



Report on the Governors' Consultation to convert Bomere Heath CE Primary School to an Academy and join Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust

July 2024

Contents

1. Formal Consultation Timeline and Methodology
2. Public Stakeholder Consultation Meeting(s)
 - i) Attendance
 - ii) Additional questions asked.
3. Written Submissions
 - i) Analysis of MS Forms responses
 - ii) Any additional written submissions received
4. Conclusions
5. Next steps
6. Appendices

1. Formal Consultation Timeline and Process

On the 5th June 2024 Governors of Bomere Heath Church of England Primary School published a consultation on the proposal to convert to academy status and join Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust.

What is the proposal?

Our school would like to collaborate with other schools in a strong and resilient structure and we believe that becoming an academy and joining Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust will provide this opportunity for our pupils, staff and community.

The consultation ran from 5th June to 16th July 2024 – a period of 6 weeks. The consultation was coordinated across all seven of the schools who are considering voluntary conversion to form the founding group of the new Trust.

The consultation was published on the school's website and publicised to parents, staff, the Local Authority, other local schools and union and professional associations representing school-based staff. Public consultation meetings were held on 13th June 2024 and 17th June 2024.

Consultees were provided with a covering letter outlining the proposal, a frequently asked questions document, and also an opportunity to respond to the consultation in writing through an MS Forms link (see appendix 1)

2i. Attendance at Public Stakeholder Consultation Meeting(s)

2 parents/carers attended the public meetings. There was also attendance from 1 staff member and 1 union representatives.

The presentation shared during the meeting can be found in appendix 2.

2ii. Additional questions asked at public consultation meetings

Questions raised and comments made indicated that parents/carers were generally well-informed and engaged in the process of academy conversion. Those who wished to speak were able to express their opinions and raise questions openly and freely throughout the meetings.

The following additional questions were asked by attendees at our public consultation meeting(s). The response provided at the meeting is given below.

Finance:

Q: Parents asked;

Will we be at a disadvantage compared to larger primaries in the MAT financially? How becoming an academy would impact on the funding the school received and what the financial benefits/savings would be as a result of becoming an academy as opposed to remaining as a local authority School

A: Academies and local authority schools are funded in exactly the same way. This ensures that no school is disadvantaged due to its status.

Shropshire local authority, however, retain/top slice funding from all of their maintained schools' budgets to pay for central services. They then "delegate" the remaining funding to their schools. They also offer services to schools to buy into. Over the last few years, the range and quality of services the LA has been able to offer has diminished as budgets have been squeezed.

In contrast, as an academy the totality of the funding allocated via the funding formula is received by the Trust. The Trust will retain an amount of each academy's budget to provide a range of central services such as finance, HR and other statutory duties. For SCEAT this is 4.5% of an academy's core budget.

An academy may still choose to buy services beyond those provided by the Trust and these can still come from the LA if it is providing good value for money.

As with all academies, it is not the case that our school will be significantly better off in cash terms than if it remained an LA school. It is also likely that the like-for-like comparison will show the top slice/retained funds to be broadly similar, and certainly not different enough to be a decisive factor in the governor's decision to convert or otherwise.

Rather, academies within a trust have the freedom and significant incentives (unlike local authority schools) to share back office and other functions with each other and use the purchasing power of the trust in order to gain good value for money and to exercise a high degree of control over the quality of the services it receives.

Q: What if we don't get to 25 schools? Will the MAT remain viable?

Budget modelling is based on the initial phase of 8 schools joining and forming the new Trust. This budget modelling has been submitted to the ESFA and DFE at the application stage as part of their due diligence to ensure the MAT is financially viable on opening. Financial modelling and budget projections for further schools joining the Trust in subsequent

phases has also been subject to DFE/ESFA oversight prior to them giving agreement for the Trust to form.

Growth plans

Q: Are we going to end up having a large two form entry school
What is the timescale for growth?

