



The Governing Body has spent approximately 18 months undertaking an extensive process to consider the best future structure for Grove Road School in the context of increasing cuts to budgets and services. The due diligence process has examined the opportunities and risks of establishing and joining a local MAT, relative to the other available options. All of these considerations have informed the suite of information that has been made available, including this Q&A document, to provide an accessible overview for parents of the proposal being presented. This has been, and will continue to be, updated as we hear from parents during the consultation process about aspects of the proposal that they would like more information on.

CONVERSION

Q: What are the benefits to Grove School of joining a MAT?

Joining a local cross-phase MAT would drive more formal and structured collaboration between local schools to deliver:

Enhanced transition support, building upon what is already in place to ensure the children's education journey is seamless from the moment they join Nursery at 3, through to the point when they leave school at 18

Educational and learning opportunities, including improved curriculum links between the schools; access to additional resources; opportunities for staff to work across key stages (e.g. KS2 - KS3) to enhance expectations and understanding.

Improved staff recruitment /development due to greater opportunities for career progression and enrichment (e.g. staff acting as leads in a given area across the MAT).

Enhanced potential for cost savings, economies of scale and enhanced purchasing power.

Long term, we are also keen to ensure support and oversight structures between the schools, particularly if the role of the Local Authority diminishes.

Q: Have you looked at other MATs?

We have looked at other MATs but we feel the benefit of collaboration between schools in a shared local community is an important one and felt the local MAT offered most advantages to our school. We also have the chance to be in at the start and shape this local MAT for our specific needs, whereas with others we would not have that opportunity.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: What due diligence has the Board of Governors done?

Your Governors have been evaluating options for more than 18 months. That has included looking at a number of different MATs as well as considering the 'do nothing' option. They have met representatives of the different MATs, leaders from all local schools, spoken to teachers and modelled financials as far as is possible. Throughout the process, we have assessed the various options against a range of key criteria, with pupil outcomes foremost amongst these. There has been considerable debate and challenge among the Governors to arrive at this decision.

Q: Why can't we stay as we are?

We believe that the role of the current local authority structure will diminish in the coming years. We need to ensure we put in place the support structures for our school that will protect us when this happens. We are effectively moving from one accountability structure to another, replacing the local authority with a MAT. Without accountability, there is a risk of complacency, and we are planning for a future where that accountability no longer comes from the Local Authority.

Q: Why don't we wait and see what others do?

The Governing Body feels that there is no obvious advantage to sitting on the side-lines and watching others shape our future. By doing nothing now, we run the risk of being forced to join a MAT in the future, by which time we have lost any opportunity to help shape or define that MAT and its strategy and values. We feel that converting to an academy now and playing a key role in shaping a local MAT as a first mover will help create a structure that is most beneficial to our current and future pupils. We hope that other primaries in the local area will join the MAT once it is formed.

In Berkhamsted, Ashlyns secondary school and four primary schools have this month announced their intention to form a MAT before the end of 2017.

Q: What are the other primary schools in the Tring area doing?

Each school has different priorities and considerations and they are all at different stages of their own due diligence. We do not believe that others have been working on this issue for as long or as extensively as we have, but they have all been involved in discussions about structures and possible options. At this stage, none are ready to commit to the creation of a MAT, but we hope this will change as they see Grove Road and Tring School establishing the MAT structure.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: Is this just a profit-making exercise?

No. This is about creating a structure of support and leadership that will enable our school to thrive in an uncertain future. The primary driver is pupil outcomes. We believe being in a local MAT will provide greater financial stability, but the priority is ensuring our children receive the best education possible. The MAT would be set up as a charitable organisation.

Q: What is the process for converting to academy status? What does it cost?

Following an 18-month period of due diligence, the full governing body has voted to focus on the option of establishing a local MAT with Tring School. As part of this, next steps to initiate conversion to academy status have been undertaken. We have registered our intention with the DfE and the Local Authority for approval. Another important part of this phase is this consultation with our parents and then with staff. This is a crucial part of the process, which takes place in tandem with a host of other tasks that will be completed over the summer term.

If each stage is successful, we are likely to convert during the Autumn of 2017. Nothing is definite until the Secretary of State for Education and the school signs the agreement. At any point until then, we are free to withdraw from the process.

