



NABURN C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Naburn, York  
YO19 4PP  
Tel: 01904 551075  
Fax: 01904 633287  
E-mail: [naburn.primary@york.gov.uk](mailto:naburn.primary@york.gov.uk)  
[www.naburnschool.com](http://www.naburnschool.com)  
Twitter: @naburn\_primary

Headteacher: Mrs B Christison

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Consultation on conversion to Academy status for Naburn Church of England Primary School and the establishment of a South York Multi-Academy Trust**

In our annual governors' report to parents in July we informed you that we had been in discussions with the South York schools cluster about conversion to academy status and we promised to update you this term on the progress of these discussions.

Following these discussions, we are now launching a formal consultation with parents on our plans for academy conversion. These plans will involve Naburn Church of England Primary School converting to academy status and entering into a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) with Fulford School and its other feeder schools in the existing South York Schools Partnership. The establishment of this MAT will formalise and build upon a working relationship which has flourished for over 20 years.

Naburn Church of England Primary School is an excellent, highly successful school, serving its young people, families and community very well. This success is supported by a strong partnership with local primary schools and local services. We want to make this partnership as strong as possible and to develop even closer collaboration to share our services and expertise. We believe this is the best way to strengthen our schools and to ensure they thrive in the difficult and uncertain times ahead. To do this we believe setting up a South York Schools Multi-Academy Trust is the best way forward.

The following information sets out the national and local context and gives details of MAT operation, in addition to outlining the specific benefits the establishment of a MAT will provide for our school and our partners. The schools involved in this consultation are – Naburn CE Primary, Fulford, Archbishop of York CE Junior School, Dunnington CE Primary, Elvington CE Primary, Escrick CE Primary, Lord Deramore's Primary, St Oswald's CE Primary and Wheldrake CE Primary.

Local Authorities are losing their role in school improvement and there has been a sharp decline in the support available for schools through the Local Authority. This context, in addition to the rapid pace of educational reform and pressures on school funding, creates both a need and an opportunity for schools to work together to provide school to school support and to facilitate school improvement. Establishing a MAT would provide a clear structure and mechanism for our schools to work together and to build upon our existing strengths. In light of the threats and opportunities we face, both within a national and local context, we feel that academy conversion is the most appropriate course of action to advance and protect the interests of our whole school community.

The establishment of a MAT will enable us to:

- Create a real family of schools and harness the strength of acting together to improve your child's transition from primary to secondary school
- Ensure that the curriculum is co-ordinated and linked throughout your child's education
- Provide effective school to school support within the group by sharing best practice
- Empower our school leadership to focus more on teaching and learning and on whole school improvement by reducing the administrative burden on individual schools on issues such as policy development and procurement
- Pool resources, services and support to ensure the best outcomes for all in our community
- Improve recruitment, retention, professional training and development as well as succession planning
- Achieve economies of scale and improve value for money
- Control our own destiny within a changing school system by choosing to join our preferred academy trust

The information in this letter and the FAQ sheet provide a summary of the important points relating to our proposed academy conversion. We would very much like to hear your views. You can respond by completing and returning the reply form in this document, by attending the consultation meeting or by emailing your response to [naburn.primary@york.gov.uk](mailto:naburn.primary@york.gov.uk) The consultation meeting will be held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm. There will also be a 'drop-in' session from 2-3pm on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November. Any information or powerpoints used at this event will be shared on our website for those who are unable to attend. Please note the closing date for submissions is 3.30pm on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November.

Feedback from the consultation will be reviewed by the Full Governing Body in December when a decision will be taken on whether to proceed with the application for academy status. If this proposal is agreed, all schools seeking to apply to convert to academy status and to join the MAT will then work together to shape and agree the MAT structure and its operational arrangements. Fulford School will be in the first phase of the conversion with a small number of partner schools. The remaining schools seeking to join the MAT would then do so on a phased basis.

We believe this course of action offers an exciting opportunity for our school community and that it is one which will bring real benefits to all its members. Our support for this plan follows lengthy deliberation and considerable research. It reflects our long-standing desire to formalise and further embed the unique benefits of our partnership working in order to get the best outcomes for the young people in our care.

Yours faithfully,

Brenda Christison,  
Headteacher

Dave Moores,  
Chair of Governors

**Response Form – Academy Consultation**

Comments:

Please return to:

Naburn CE Primary School,  
Naburn  
York YO19 4PP  
(Please mark the envelope as “Academy Consultation”)

## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers - Academy Conversion

### What is an academy?

Academies are publicly funded schools that are not managed by a local authority. Their independence means that they have more flexibility in some areas of decision making than local authority (LA) maintained schools. They still have the same duty as local authority maintained schools to provide free education for local children and are subject to the same laws, regulations and codes when it comes to admissions, exclusions and SEN provision. Where several academies combine together to create a formal legal structure this is known as a multi-academy trust or MAT for short.