A: This will be subject to the DFE Regional School's Director oversight. A broad outline was shared on the presentation. Our school's admission number will not change upon joining the Trust. The character and ethos of the school will remain the same.

Q: Is it going to be a primary only MAT?

A: Yes, this is the long term vision for the MAT.

Q: Once in a MAT, you can go from one MAT to another. Is this going to happen?

A: The governance model is there to protect the children and their education within the schools in the MAT and ensure their best interests are at the heart of all decisions. The advantage of this MAT is that it is Diocese led and will provide the same protections we currently have as Church of England schools with the same ethos and values. Once in a MAT it is very difficult to change to another but there are occasions where some MATs join as part of their growth strategy. This is not the intention as part of the setting up and growth plan identified for this MAT.

Q: Is growth of additional schools local?

A: It is anticipated that the growth will be across Shropshire and include Telford and Wrekin schools.

Quality of Education

Q: Following media concerns historically in relation to MATs and the use of unqualified staff, are our standards and quality going to drop?

The school is not proposing to change its character and will continue to look, feel and be the same as it is now. The School Leadership Team will continue to run the school daily, as they do now, and the Local Governing Body, which will include parent representation, will oversee the work of the school. There is no intention to employ unqualified staff as teachers.

Leadership

Q: In terms of the governance model, who is paid and who is voluntary?

A: All are volunteers

Q: Are the Articles of Association publicly available?

A: : Yes, they will be on the Trust's website once the company is incorporated.

Q: Will Ruyton governors be on the Trust board?

A: No – this is not permitted under the governance model. However, each school will still have a local governing board whose chair will have opportunity to feed into the Trust board through Heads and Chairs’ network meetings.

Communication

Q: Will the MAT communicate with parents?

A: Yes – there will be a website for the MAT and, in time, a sharing of news through a newsletter – possibly termly although this is not yet decided. The school will continue to be the main source of communication to parents on a regular basis.

3. Written submissions:

i) Analysis of MS Forms

No further questions or comments were submitted for Bomere Heath School consultation.

ii) Any additional written submissions received

None received

Governors received the above summary of all of the written responses to the consultation as part of their review of the consultation responses.

4. Conclusions

One of every governing body’s core functions is to ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.

The school’s governing body has carefully considered the current educational landscape, the formal consultation responses, and due diligence outcomes they completed in collaboration with other primary schools to shape the proposal.

Together, governors and leaders have helped to shape the Trust’s vision and values, benefits for children, staffing and financial models and governance structure.

All reasonable efforts have been made by the school to communicate the proposal both informally and formally. A six-week opportunity was given for all

key stakeholders (including staff, parents, and pupils) to participate in the formal consultation process.

Analysis of all formal consultation returns received shows all respondents disagree with the proposal, however, there were only 3 responses which would indicate the majority of parents who did not respond were not concerned and had no strong views.

Equality Impact Assessment: there is no evidence arising from the consultation processes showing that the proposal would adversely affect any group of individuals either with a protected characteristic or none.

5. Next Steps

It is now for the Governors to consider the next steps in the process.

Their options are to:

- 1) Continue with their process of due diligence with a view to joining Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust
- 2) Stop the process

It is also worth noting that having been granted an Academy Order the governors are not committed to converting. If after the due diligence and further discussion, the governors can decide that it is not right for the school to convert.

6. Recommendation

The governors are grateful to all of the parents and other stakeholders who took the time to attend the consultation meetings and/or respond in writing. A higher response rate from all stakeholders would have been advantageous for the Governing Body in terms of decision-making. However, it could be deduced from the low response rate that stakeholders are comfortable with the proposal and do not have significant concerns that they wish to raise.

The questions asked were helpful in supporting the governors' thinking and in giving them a clear understanding of the views of their stakeholders concerning the proposal.

It is the case that a proposal of this nature will be opposed by some. This is their right and the governors respect the positions articulated. However, over the course of the consultation period it is the case that there was only limited negative reaction to the proposal.

