the DfE are only available to Trusts. Risk analysis through due diligence has been conducted by each school with their Governing Body to assess the risks and benefits of Trust membership. Specific responses can be made available.</p>
<p>What are the financial implications, will we need to financially support the other schools, will parents need to pay more money for items, will teachers be used to cross cover other schools?</p>	<p>We aim for all schools to maintain their own budgets and manage these from the school, however there will be a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who will oversee the budgets for all the schools to maximise economies of scale. Should a school be struggling to manage their budget due to staffing, or the school is in need as identified by Ofsted, then the CFO/CEO would step in to support this. Parent carers will not be expected to prop-up any costs incurred by other schools or pay any more than they would be expected to pay now/in line with cost of living. Teachers won't be expected to cover across any of the schools, though they may opt to do this as a professional development/opportunity.</p> <p>All schools will support each other whilst ensuring there is no detriment to their pupils or staff.</p>
<p>How will decisions be made within the MAT, and what role will our school have in this process? Will the school retain any autonomy, and if so, in what areas?</p>	<p>The Trust will be overseen by 3-5 Members who have a vested interest in supporting all the schools and ensuring the business is well run and following legal protocols. They are responsible for the company. The Member positions are voluntary positions so do not incur any extra cost to the Trust.</p>

	<p>There will be about 9-11 Trustees who will sit on a Trust Board and be answerable to the Members. An invitation to become a Trustee was offered to all Governors of all the schools and the Board of Trustees has been formed from that offer and there is broad representation across the schools. The Trustees will work with Headteachers as an Executive Group. The Trustees will no longer be Governors of their school but represent all the schools, their children, staff and families. The Trustees will be the decision makers over the Trust. They will be responsible for making decisions with the CEO, Headteachers and School Governors. They will be involved in staffing, finance building and resources. Each school will maintain a reduced Governing Body who will be responsible for looking after staff, school improvement and teaching and learning.</p> <p>The Headteacher is responsible for their own school and the day-to-day running of that as they are now, however, they will have a wider support network.</p> <p>We want schools to maintain as much autonomy as possible. Each school will have its own Scheme of Delegation which sets out what decisions are taken at each level. Where a school has strong leadership and an effective provision, as all founder schools have, the majority of control will remain with the individual schools.</p> <p>We are proactively taking this action to protect our schools and maintain our autonomy before the choice of what we do gets taken away by an unknown entity.</p>
<p>What additional resources and support will the MAT provide to our school?</p>	<p>Shared expertise, resources, training. Economies of scale to support the above.</p>
<p>How are you aligning the vision and ethos of the individual schools? What are the long-term goals of the MAT, and how will they benefit our children?</p>	<p>As a group of Headteachers we all shared our vision and values for our schools and produced a document that outlines this. We share the core values of being ethical, ambitious and inclusive. The ethos of all our schools is extremely precious to each and every one of us and one that we would all protect at all costs, so we respect each other and will all have the ethos of our schools at the heart of what we do, it is what makes us what we are and what we represent.</p> <p>Our long term goal is for the Trust to grow to further extend opportunities for all schools but only at a rate that supports staff to prioritise their own schools. We will not take on</p>