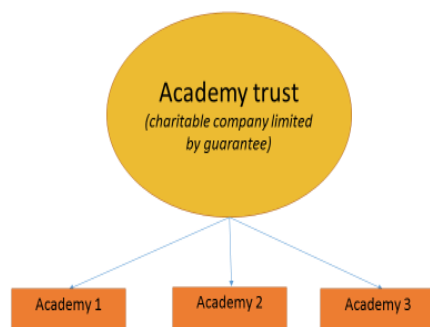
### Who would be involved in the MAT?

The membership of our MAT and the pace of its growth will be determined by decisions taken in individual schools relating to academy conversion. In addition to this, any school seeking to convert and to join the proposed MAT would need the agreement of the MAT board and of the Regional Schools Commissioner. At present Fulford is in discussion with a number of our feeder primary schools and schools within our existing South York Partnership in relation to potential MAT membership.

### What does a MAT look like?

The broad structure of a Multi- Academy Trust is shown underneath.

#### Academy trust: a visual representation



### How does the conversion process work?

Once a decision is taken to convert to academy status, the school must then go through a detailed application process with the eventual conversion being subject to the approval of the Regional Schools Commissioner.

### How would Community and Church schools work together in a MAT?

Schools which join the Trust would retain their original character with Church of England schools becoming Church of England academies while community schools would retain their own status. The religious aspects of Church of England school governance would not affect community schools within the Trust. The terms of the Trust would ensure that the distinctive character of each school is preserved while the benefits of working together are maximised.

**How would the Multi -Academy Learning Trust be run?**

The MAT would be a charitable company limited by guarantee with members who appoint the board of directors/governors/trustees who run the Trust. Each of the academies within the Trust would have its own local governing body. This would enable all academies to have the greatest possible autonomy whilst developing a collaborative framework. Each academy would retain its own head and local governing body. The experience and commitment of our schools' existing governors would be highly valued and as many as possible would transfer to the new structure.

**What would the relationship be between the MAT and the LA?**

Academies are not maintained by the LA, but our schools would continue to be part of the city-wide provision for the children of York. Our schools would be committed to preserving their partnership with the LA and other schools and academies across the city. We believe, however, that as the role of the LA changes and its capacity to support schools diminishes, our schools would benefit enormously from belonging to a MAT which would provide some services in-house and where resources could be procured and provided more cost efficiently. We need to maximise the funding that goes directly to benefiting children in the classroom.

**Who would the MAT be accountable to?**

Elements of academy performance would still be accountable to the LA. The academy would also be accountable to OFSTED, the DfE, the Educational Funding Agency and the Regional Schools Commissioner.

**What would be the timescale for conversion to a MAT?**

A decision on conversion will be taken this academic term. Approval at this stage would start the application process. The length of the conversion process is largely determined by the time taken to complete this and to gain approval from the Regional Schools Commissioner. Our aim would be to achieve the initial conversions to academy status and to establish the MAT by September 2017.

A small number of schools, including Fulford School, would take part in the initial conversion to form the MAT. MAT membership would then develop via a phased expansion over a five year period to include all partner schools seeking to join the MAT. Given all schools committing to join our MAT will be involved in discussions on its establishment and operation, those not joining until a later date will still very much join it as equal stakeholders.

**What would happen to the admission arrangements for our schools?**

The academy trust would become the admissions authority for admissions purposes and would be responsible for determining the admissions policy. Our schools would, however, continue to be inclusive and to serve their local communities by admitting local children on the same basis as they do now.

**What would happen to our funding and assets?**

Academy funding is now calculated on a broad like-for-like basis with LA schools. In the light of this, our academies would have a similar budget compared to our current funding.

**Would the schools need to change their name and uniform?**

We believe that schools joining any MAT we establish should retain the essence of what makes them unique. We would plan to retain our names or change these as little as possible. The uniform for individual schools would be unchanged.

**Would the terms and conditions of employment for staff change?**

The academy trust would be the employer of staff. This includes not just those who work "across the trust" but also the staff working in the individual academies. Staff contracts would automatically transfer from the local authority/maintained school governing body to the academy trust at conversion under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE). As part of TUPE arrangements, all staff are entitled to transfer to the Trust under the same employment terms and conditions. Once the academies have been established, any changes to terms and conditions would be subject to consultation with staff and Trade Unions as they are now.

**Would the Academy offer the same curriculum as the current school?** We will, as we do now, continue to provide a broad, balanced, creative and enriching curriculum that meets the needs of all our students and fulfils all statutory requirements.

**Would our Headteachers remain with the Academies?** The values, skills, experience and commitment of our Headteachers would continue to be utilised in their individual schools. The Trust would, however, provide a way of strengthening the leadership of our schools by sharing expertise and freeing our senior leaders to focus on teaching and learning.