We can apply for a £25,000 government grant to help with any costs linked to the conversion, such as legal fees. The process has been greatly simplified since the first phase of schools converted, reducing the cost and time associated with conversion. We don't anticipate any financial costs beyond that funded by the grant.

Q: What is the consultation process?

A key stage in making any decision to convert to an academy is consultation with parents and staff. We are committed to full transparency throughout the process, and this consultation period is a time when we will share information and invite feedback as we move towards a final decision. This Q&A section will be continually updated, and you can send any additional questions and comments to the school governors email address governors@groveroad.herts.sch.uk

A meeting for parents to talk about the proposal was held on 15 June. Comments and questions from attendees have been incorporated into this Q&A document. A presentation that was given by Sharon Sanderson (Head Teacher) and Julian Crane (Chair of Governors) can be found on the website.

http://www.groveroad.herts.sch.uk/academy_conversion.html

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: When is the last point at which the school can change its mind about conversion?

The school can withdraw from the conversion process at any point up until the final signature by the Secretary of State for Education.

Q: What if the school wants to leave the Trust?

The Governors believe this is the right decision for our school in the long-term and, if the MAT was established, we would go into it with the expectation it will be a success. In the unlikely event any school decides to leave the MAT in the future, there will be a defined process in place. To exit would be a major decision and it would be a complicated process.

Q: Can we still use our current service providers after our conversion?

We can use current service providers and also look at alternatives. We would also still have full access to the local authority for as long as that is available. As part of a MAT, we expect in time to be able to benefit from improved purchasing powers with our providers.

Q: What happens if Tring School's application for conversion to a MAT is refused?

We do not believe that this will be rejected. If it is rejected, we would need to consider other options.

Q: What happens if none of the other schools in the area join the MAT? Can it really be called a local MAT?

Our priority is achieving the benefits we believe will come to our pupils even if there is just us and Tring School, such as structured collaboration, improved curriculum links, enhanced transition from KS2 to secondary and higher staff retention. Any financial benefits would, however, be less pronounced if more schools do not join the MAT.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

NEW MAT STRUCTURE

Q: Will Grove Road Primary School keep its current identity – logo, brand, uniform, etc.?

Q: Will Grove Road Primary School remain autonomous?

We will continue to be Grove Road Primary School and our ethos and values will remain unchanged. Our identity will stay the same – our logo, uniform and house system will remain as today. Our head will still have responsibility for our budget and make decisions on hiring, staff levels, etc.

The MAT will establish a brand and identity that will be reflected in some of our materials. That name is likely to be The Ridgeway Learning Partnership. Our school leadership will remain the same after we join the MAT.

Q: What differences will we see on day 1 as a MAT?

The pupils and parents will see no difference on day 1. The real differences will be behind the scenes and in reporting structures for the schools. We hope that the positive changes will be seen by the pupils and parents for example through the delivery of the collaborative teaching and shared resources.

Q: How far can Grove Road Primary School impact/influence the MAT strategic direction?

