

West Hill School – Academy Consultation Leaflet



SECTION 1: Academy Information

What is an Academy?

Academies are publicly funded independent schools that are not managed by a local authority but their funding and accountability is directly with the Department for Education (Department for Education).

A Multi-Academy Trust is a Trust set up to manage more than one School.

Why is West Hill School proposing to become an academy?

West Hill School has been working closely with a number of partner Schools in recent years to improve effectiveness and efficiency. Linden Bridge and West Hill Schools already collaborate formally together through our SEND Teaching School. Whilst this collaboration has been beneficial it has not been possible to realise all of the efficiencies available.

The School now wishes to form a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) with Linden Bridge School in order to take partnership working to the next level and benefit from further efficiencies only available to a single entity.

Since 2010 more than 6000 schools have become academies with over 70% of academies MATs being converter academies. Government expectations for 2020 are that most schools will be in MATs.

The benefits of being in a MAT for West Hill School include;

- Curriculum provision –sharing of expertise, senior and middle leadership
- Re-energise staff through CPD and new roles
- Identify efficiency savings by sharing some specialist office functions across schools in the MAT
- Improved recruitment and retention of the most skilled teachers and leaders attracted by the opportunities that a wider successful Trust will bring.
- Provide consistent expectations of pupils and staff
- Allow flexible deployment of staff
- Greater resilience to future risks by joining a Trust containing other schools that may grow to include further schools in time.
- Provide the opportunity to develop new provision for children with SEND locally

Government legislation requires that any school proposing to convert undertakes a public consultation on its proposals.

What is the MAT vision for the Linden Bridge and West Hill Schools?

Linden Bridge and West Hill Schools will establish a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). Other special schools in East Surrey are also exploring academisation and may opt to join the new MAT in the future. Our joint and longstanding track record, supported by the infrastructure of the Teaching

School and the governance of our proposed MAT, gives us the confidence that the MAT will be successful and sustainable.

At the heart of our vision is the drive to provide outstanding, high quality education for SEND in our locality.

The MAT Board will be open to further special schools wishing to join from 2018 with 10 being the optimum number envisaged at this point.

The vision of the MAT is that as educational partners we will:

- Deliver an ambitious education that is tailored to the needs, interests and abilities of all learners with SEND, while maintaining the unique ethos and specialisms of each school
- Provide mutual support and challenge to raise standards and ensure education excellence across all schools
- Recruit, train and support outstanding staff and leaders, with exciting development opportunities at each stage of their career
- Work with families, professionals, the wider community and other stakeholders to secure aspirational outcomes and belief in a positive future for children and young people with SEND
- Ensure highly effective governance for all schools

How does a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) work?

Each school in the MAT has a Local Governing Body responsible for the day to day running of the school. These Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) have powers delegated to them from the MAT Board under a Scheme of Delegation.

The local governing bodies of each school are accountable to the MAT directors. The MAT Board is made up of directors (also known as Trustees) with the necessary collective skills to oversee the strategic management of the Trust including Education Finance HR, Legal etc.

The Board will appoint a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to be responsible for School Improvement and Attainment.

Support will come through the CEO leveraging of a genuine partnership of schools in the Trust working collaboratively together. This is already underway.

Each school has its own Action Plan focusing on the quality of education and this forms part of the overall MAT Action Plan.

Each school is seen as central to its own community with the skills of each being used in a supportive way for all the others regardless of their current educational grading. Linden Bridge and West Hill Schools are outstanding schools.

The Trust is very clear that the individual ethos and character and good practices of each school are retained and that all the schools operate as equals supporting each other.

When will West Hill School become an Academy?

We would expect that the process will take 4-6 months, work is underway and the planned conversion date is 1st October 2017.

Why is there a consultation?

The Academies Act 2010 requires either the school to consult “such persons as they think appropriate” on whether the school should become an academy.

The Governors of West Hill School will consult with all key stakeholders about the academy conversion including parents, staff, pupils and other schools over a 4 week period from 2nd May until 26th May 2017

Does the school need agreement from the Local Authority to become an Academy?

No. The Academies Act 2010 has removed the need for the Local Authority to approve plans for the school to become an academy.

What form of relationship will exist between the Local Authority and the school?

This is for individual academies or Multi Academy Trusts to determine – there is no statutory requirement for any formal relationship between Local Authorities and academies. Academies are directly funded and accountable to central government (Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency).

The Local Authority retains statutory duties for aspects of Special Educational Needs, admissions coordination and provision of home-to-school transport. Local Authorities are also expected to play a key strategic role locally in areas such as pupil place planning admissions and sharing good practice.

We expect West Hill School to maintain its excellent relationship with Surrey County Council in the above key areas.

Why has the School not referred to the name of the new MAT in the consultation materials?

The Governors and Senior Leadership Teams of either school have not settled on a name for the new MAT.

Will the school change its name and uniform as some Academies have done?

No. The school will not change its name or uniform after it becomes an academy.

Are Academies subject to the same Ofsted inspection regime?

Yes, Schools converting to academies will continue to be inspected in the normal way.

What is the process for West Hill to establish a new MAT?