	<p>more schools until we have the capacity and confidence across the Trust to do this. Our founder schools have to sit at the centre.</p> <p>We want every child to have the very best experience of school and we will optimise opportunities every day for that to happen. We want every child to thrive in a happy and safe environment that is fit for purpose with high quality teaching with a Trust team that strive for excellence.</p>
<p>How will becoming a MAT impact the budget available to AMS? Will there be funding pooling (GAG pooling)? If so, on what basis will each school's funding be determined?</p>	<p>Our aim is that the funding across all our schools will be enhanced by the opportunities a Trust will afford us. We will take advice from other Trusts and an independent advisor experienced in Trust set up and development.</p> <p>There is no plan to 'GAG pool', each school will be top sliced fairly to access central services such as school improvement, HR, payroll, compliance, legal support etc. Many of these services are already de-delegated back to the Local Authority at the moment and that money will come back to the schools.</p> <p>AMS is already a MAT, albeit with only one school in it. Being part of something larger enables us to cost save in many areas such as running our own payroll, combined auditor costs, internal assurance. There will also be the advantage of being larger purchasing group which will lead to economies of scale. We already work closely with Chadsgrove School through its outreach services and will be able to access these more readily.</p> <p>Decisions will be made jointly regarding this with leaders and Trustees. We look at school sizes to determine contributions to support the Central Team. The Central Team initially will be a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and a Chief Operating Officer (COO) and all the central services that they will provide.</p>
<p>What opportunities for staff learning, development and collaboration across the MAT will be available, particularly for those teaching and supporting KS3?</p>	<p>There will be a wealth of opportunities for staff across the Trust to support learning, development and collaboration. These will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training - Peer observations - Monitoring and moderation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team teaching - Sharing of curriculum/planning/assessment ideas - Subject leadership and expertise - SEND advice and expertise - Wider links across all our school networks <p>Future trust growth will further enhance opportunities.</p>
<p>Do you believe you will want to make changes to the curriculum and if so what will they be?</p>	<p>Each school curriculum will remain the responsibility of the individual schools to ensure that it best meets the needs of the children at that school. If schools seek support from the Trust to do this then this will be readily available.</p>
<p>What are the main reasons and benefits behind the move to a MAT?</p>	<p>We are all passionate about our schools and maintaining the autonomy and ethos they have. We could all stay as we are, however, there is a risk that at some point we may all have to move into a MAT due to the capacity of Local Authorities to maintain schools and provide them with the funding, support and resources they need. If we do nothing at all, we risk being forced to joint a MAT that may not be of our choice or align with our values and vision. There are some substantive Trusts established in the Bromsgrove area now and at some point the DfE may say that they do not need any more Trusts set up, so our choice to establish something new and innovative could be taken away from us.</p> <p>We want to further improve our schools and we believe joining together as a group of excellent schools will support this wholeheartedly.</p>
<p>How will you help/assist the other schools in the MAT?</p>	<p>As a group of schools we can provide the opportunities listed above and have greater capacity to move forward the quality of education we offer and seek economies of scale for purchasing and offering high quality professional development opportunities. Together we will be greater than the sum of our parts.</p> <p>Within a Trust we will be able to provide peer support and networking at all levels of leadership and within the classroom. This will increase opportunities to learn from experts in different schools as well as provide opportunities for our best staff to develop their careers and job satisfaction so that we can hold on to them.</p>
<p>Teaching of Biology and Sex: "How will the school approach the teaching of biology,</p>	<p>The schools will maintain their autonomy over their curriculum and adhere to National Curriculum/DfE guidance. Each school curriculum offered should be broad, balanced</p>

<p>particularly regarding sex? Will the curriculum adhere to the scientific understanding that there are two biological sexes?"</p>	<p>and relevant. There should not be any reason for changes to content and delivery of any curriculum area unless it is deemed weak or inappropriate.</p>
<p>Gender Identity in Education: "Will the school teach concepts related to gender identity beyond biological sex? If so, how will this be communicated to parents, and will parents have the right to opt out?"</p>	<p>The schools will maintain their autonomy over their curriculum and adhere to National Curriculum/DfE guidance. Each school will maintain their systems for parental consultation.</p>
<p>Curriculum Transparency: "What measures will be in place to ensure transparency with parents about the content being taught in personal, social, and health education (PSHE) and related subjects?"</p>	<p>The Trust will be ultimately be responsible for policies, practices and procedures, however, these will remain at school level for discussion as to what works best for each individual school. The communication with parent carers will be as transparent as possible – we want to work together to get the very best for our children and listening to families will always be a priority for us.</p>
<p>Parental Consultation on Sensitive Topics: "Will parents be consulted or notified prior to the introduction of any new materials or policies on contentious topics such as gender identity or sexual orientation?"</p>	<p>Parental consultation will be conducted at Trust or individual school level as deemed appropriate to the circumstance.</p>
<p>Staffing and Curriculum Control: "How will the academy ensure that staffing and curriculum decisions maintain a focus on academic rigour, without being overly influenced by social or political agendas?"</p>	<p>All schools within the Trust are fully committed to academic excellence and maximising pupil achievement through a curriculum and supporting activities that underpin pupils' personal development.</p>