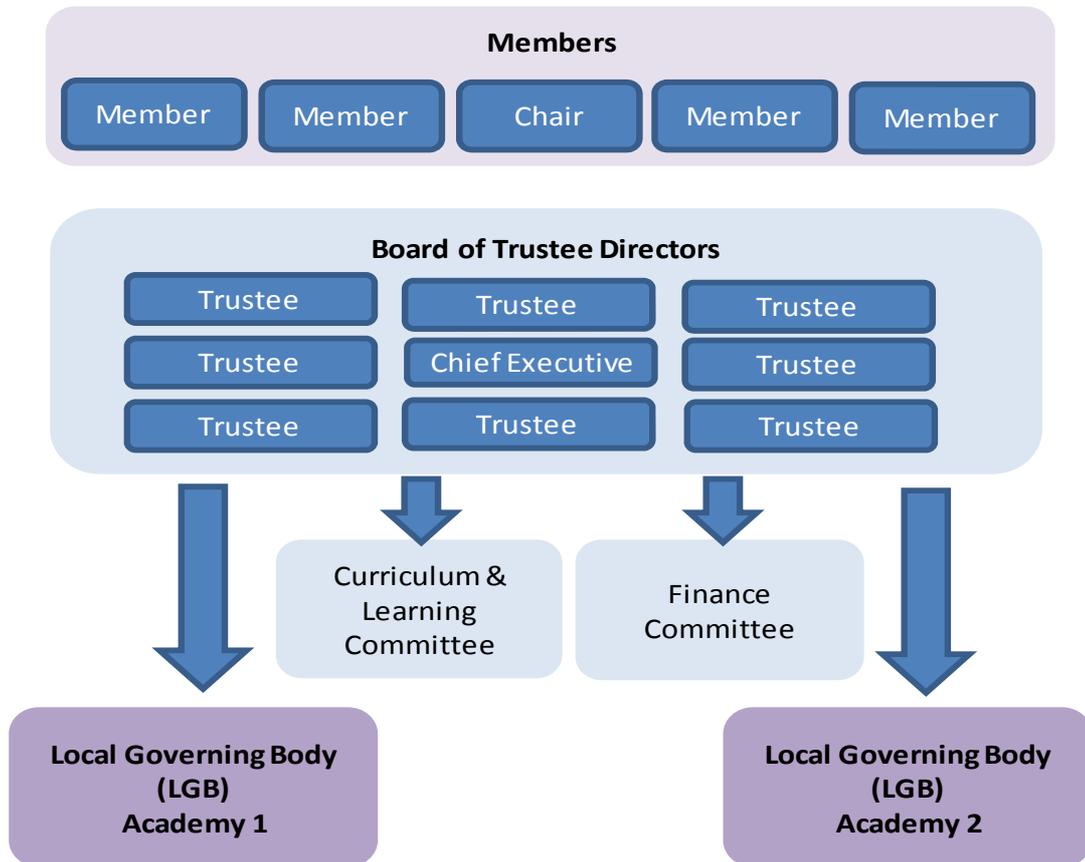
Significantly, because we would be the first to join. This will enable us to help define the overriding strategy, guiding principles, governance structure far more than we would be able to, joining a larger MAT or waiting until others had already joined.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: How is the MAT structured?

It will be led by a CEO who will report to a Board of Trustees, which will oversee the strategic direction of the MAT. They will work closely with the Academy (local school) Governing Boards to ensure local needs are met.



Q: Who are the Members?

A MAT is a not-for-profit trust, and members have ultimate responsibility for the MAT. They provide strategic oversight and hold the Board of Trustees to account, but are not involved with the day-to-day operation of the MAT. Members are still being confirmed but all candidates offer a broad set of skills and experience from education and the wider business community.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: Who are the Trustees?

The Trustee Directors are responsible for the strategic running of the MAT and will comprise of nine (9) trustees with a broad set of skills and knowledge across a wide variety of areas, such as legal, HR, finance. As a 'founder' academy, we will have three (3) nominated trustees on that Board, who will be joined by nominees from Tring School as well as independent trustees. The chair of trustees will also be on the Board of Members to ensure alignment and clear communication lines.

Q: Would the make-up of these Boards change each time a new school joins the MAT?

As with any boards of this nature, they will evolve over time as people leave and are replaced. However, new schools coming in will not have the ability to nominate people – this is a unique advantage that we have in being a first mover into the MAT.

Q: Are there governance safeguards in place to prevent conflicts of interest?

As there are today, all Board of Governors meetings have strict processes around declaring conflicts of interest. We expect there to be a strict code of governance to prevent any conflicts of interest negatively impacting the MAT.

Q: Who identifies and appoints the Members and Trustees?

The Dept. of Education will ultimately approve the initial Members and the Trustees. In both cases, nominations have been made by Tring School and Grove Road, as the founding members of the MAT. The diocese also has a voice in approving the nominated Trustees and Members to ensure the faith status of Tring School is protected. The Members will be responsible for appointing and removing future Trustee directors.

Q: With the majority of appointees among both Members and Trustees being affiliated with the Church of England, will this threaten our status and ethos as a non-faith school or unduly influence the curriculum?

The majority of Members and Trustees will need to be approved by the Diocese, but this does not mean that they will be 'affiliated' with the Diocese. This structure is designed to protect the faith schools rather than to impose anything upon the non-faith schools. The governance structure in place has checks and balances that will prevent any one party making decisions that are detrimental to the others. The Governors discussed this issue at length as part of the due diligence process, and noted the experiences of Tring School in terms of its relationship with the Diocese and were reassured that its influence should not be inappropriate.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: Who will appoint the CEO? How will that person be selected?

The CEO will be appointed by the Members in consultation with the Board of Trustees. Initially, the role of CEO will require only a commitment of half a day per week, when averaged across the year, so it is expected the CEO will be appointed from within the MAT. The CEO will be accountable to the Board of Trustees.