West Hill School is to form a new MAT with Linden Bridge School. In order to do this it will need to:

- Hold a statutory consultation process with school stakeholders;
- Establish the Governance arrangements for the MAT;
- Put in place a Master and Supplementary Funding Agreement between the MAT and the Secretary of State for the running and funding West Hill School;
- Arrange a 125 year lease for the land and buildings from Surrey County Council (SCC);
- Transfer the employment of the staff from the SCC to the MAT following a statutory (TUPE) process;
- Agree a Commercial Transfer Agreement for the transfer of assets and contracts from SCC to the MAT; and
- Ensure that MAT finance and administrative processes and systems operate effectively independent of the Local Authority.

SECTION 2: Staff Issues

Does the school have to hold consultation with staff?

Under employment legislation Surrey County Council as the current employer will need to conduct a TUPE* consultation with all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) and the relevant unions as part of the staff transfer process.

*(*TUPE = Transfer of Undertaking – Protection of Employment)*

Can the school alter teachers' pay and conditions?

The terms and conditions of staff are protected on transfer by TUPE regulations. Academies do have the freedom to vary terms and conditions from national ones but the MAT does not have any plans to do this.

If the school becomes an Academy, who takes responsibility for the pension arrangements?

Teachers working in an academy fall within the scope of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), just as if they were employed in a Local Authority maintained school.

Non-teaching staff at schools are able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This is administered by Surrey County Council as at present.

Employees will pay the same rate as at present under both schemes, subject to any nationally imposed changes.

How will the TUPE process work and what specific responsibilities does the school have?

As the current employer Surrey County Council is responsible for informing and consulting with staff.

The Multi-Academy Trust is responsible for informing the employer of any 'measures' which will impact on their employment.

There are no planned changes for this MAT.

The Academy Trust will therefore write to each member of staff confirming that they will transfer under existing terms and conditions.

SECTION 3: Finance

Will we get more money as an academy?

The Government is clear that becoming an academy should not bring about a financial advantage or disadvantage to a school. We will continue to be funded on a per pupil basis within our agreed planned places and will receive this for the EFA rather than the LA.

Academies do have greater freedom to decide how they use their entire budget.

SECTION 4: Special Education Needs

Will our responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs change?

No. Responsibilities as an Academy in relation to Special Educational Needs will be just the same as they are now as a maintained school. The Local Authority will continue to be the Admissions Authority for the MAT as it retains responsibility for Special Education Needs.

Can a child with a statement of Special Educational Needs nominate an academy as their school of choice?

Yes. These arrangements and related processes must at all times comply with the School Admissions Code and responsibilities as an academy in relation to Special Educational Needs will be just the same as they are now as a maintained school.

Does becoming an Academy change the way in which exclusions are dealt with?

Academies are required by their Funding Agreement to follow the law and guidance on exclusions as if they were maintained schools. This includes reporting exclusions to the Local authority. However, academies do not have to consult the Local Authority before deciding to exclude a pupil and they can arrange their own independent appeals panel.

SECTION 5: Update on the Free School Application

How is the recent announcement of the approval of Linden Hill Free School linked to the formation of the multi academy trust?

Linden Bridge and West Hill Schools' recent application to the DfE to set up Linden Hill Free School was recently approved into the 'pre-opening phase', which means the DfE are happy that we can start to make preparations to open the new school.

Linden Hill School will be a new, mixed, non-faith based special school for children aged 4 to 19 years living in East Surrey. It is planned that the School will open with 42 children in September 2018, rising to a total of 120 children by 2021.

The MAT Board currently being established will contain Trustees with the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and dedication to provide effective Governance to Linden Bridge, West Hill and Linden Hill Schools. Similarly, consideration will also be given to ensuring that all other functions of the MAT provide support and capacity to two schools from October 2017 and can be extended to include Linden Hill from September 2018 as well as other Special Schools who wish to join.

When open, Linden Hill School will be an equal member of the Trust and will work collaboratively with Linden Bridge and West Hill School and others to realise our shared vision to provide outstanding, high quality education for SEND in Surrey.

A full consultation on the vision, values and location of Linden Hill School will follow later in the pre-opening phase of the project.

For further information and latest news please go to www.lindenhill.co.uk

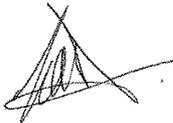
SECTION 6: Further Information

How do I find out more about the proposals?

Come along to the consultation meeting being held for parents at the School at 6pm on Monday 15th May. There will be an opportunity for you to meet and ask questions of the Headteacher and myself as Chair of Governors.

If you have any queries please email us at consultation@west-hill.surrey.sch.uk

Please complete and return the questionnaire page below to the School office by the 26th May 2017.



Ray Marsh
Chair of Governors
May 2017



Judy Nettleton
Headteacher

West Hill School Academy Consultation Questionnaire



| 1) Please tick the box(es) which best describe you. I am; | Tick as appropriate |
|---|---------------------|
| Parent | |
| Employee at the School | |
| Local Resident | |
| Local Authority Employee | |
| Other | |
| Please provide a contact email address if you wish to be kept informed about this proposal | |
| | |

| 2) Do you agree that West Hill School should convert to an academy and form a MAT with Linden Bridge School? | Tick as appropriate |
|--|---------------------|
| Strongly Agree | |
| Agree | |
| Disagree | |
| Strongly Disagree | |
| Please give your reasons: | |
| | |

| 3) Do you have any comments you wish to make about this proposal? |
|---|
| |

If you need more room for comments please attach a continuation sheet. Please return this form by email to: consultation@west-hill.surrey.sch.uk or in person via the school office