Many of the points raised instead sought assurances that the school will continue to have the same ethos and provide the same level of support and

care for its pupils if it/they become(s) an academy. The governors are strongly of the view that this proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the existing ethos of the school or the quality of the education the school provides. They are rightly proud of these aspects of the school(s) and will not do anything that could undermine it. Indeed, through the development of shared central services and the opportunities offered as being part of the founding group of schools in Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust they can see enhancements and benefits not available to the school(s) by remaining as a maintained school.

Having considered this report it is **recommended** that the governors agree to continue with their due diligence in respect of the proposal to convert to an academy and join Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust.

Once due diligence has been completed the governors will make a final decision as a Full Governing Body as to whether to convert or not. This will be communicated to parents/carers.

July 2024

Appendix 1: Consultation papers

Appendix 2: Formal Public Consultation Presentation



Bomere & the XI Towns Federation

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Julie Ball, NPQH, PGCE, PG(Dip)M



St John the Baptist CE Primary School & Nursery
Church Street
Ruyton XI Towns
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY4 1LA
Tel: 01939 260445
Email: adminruyton@bhsjbfed.shropshire.sch.uk
Website: www.ruytonschool.org.uk

Bomere Heath CE Primary School
The Crescent
Bomere Heath
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY4 3PQ
Tel: 01939 290359
Email: adminbomere@bhsjbfed.shropshire.sch.uk
Website: www.bomereheath.shropshire.sch.uk

5th June 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL OF BOMERE HEATH TO JOIN A MULTI ACADEMY TRUST AND FOR THE SCHOOL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS

For some time, the Governing Body of **Bomere Heath CE Primary School** has been carefully considering the school's future in a fast-changing and increasingly challenging educational landscape. The Church of England's ambition is for all schools to be part of a multi academy trust (MAT) by 2030, as strong MATs are now a better vehicle for school improvement than Local Authorities. Over years, the support that Shropshire Council has been able to provide to us as a maintained school has diminished as funding from central government for their education improvement service has fallen dramatically. Maintained schools are also now feeling the impact of a reduction in other local authority support services to schools. We want to be part of a strong and sustainable group of schools so that we are well-placed to collectively meet the challenges we will face over the coming years and ensure we have the right support to continue to improve.

Governors have spent time researching options available to our school and now believe that the best option is for **Bomere Heath CE Primary School** to become an academy and join a new multi academy trust being established in Shropshire through a joint project between Hereford Diocese and Lichfield Diocese. We are a church school in Lichfield Diocese. Governors have therefore approached the Department for Education (DFE) to secure their agreement, in principle, for **Bomere Heath CE Primary School** to become an academy and join **Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust**.

The values of the Trust are closely aligned with **Bomere Heath CE Primary School** in particular their ethos around the inclusion of all pupils and enabling us to retain our individual school identity. Leaders in our school have been able to help shape the formation of the new Trust and, as members of the founding group, we have an opportunity to create strong foundations for the Trust. Working with the Trust and its schools is something that Governors feel would continue to strengthen our school, providing new and further opportunities to pupils and staff.

The new, joint Diocesan Multi Academy Trust will particularly support rural church schools in Shropshire like ours. by upholding our Christian ethos and values. The new Trust will need to adopt model Articles of Association (2023) approved by the Church of England and Department for Education. These articles ensure that the Christian foundation of each church school entering the Trust would be protected.

Gathering your views

Governors believe that this new Trust is the best home for our school, but they want to find out what you and other stakeholders think too. As part of the process, we have a duty to formally consult with key stakeholders and the information enclosed within this letter is the beginning of that consultation process.

Our formal consultation process will run for a period of 6 weeks and during this time we will be hosting meetings and preparing documents which will help you to understand our proposals, what it means for the school, the children and the staff, answer any questions you may have and most importantly, enable you to share your views.

What is the proposal?

Our school would like to collaborate with other schools in a strong and resilient structure and we believe that becoming an academy and joining Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust will provide this opportunity for our pupils, staff and community.

