



Dear parents and carers,

We would like to let you know that our schools and Governors are currently considering joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), Northern Lights Learning Trust. This MAT currently has only one school, Benedict Biscop CoFE (VA) Primary Academy based in Sunderland. It is an outstanding school that is also a Teaching School. We currently work closely alongside Benedict Biscop Academy, eg our teachers work together. We feel that by joining this MAT together, this would strengthen our schools and enhance the future opportunities for our schools in the way that our two schools being in a Federation together has done. We don't envisage a change being visibly evident, for example our two schools will still continue to work very closely together. We thought it may be useful to answer some common questions and concerns below.

**1. What is a multi-academy trust?** A multi-academy trust (MAT) is where a number of academies join together and form a single trust with a board of directors answerable to the trust's members. Members of the trust are responsible for the strategic oversight of the academy. They appoint and work closely with the trust's directors who determine the policies of the trust, monitor the effectiveness of each academy within the MAT, manage central services where appropriate and report to the Secretary of State. They work to ensure that each academy is performing to the best of its ability and it gets the support it requires. The MAT enters into a supplemental funding agreement with the Secretary of State in respect of each academy within the MAT, each school having its own budget stream and staffing structure.

Each of the academies in the trust has its own local governing body which has authority delegated to it by the directors. As we currently have one governing body, we would seek to retain one governing body across the two schools, in the same model we have now.

**2. What are the benefits of being part of a MAT?** Where schools are not yet academies, their budget may be enhanced by the additional funding stream that Academies receive. Schools in the Trust can also benefit from being part of a larger organisation, in the same way as our Federation, but on a larger scale. Examples would include:-

- Better purchasing power: having a larger organisation allows economies of scale for e.g. computers, paper and photocopying.
- Better sharing of resources such as employing specialists across schools to support students with particular needs; sharing "back office" resources such as HR and Finance departments as well as reprographics expertise.
- Opportunities for greater staff development or progression through working across schools to share best practice or support particular subject developments

This could mean savings to the budget for schools in the Trust due to economies of scale (e.g. ordering goods or sharing HR and Finance expertise) which means more money for each school to spend on staffing, resources or other items. The Trust structure also supports the sharing of best practice across schools.



- 3. What would a school becoming part of a Multi Academy Trust mean for our pupils and parents/carers?** Pupils and parents/carers will continue to be part of their school community with the same support structures that currently exist. The school local governing committee will be able to exercise the usual range of powers. There may also be increased monies available in the budget for teaching and other students support services due to economies of scale (see above). Each school retains its own distinctive identity.
- 4. Will our schools change their identities?** No, our schools will still be as distinctively individual in the MAT as they are now in the Federation. St. Peter's Elwick CofE will remain a Church school and Hart Primary will remain a non-church school.
- 5. Who runs the Multi Academy Trust?** The MAT Directors Board has overall responsibility and accountability in law for the performance, site and overall viability of the Trust. In a multi-academy trust, the Directors Board is the top level of governance within an academy school. The local Governing Body sits beneath this and supports the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team to make and implement strategic decisions. When there is more than one school in the trust, each school has its own Local Governing Body, but in the case of our two schools the aim is to continue with one Local Governing Body for both schools, in the way we currently operate.
- 6. If we proceed when will the change be made?** Subject to final processes we would hope to become part of a MAT from Spring 2018.
- 7. Will Mrs. Heaton still be the Executive Head and Mrs. Hill the Head of Schools?** Yes, our staffing structure will still be the same.
- 8. Will our two schools still be a Federation?** Our two schools will no longer be a Federation, we will instead be part of a MAT. However, our leadership and staffing structures are intended to remain the same, eg one Local Governing Body across both schools. We will continue to work with each other in exactly the same way, due to the benefits we know working together brings. Our staff will continue to plan together and our pupils enjoy educational visits and other opportunities together, in exactly the same way as before.

If you have any comments you would like to make, or if you would like to ask any questions that aren't answered here, then please email them to [consultation@hartelwickfederation.org.uk](mailto:consultation@hartelwickfederation.org.uk) by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Yours sincerely



Mrs. J. Heaton

Executive Headteacher