

Frequently Asked Questions concerning the formation of the Corvus Learning Trust

The Academy Executive Group made up of representatives from Edgbarrow, Hatch Ride Primary, Oaklands Infants and Oaklands Junior have been keeping track of questions raised regarding the Multi Academy Trust (MAT). This is a working document and will be updated during the course of the consultation as additional questions are raised.

What is a MAT?

A MAT is a group of schools which are part of an Academy Trust which has legal responsibility for all of them – including the staff, assets and land.

Why a MAT rather than stand alone?

The DFE are now encouraging MATs as this promotes collaboration and shared best practice. It also allows for economies of scale with regard to costs.

What is the MAT Name?

Corvus Learning Trust (CLT). Corvus is the Latin name for crow. This was selected as the Trust would be founded by schools in Crowthorne. The Trust would be registered at Companies House as a unique name.

How will the CLT be governed?

The CLT is set up as a charitable trust. The Trust will have 5 Members. These Members will meet once or twice a year and are responsible for holding the Trustees to account and ensuring that the Trust is working towards its objectives. The Trust will have 9 Trustees, this group is similar to the directors of a company and will run the governance of the MAT; they will focus on matters such as the strategic direction, standards and finance. Trustees will meet at least termly. The Trustees will also hold Local Governing Bodies (LGB) to account. The LGB is very similar to the current governing body, each school will have its own LGB and they will continue to hold their own schools to account and their duties and responsibilities will be the same as they are currently.

How will the consultation process work?

Hopefully you feel that we have been keeping you informed from when we first started to look at Academisation. We are now holding a formal consultation to provide information and a rationale, and to take feedback. The formal consultation period will last for 4 weeks from Friday 22nd September to Friday 20th October 2017. During this period we will be holding an open day at Edgbarrow School on Tuesday 3rd October between 10am and 4pm and evening meetings at Oaklands Junior School on Tuesday 10th October and Edgbarrow School on Thursday 12th October, both from 6.30 to 8.00pm.

You can also send any questions or comments in writing to consultation@edgbarrowschool.co.uk

Who will be the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Corvus Trust?

Mr Elsey (Headteacher at Edgbarrow) will be the CEO. The CEO will lead the MAT and act as the link between schools, Trustees and Members.

What does being a 'Member' mean?

Academy Trusts have up to five Members. Members are unpaid and are responsible for appointing the Trustees, they are the guardians of the Trust's constitution.

What does being a 'Trustee' mean?

The Trustees are appointed by Members and act as the critical friends for the Trust. Their key responsibilities are based around ensuring the quality of educational provision, challenging and monitoring performance, ensuring financial health and probity and support the Governors, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and staff of schools. They also have specific duties as a result of being a charity Trustee and company director. The Trustees can delegate some of their duties to LGBs through a scheme of delegation. Other than the CEO all Trustees are unpaid.

So who are the Members?

We are looking to appoint 5 Members with a wealth of experience from education or the local Crowthorne community and who are known to the Headteachers or Governors of the founding schools. Please find below the names of the proposed Members:

Peter Floyd – Edgbarrow School Governor and retired senior manager with S.C. Johnson

Jeff Dawkins – Retired Secondary Headteacher from Windsor Boys School and currently national Director PiXL Leadership Programmes

Julian Thomas – Master of Wellington College

Marian Dickens - Retired solicitor who had a practice in Crowthorne

Sandra Symms – Retired Primary Headteacher from Finchampstead C of E

Each of the Members is known to at least one Member of the executive committee and the committee have fully discussed and approved the nominations.

And the Trustees?

Mr Elsey will be one of the Trustees as CEO. The other Trustees have been drawn from the Governing Bodies of founding schools or are known to a Headteacher. All of them have a particular skill set that is required. The names of the proposed Trustees are as follows:

Steve James (Strategic Leadership) – Retired Head of International Relations for UK Air Navigation Service Provider NATS

Sukina Carr (Finance) – Finance Manager with Fujitsu and Governor at Oaklands Infants School

Graham Oakley (Business) – Senior Branch Manager at Waitrose and Chair of Governors at Edgbarrow School

Sara Young (HR) – HR Business Partner at The John Lewis Partnership and current parent of two Edgbarrow students

Jason Welch (Strategic Leadership) – North Europe Service Director for General Electric and Chair of Governors at Hatch Ride Primary

David Whitfield (Asset Management) – Retired from a 40 year career in engineering, project management and IT services management and Governor at Oaklands Junior School

Iain Henderson (Secondary Education) – Deputy Headteacher – Wellington College

Joanna Nightingale (Primary Education) – Retired Headteacher - Whitehall Junior School

Bob Elsey (CEO) – Headteacher at Edgbarrow School

Which Schools are involved?

The Founding Schools are Edgbarrow, Hatch Ride Primary, Oaklands Infants and Oaklands Juniors.

Will there be more schools?

Yes. To be a viable MAT the government suggests a number of approximately 5,000 students. The Founding schools will have a total of just over 2,000. The Trust will therefore need to grow over the next few years but we are in no hurry and will only take on schools providing this is not to the detriment of existing schools and we will only invite schools with a similar ethos.

Can you be forced to take other schools?

The DFE can ask and encourage but the final decision lies with the Trust.

Why are we moving away from the Local Authority?

The school has always enjoyed a very good working relationship with the Local Authority and will continue to do so. However the Education system is changing. Three quarters of Secondary Schools and a quarter of Primary schools are already academies. This means the scale of support from LAs has been reduced. Academies are able to source services from the best and most cost effective suppliers, which may include the LA.

When are we planning to become a MAT?

We have set a target of 1st December 2017 although we can adjust as necessary. It will not however occur before 1st December and will be subject to the consultation and a final decision by school governing bodies.

What are the financial implications?

We anticipate the move to be financially neutral. A small percentage will be taken from the school's budget and given to the MAT to provide services. This will be broadly in line with the amount that is top sliced currently by the LA or paid to the LA for services.

Will the name of the school change?

No

Will school uniforms change?

No

Have the schools completed due diligence?

Yes. The schools have shared their financial information in the executive committee; none of the founding schools is carrying a deficit or has any significant financial or non-financial outstanding liabilities. In addition, site surveys are being carried out and shared. All schools are rated as Good or better by Ofsted. The schools already work very closely with each other and know each other well.

Further information can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>