When would our school join the Trust?

We anticipate that the Trust will open on 1st October 2024. We hope to join – subject to consultation - with seven other Shropshire schools on or soon after this date, as part of the founding group of schools. There are about 25 schools who are interested in joining the trust and so there will be more schools joining in phases over a rolling period. This will ensure that there are enough pupils in the trust to make it financially viable to support effective school improvement work through a small central team, initially comprising of a Chief Executive Officer and Chief Finance Officer who can help the trust achieve its aims and vision.

Why have Governors decided to join the Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust?

The opportunity to be part of a founding group of schools in a new MAT, where all the schools share Christian values and a common vision for serving their community, allows us to shape some of the Trust's culture from the start and is a great opportunity. Governors have looked at other local trusts. Some of them we could not join because they do not have the right Church Articles of Association (this is to do with our Trust Deed and other legalities) but some of them, whilst being successful, have different values which do not align so closely with our own, or have a large focus on secondary schools rather than primaries.

First and foremost, we will only join a trust whose values fit our values as a school. By joining a family of schools, we believe we will further improve your child's education because we will be sharing ideas and expertise with other schools. We want to help our local community to thrive by giving children even wider curriculum opportunities to learn inside and outside the classroom. There are lots of reasons why joining a likeminded group of schools would make us stronger as a school. Most importantly, we will only make a decision that will give our children and staff the very best opportunities.

Like any other state school, our school as part of the Trust, would continue to be free to attend, we would be inspected in the same way, and children would take the same statutory tests.

Consultation Process

Governors are now entering the consultation phase and would like to consult with parents, carers, staff, pupils and the wider community on the proposal for **Bomere Heath CE Primary School** to convert to academy status and join the Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust.

The consultation period will run from **Wednesday 5th June** until **Tuesday 16th July 2024**

Following consultation, the Governing Body will consider a report on the findings of the consultation at a meeting which will be held by 9th September 2024 and this report will help to inform their decision making. The report will be made available online to all stakeholders via our school website and the outcome of the meeting will be communicated to parents and staff.

**We invite parents to attend a consultation meeting on
Thursday 13th June 2024 at Bomere Heath CE Primary School
At 6.00pm**

Or

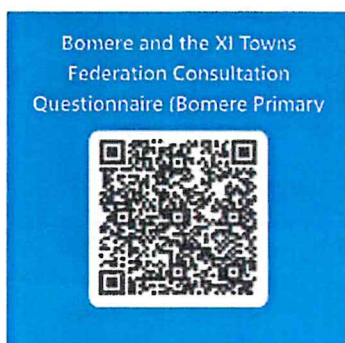
**Monday 17th June at St John the Baptist CE Primary School
At 2.30pm**

The two sessions (which will be identical in format) will be an opportunity to ask questions about academy status and joining the trust, and how this will affect the school. Representatives from Governors, school leadership and Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust will be available to talk to you and you will also be able to register your comments, queries and any thoughts on opportunities or concerns.

We have also prepared a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document to help answer some of the questions we anticipate you may have. This accompanies this letter.

You can have your say in the following ways:

- By completing our online survey via the link below (also available on the school website)
<https://forms.office.com/e/63kKUL30d2>
- By asking questions at any of our meetings



We look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Ball".

**Julie Ball
Headteacher**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Lister".

**Keith Lister
Chair of Governors**

Enclosed:

- Academy consultation FAQs

I/we will be attending the following information session:

Thursday 13th June 2024 at 6.00pm at Bomere Heath CE Primary School

Monday 17th June 2024 at 2:30pm at St John the Baptist CE Primary School

Child's name Class

Parent(s)/carer(s).....