Q: Apart from the Chief Executive, are there plans to pay any of the other Trustee directors or Members?

There are no plans to pay any of the trustees or members. These will be voluntary positions, as stated in the articles of association.

Q: Could the Members or Trustees vote to pay themselves salaries in the future? If so what measures are in place to prevent future Members or Trustees from awarding themselves excessive salaries?

It is stated in the articles of association that the roles of Trustees and Members will be voluntary. Just as with local school governors today, those who join such boards do so because they wish to contribute to their community in the full knowledge that it is voluntary. We have no reason to believe this is a risk.

Q: What expertise in the field of education exists among the Trustees on the curriculum & learning committee regarding education? Is this not an area in which only educational professionals should have input?

A number of the proposed Trustees have direct and indirect experience of education and curriculum development. This input will be invaluable but so will the perspectives of those from outside education who can help identify opportunities to improve the education and development of our children. It is also expected that a range of education and teaching professionals will attend Teaching & Learning Committee meetings by invitation, to advise and support trustees on particular areas.

Grove Road School's current Teaching and Learning Committee consists of a mix of educational professionals alongside other Governors (including two Parent Governors) who do not have direct experience of delivering primary education but can still make significant contributions to the work of that group.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: Does our MAT have to include business leaders if the purpose of the schools is non-profit?

The MAT Trustees and Members will come from education, business and the not-for-profit sector. The key is that they are experts in their field – HR, finance, legal, communications – and will bring important insight and experience from a range of backgrounds, as we strive to maximise the return on any investment for the benefit of the children and the long-term sustainability of the school. The current Governing Board at Grove Road School comprises of people with backgrounds in the public, private and charitable sectors and benefits from this range of perspectives.

Q: What will happen to the Grove Road Primary School governing body?

It will get a little smaller and become an Academy (local) Governing Board. It will still maintain authority for many aspects of the school's activity, particularly around teaching and learning, but will have accountability to the MAT Board of Trustees on more long-term strategic matters. By acting now, Grove Road has the opportunity to have 3 nominated members on the Board of Trustees and we have also had the opportunity to shape the scheme of delegation between the local Grove Road Governing Board and the MAT.

Q: Will there still be elected parent governors? Can staff still be elected to become governors?

It is expected that the Academy Governing Board will maintain a diversity of skills and backgrounds, and having representation from parent governors will be an important part of that. Staff will also continue to have representation on the Academy Governing Board.

Q: Who takes decisions in the Trust?

Grove Road will maintain a large part of its existing autonomy and make the decisions that are best for its pupils on a day to day basis, especially in the areas of teaching and learning. Grove Road will also maintain sole responsibility for its own budget, which will be defined according to pupil numbers. The involvement of the MAT will focus on long-term strategy and accountability – which we will also help define – and to provide co-ordination of activities across the schools where this will deliver benefits. Please refer to the DRAFT SCHEME OF DELEGATION on the website.

http://www.groveroad.herts.sch.uk/academy_conversion.html

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: How many academies will be in the local MAT?

Currently, it would be just Grove Road Primary and Tring School. All other local schools are doing their due diligence but are not as advanced as us in the process. We hope that other primaries will join.

Q: According to the NUT, there is evidence that MATs succeed better when they remain small and local rather than massive business-like models spread across a wide geographical area. Is there a maximum size or geographical boundary? How will you decide which schools can join?

This is one of the reasons the Governing Board identified a local MAT as its preferred option and has rejected the concept of a very large scale 'chain' option, such as the larger, more geographically disparate Herts for Learning (HfL) MAT.

It is intended that we involve schools with a common ethos and characteristics, and although there is no defined geographical range, logistics suggest that local schools are a more practical partner choice for any shared working, which is a priority for the proposed MAT. Each applicant school will be evaluated by the Trustees on its merits and what it brings to the MAT as a whole, and even if it is close by, if it does not fulfil the requirements of shared ethos or financial stability it is possible it will not be allowed to join.

Q: As part of this MAT, will Grove Road have the power of veto to prevent failing schools from joining this MAT?

This will be a decision for the MAT Trustees based upon a defined mission and strategy. By being first into the MAT, we will be able to help shape that strategy and will have three appointees on the Board of Trustees. As part of our application we have stated we will not be taking on failing schools. However, as with many aspects of education policy, we cannot rule out future changes by the Department for Education that might require all MATs to take on schools at the Government's direction.