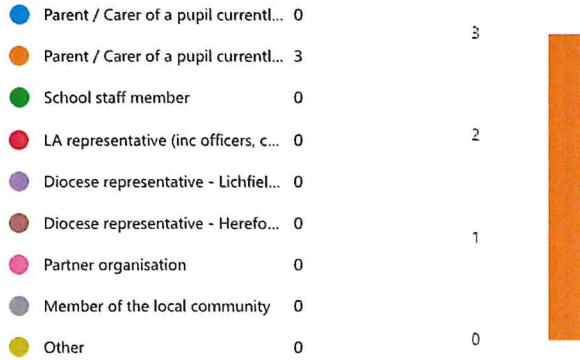
Bomere and the XI Towns Federation Consultation Questionnaire (Bomere Primary School)

3 Responses

00:40 Average time to complete

Closed Status

1. Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are? *



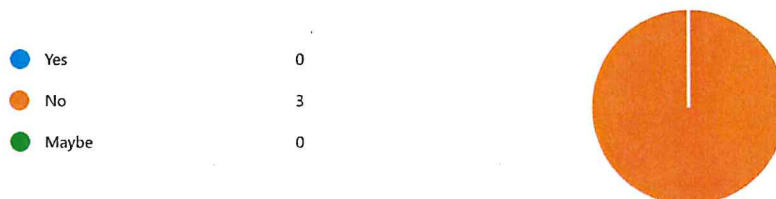
2. Have you received enough information regarding the reasons why the school is considering becoming an academy and joining Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust?



3. Have you received enough information about Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust?

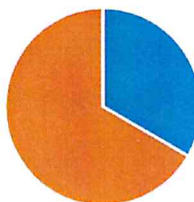


4. Do you support the proposal for our school to become an academy and join Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust?



5. Did you (or will you) be attending our scheduled consultation meeting?

- Yes 1
- No 2



6. Should the Secretary of State enter into a Funding Agreement with the Trust for our school? To understand more about what a Funding Agreement is, log onto <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-and-free-school-funding-agreements>

- Yes 0
- No 3



7. Any further comments or questions?

0 Responses

Latest Responses

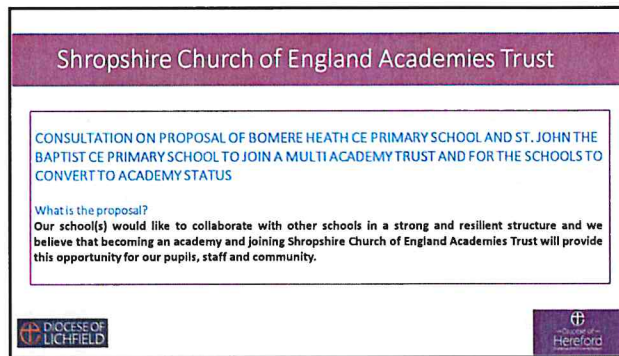
8. If you would like to receive a copy of the final report and findings and/or would like a response to any question asked whilst completing this survey please let us have your: Title/First Name/Surname/Email address/Telephone number/Postal address below. Your details will only be used for this purpose and will not be passed onto any third party. We will store your information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 which is the UK's implementation of the GDPR.

0 Responses

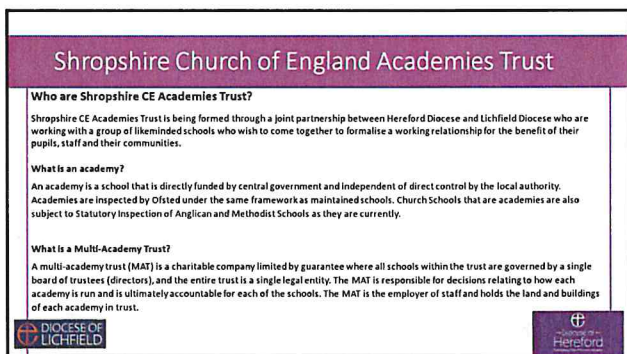
Latest Responses



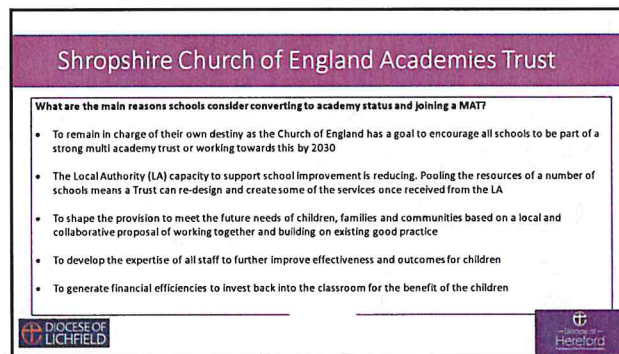
1



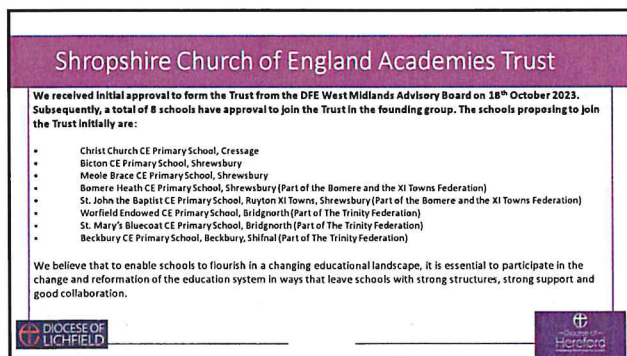
2



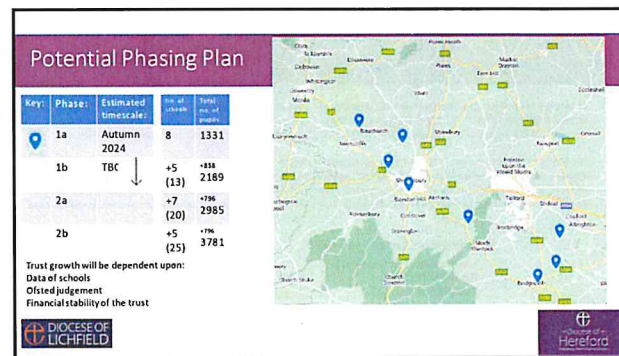
3



4



5



6

Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust: Vision and Values

Our Trust vision is to provide high quality, fully inclusive learning opportunities to children across the early years and primary age ranges through:

- > realising potential by working together to develop everyone's education and enabling all to flourish
- > sharing our Christian values, being warm and welcoming to all, knowing our children and their families well
- > a strong emphasis on meeting the pastoral needs of pupils
- > promoting and delivering strong mental health and wellbeing support to all children and the MAT workforce including promoting opportunities for families, building in the unique natural beauty of Shropshire to promote positive wellbeing and opportunities to explore learning outside the classroom
- > ensuring our ethos is underpinned by a strong knowledge and understanding of the impact of trauma and ensure our approach to supporting behaviour is trauma informed.




7

Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust: Vision and Values

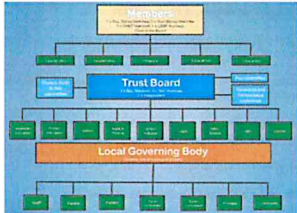
Our Trust vision is to provide high quality, fully inclusive learning opportunities to children across the early years and primary age ranges through (continued):

- > providing an ambitious and engaging curriculum within each academy
- > ensuring the delivery of high-quality education to all young people across the academies through a comprehensive school improvement offer to all academies within the Trust
- > empowering each CE academy within the trust to embody its distinctive Christian vision
- > creating an environment in all academies where pupils and adults can truly flourish
- > growing and developing the expertise and capacity of the MAT to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND who may require more specialist provision
- > overseeing efficient, effective, and compliant management of the trust's finances
- > Skilled, effective and robust governance at all levels



8


Governance Model



Our schools are currently federated. Will this remain the case when the school is an Academy?

Whilst in legal terms the schools will no longer be federated, the schools will continue to work in the same way as currently with a shared leadership structure and a single Local Governing Body across the 'originally' federated schools but as part of the MAT.