PUPILS

Q: What will the admissions arrangements be and who will manage them?

We plan to continue to be a fully inclusive school, and Grove Road will maintain its autonomy and make the decisions that are best for its pupils. A final decision on this has yet to be made, but most likely we will adopt existing Local Authority admission rules.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: A criticism of academies is that pupils who "do not fit" are removed from school. How would you ensure they are protected?

We would support them just as we do now. Our school currently has a very robust and structured approach to ensuring we meet the specific needs of those children with special education needs and/or challenging personal circumstances within the context of a reducing budget and diminishing resources at county level. Grove Road will retain autonomy in all matters of learning and education, but we anticipate that working through the MAT will allow us to pool and share staff and resources so that we can continue and further improve the way we nurture these children (with this being enhanced if more schools were to join the MAT).

Q: Previously SEND students would receive funding through the Local Authority to allow for the correct support levels. How is funding for SEND determined in a MAT? If you had one year group where a large amount of SEND support is needed, are you able to access extra funds?

The funding for SEND has been diminishing over time and Grove Road currently receives no SEND allocation from the Local Authority as part of our budget. As a school in the MAT, we will be able to apply for Exceptional Needs funding, as we do now, for pupils who qualify. We will still need to manage our budget as best we can to meet the needs of our pupils, but we would have the advantage of potentially being able to tailor our resources across the schools in a more bespoke fashion than is currently possible across Dacorum. For example, we are looking at the possibility of training and funding an Educational Psychologist or perhaps therapeutic support to work across the MAT. This is another area where the MAT structure could potentially allow us to better meet the needs of the children in the face of cuts to funds and services.

Q: When MATs performance tables are introduced, what will the implications be for school enrolment policy?

Both schools intend to adopt and retain the current county admissions rules. If, over time, the Local Authority passes the administration of admissions to individual schools, neither Tring nor Grove Road have any plans to introduce selection. The vision for the MAT is to be locally focused and inclusive.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: If a student is expelled or has not settled in school, the Local Authority could offer alternative places. How would this work under a MAT?

The “managed move” system is in operation to try and keep pupils in school and maintain their education. It works by supporting transitions for troubled students. Our admission rules would remain the same. We cannot and would not refuse a child if we had space on roll. Parents can currently apply for places in any school with a place, and we expect that the Local Authority Inclusion Team would contact a school in a MAT just as they might a non-academy school.

It should be noted that maintained schools and schools within MATs have the right to exclude pupils on a fixed term or permanent basis according to their policies.

Q: Will we have to support schools that need additional funds?

Currently the Local Authority keeps a percentage of our budget allocation. This ‘top slice’ is typically used to support those schools that have a specific extraordinary need. For example, Grove Road benefited when we needed a new roof, windows, boiler etc in the last 6 years. As a MAT, there will still be a percentage of the budget that goes to the central MAT, but the percentage is likely to be less than half of what it is now.

FINANCE

Q: How does the MAT funding change from the current model?

The school will still have its own budget allocation from the DfE, but instead of this coming via the Local Authority, it will come via the MAT. Today, the Local Authority takes a percentage of that budget (known as a “top slice”) which it uses to fund and subsidise a variety of services and support for Hertfordshire schools. In the new structure, the MAT will also take a “top slice” to provide central services within the MAT, but we expect that to be considerably less than the current percentage. Further details will be confirmed as we move through the process.

Q: How will money be shared between the schools?

Funding will not be ‘shared’ between schools. Just as today the school will have its own budget allocation from the DfE, but instead of this coming via the Local Authority, it will come via the MAT.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: Will this change give us access to higher budgets in the future?

As a MAT, it is expected that a greater percentage of the DfE budget will come to Grove Road, but we do not know specifics at this stage. We also expect to benefit from greater cost efficiencies through improved purchasing power, shared services, and some additional freedoms to enable us to access alternative providers who offer a more competitive rate, all of which will have a positive impact on our available budget and accessibility to services. These benefits will be more pronounced if further schools join the MAT.

Q: Does our school still have control of its own budget?

Grove Road will retain autonomy in terms of its budget, how we spend that budget and how we generate additional revenues. We will also retain any budget surplus we achieve – this will not be taken by the MAT.

Q: Who will own land buildings, etc?