A Scheme of Delegation for a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) outlines the distribution of powers, responsibilities, and decision-making authority within the organisation.



9


Sponsored Academy

What is the difference between a sponsored academy and a converter academy?

Converters are schools which previously had 'good' or 'outstanding' Ofsted grades and have opted to convert to academy status. Sponsored academies are mostly underperforming schools who have been directed by the Regional Director to convert to an academy run by sponsors, who are responsible for improving performance

An academy sponsor is an organisation or person who has received approval from the Department for Education (DfE) to support an academy or group of academies.

A sponsor works with an academy through an academy trust, which is the charitable company that runs the academy or group of academies. It has the power to appoint the Head and the board of governors. Sponsors are held accountable for raising standards in underperforming schools. This is achieved by providing effective governance, strategic leadership, a clear vision and a combination of support and challenge to ensure the vision is translated into reality. To support the sponsor, the DfE has a number of funds that the sponsor/trust can apply for.



10


Finance and SLAs

Academies receive funding directly from the government rather than via the LA. It is governed through a master funding agreement between the Secretary of State and the MAT. In some ways a multi-academy trusts act like a 'mini-local authority' in this regard as the money is given to the MAT by central government and then passed on to schools.

The MAT will retain some of the funding for central services which support the schools in a similar way that LAs and maintained schools operate. This is known as the top-slice. As a new MAT, we wish to continue to work with some of the LA services which we currently value, to manage the process of change in a measured way. As the trust grows, we will benefit from economies of scale and our purchasing power for the procurement of services to our schools will increase.

What central services will be provided?

- Finance support & compliance
- Finance Software
- Payroll functions
- Governance support
- Human Resources/personnel
- Standards and school improvement*
- Operations & marketing
- Safeguarding - strategic support
- Legal support
- Estate Management support
- Policy development
- Admissions support



11

Trust/School Improvement Strategy

At the heart of our improvement strategy is a commitment to working in partnership with all our schools, and in supporting all schools in being self-improving, committed to achieving a school-led system in order to promote and secure:

- Outstanding levels of achievement for all children and groups of children
- High quality teaching and learning
- Effective leadership and governance in all schools
- Safe schools with inclusive access
- Affordability and value for money
- Access to high quality professional development for staff enabling sustained and continual improvement and developing a workforce in line with future succession planning needs
- Opportunities for the identification and dissemination of effective practice and engagement in research and development opportunities including teacher inquiry

While each one of our academies is unique, we understand that the mutual challenge, support and partnership that we offer each other as a Trust working together, will enable our academies to flourish and continue to develop into centres of excellence



12

Trust/School Improvement Strategy

Our universal offer will be our minimum support level to our schools. It is being designed to be a collaborative approach to focused school improvement. Through our shared sense of belonging, we will work together to ensure all staff have the tools they need to grow and enable their pupils to succeed.

13

Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust

In summary...What parents and carers need to know

- The school is not proposing to change its character and will continue to look, feel and be the same as it is now.
- The School Leadership Team will continue to run the school daily, as they do now, and the Local Governing Body, which will include parent representation, will oversee the work of the school.
- The name of the school will not change (unless this is an aspect raised through consultation), and the school will not change its admissions policy.
- Children with special needs will continue to receive additional support in the way they do now with the Local Authority continuing to fulfill their statutory responsibilities for Shropshire's children.
- The multi-academy trust arrangements will share some central services across the schools which will help them be more efficient and make sure that funding is focused on teaching, learning and support for children.
- The multi-academy trust will work very closely and co-operatively with local partners, including other schools, community groups and organisations, Hereford Diocese and Lichfield Diocese, and the local authority.
- The school uniform will not change.

14

Q&A

Any questions?

Questions will be collated, and responses published in updated FAQs (where appropriate). Further questions and comments can be received via the online consultation form up to Tuesday 16th July 2024.

15