The Local Authority will retain ownership of the land and buildings and will lease them back to the MAT for 125 years. We need to progress to the next phase to determine exact details, but the local authority will effectively become the landlord of the MAT.

Q: Once the MAT is formed and begins to lease the land and buildings from the Local Authority, who will pay for major capital projects, such as leaking roof repairs? Would there be changes to the way such works would be arranged?

Today, the Local Authority takes a percentage of Grove Road's budget (known as a "top slice") which it uses to fund and subsidise a variety of services and support for all Hertfordshire schools, including some major capital works (Eg. boilers and roof replacement) . This funding has reduced considerably in the last 10 years and currently, the school pays for all it's own repairs and capital projects. In the new structure, the MAT will take a "top slice", which we expect to be smaller, to provide central services within the MAT in the same way. Nothing changes in that regard. Within the MAT, however, we would benefit from being able to access a wider range of suppliers and, with enhanced purchasing power, to secure better deals.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: Currently, the trend is for cuts to funding of all public services including education. The more pressure local authorities come under to raise funds, the more motivated they might be to sell off land and buildings they own. What is to stop them selling off to developers or similar?

The trend is certainly to reduce funding available to Local Authorities. This trend is unlikely to reverse whether schools join MATs or not, and our decision to join a MAT is driven by our desire to address this trend and create a more sustainable future for our school. As tenants with a clearly defined 125-year lease, we would actually have more protection against a Local Authority selling off grounds than we currently would as a maintained school.

Q: Are there going to be additional management/admin costs associated with the Boards of Members and Trustees?

The proposed MAT set up and leadership structure will add minimal additional costs and will bring extensive experience and insight that will provide support and challenge to our school. The local MAT we are proposing has a relatively small management structure, that could expand and adapt if the MAT grows, but it avoids a cumbersome, top-heavy leadership employed by many of the other MATs we looked at. All Members and Trustees give their time and talents voluntarily.

Q: Why is the Trust set up as a charitable organisation?

To be a charity, an organisation must have only charitable purposes, as defined by the Charities Act 2001, and be for the public benefit. Charities must also be independent and not controlled by another organisation. Advancing education can be a charitable purpose. The laws that create some types of school make them charities automatically e.g. academy trusts with charitable articles of association.

Q: Would we benefit from greater combined purchasing power?

It is expected that we would benefit from greater combined purchasing power and some abilities to pool resources, although any significant savings will likely not come until there are more schools within the MAT. We would also benefit from some additional freedoms to enable us to access alternative providers who offer a more competitive rate.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: What is a critical number of schools for the cost benefits to be recognised?

To get more specific financial information we need to progress to the next stage in the process. Our priority is achieving the benefits we believe will come to our pupils even if there is just us and Tring School, such as structured collaboration, improved curriculum links, enhanced transition from KS2 to secondary, higher staff retention. The purchasing benefits are an additional benefit that we anticipate will come with time and more schools joining the MAT.

GENERAL

Q: Is there a strategic plan in place for the MAT?

The MAT is in the process of defining that plan. By being a first-mover, Grove Road will be able to contribute to and help shape that plan, and as we move through the process of conversion we will share that information as it becomes available.

Q: Will the schools in the MAT have the same holidays?

This is certainly one of the things that could be agreed across the MAT to help families with siblings at different schools, just as all maintained schools currently have the same holidays. We will also aim to set INSET days together as far as possible.

Q: How far will systems and processes be centralised?

As far as it makes sense to do so. Where there are clear cost or efficiency benefits for the schools in the MAT to centralise, without detriment to pupil outcomes, then we expect that will happen. If a process or system would be too difficult to standardise, then we will maintain it. For example, teams from Grove Road and Tring School are evaluating a potential centralised finance package. While there would be cost savings if we could use one, we all need to be sure it serves our unique needs as a primary or secondary school.

Q: Will the Trust impose a curriculum? Could the Trust remove subjects from the curriculum?

We can decide and shape our own curriculum, but it needs to support children to reach the expectations from Ofsted etc., so whilst there are freedoms there is still a national expectation to be met.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: It is understood what the secondary school has to offer primary schools in the MAT in terms of collaboration, but what can Grove offer to the secondary school, especially given the strong pastoral care already in place at Tring school?

Grove Road is proud of its very strong set of values and an ethos that develops children with a curiosity and skills to learn effectively. A secondary school has its own objectives in terms of pupil outcomes, and if they can work with primary schools to further align curricula, smooth the transition into Year 7, and receive children who are best equipped to learn, then they will ultimately achieve greater outcomes for their children.

Q: How do we formalise the collaboration amongst academies? How do you guarantee what you are saying?

There is already good collaboration between Grove Road and other schools in the area. However, this is ad-hoc and can be impacted by competing priorities, time pressures, etc. By joining the MAT with Tring School, we will be able to formalise this collaboration within the MAT strategy – by making schools accountable for certain activities, we can ensure they happen.

Q: Who will provide school improvement support for academies in the Tring MAT?

We will continue to purchase school improvement support from our current provider (Herts for Learning, which is a trading arm of the Local Authority) . As part of a MAT there will also be an additional layer of school to school teaching and leadership development through cross-phase support and accountability checks.

Q: What can schools expect re Ofsted inspections if they join the Tring MAT?

Ofsted inspections and ratings will remain as before and each school will be judged on its own merits. There is a Common Inspection Framework (CIF) that ensures that all schools (Private, VA, VC, Free, Academies and maintained) are inspected according to the same criteria.

Q: Do primary schools run the risk of being side-lined/overpowered by secondary school?

The Board of Trustees will be made up of nominations from Grove Road and Tring School and their aim is to ensure the success of all schools in the MAT. There is no benefit to Tring School to ‘take over’ Grove Road – it is in their interest to welcome higher performing pupils into Year 7 as this will ultimately positively impact their pupil outcomes.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: Is this a takeover by Tring School?

No, this is a collaboration by two schools that are inextricably linked in the provision of education in Tring. It is in the best interests of both schools that the other succeeds and both will be focused on ensuring that happens. Discussions between the Grove Road Governing Body and representatives of Tring School have reinforced this notion.

Q: Will the school retain its current leadership?

If we join the MAT, Grove Road will continue to have its own leadership team and its own Head. There are no plans to change this while the budget can sustain it. The current governing body will likely reduce in size to form an academy governing body. It will continue to work closely with the school and its leaders, with accountability to a board of MAT trustees, which will also have members nominated by Grove Road Primary.

Q: What are the implications for those who use our site, such as Tring Tornadoes JSC?

Grove Road will be expected to continue managing its finances in the same way it does today and will retain the autonomy to explore all revenue generating streams, such as the hire of land by local sports clubs. Nothing will change in this regard and we will continue to hire out our facilities at the market rate, as we would in the existing Local Authority model.

STAFF

Q: What would Grove Road's recruitment policy be towards employing unqualified staff?

We currently only employ staff qualified for the role they are tasked with. In the MAT, Grove Road would retain control of its own recruitment, and we have no intention of lowering these standards. The Board of Trustees will also be holding the head accountable for performance and this would be an additional safeguard against the recruitment of sub-par teachers and staff.

Q: Who will be in charge of staff recruitment? How transparent will this be regarding pay scales and grades? Will roles be advertised externally as well as internally?

Grove Road will retain authority for its own recruitment of teaching staff. As today, that search process will include any methods that ensure the best talent is identified, both internally and externally. We want to attract and retain the best staff and our pay/benefit structure will reflect the market rates needed to achieve this. One of the additional benefits of being in a local MAT will be the opportunities it offers new and existing staff and the potential we are able to offer staff for career development.

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION

Questions & Answers

Q: How do the current staff feel about a change to a local MAT?

There will be a formal staff consultation once the parent consultation is complete. However, there have been a number of informal discussions with staff, and there is staff representation on the Board of Governors, and feedback to date is positive.

Q: What will happen with regards to staff pensions?

Pensions will be protected.

Q: Who is the employer of the Grove Road Primary School staff?

The MAT will become the employer rather than the local authority.

Q: What is 'TUPE' and what does it do?

TUPE refers to the "*Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006*" and is designed to preserve employees' terms and conditions when a business or undertaking, or part of one, is transferred to a new employer. Full portability is expected.

Q: Do we need to consult with staff and/or trade unions?

Yes, formal staff consultations will take place once the parent consultation window closes. Informal discussions have already taken place, and the governing body has staff representation on it, so they have been engaged in the process of due diligence.

Q: Would the Trust make any changes to national pay and conditions?

That is a decision for the Trustees, but given we want to hold onto our staff any decision will be based on staff recruitment and retention.