

BERKHAMSTED EDUCATIONAL TRUST

A PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A NEW MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

June 2017



Berkhamsted Educational Trust

The Proposal

The Governing Bodies of the five schools listed alphabetically below, have been investigating the benefits of forming a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) together, given the wider Government policy on education and the running of schools.

- Ashlyns School
- Bridgewater Primary School
- Greenway Primary & Nursery School
- Swing Gate Infant School & Nursery
- Westfield Primary School & Nursery

Background

The proposed Berkhamsted Educational Trust would be an exciting new partnership that would enable schools to take control of their own destiny. This new partnership would strengthen and sustain the quality of education each school is able to offer our children and young people through even closer educational collaboration between member schools. Additionally, it would provide the opportunity for member schools to work and fund projects collaboratively as well as enabling business opportunities for more cost effective services.

Each school is already successful in its own right, playing an important role within the communities they serve, with a distinctive ethos and individual approach. However, in an increasingly challenging educational landscape the Governing Bodies recognise that a fresh approach is needed to maintain and improve school performance.

The proposed multi academy trust would be established in November 2017 by the five schools, which would all convert to academy status.

The proposed MAT would continue to work collaboratively with the church schools in Berkhamsted.

The Benefits

The Berkhamsted Educational Trust would provide a range of important benefits for its member schools through greater collaboration and joint working between Headteachers, senior leaders, staff and governors, including;

- Protecting and developing each school's unique ethos, values and culture,
- Providing a 3 to 19 years educational experience,
- Sharing and developing excellent practice in teaching and learning,
- Broadening and deepening the curriculum offered by each school,
- Increasing the range of learning and enrichment activities for our children and young people,
- Enhancing the provision for children and young people with additional needs,
- Helping retain and attract the most capable staff,
- Enhancing the professional development of teaching and support staff,
- Increasing mutual accountability, challenge and support for Governors and Headteachers,
- Securing financial efficiencies through coordinated resource planning and joint commissioning of services, and
- Responding to changes in Government policy proactively and efficiently.

Key information about the member schools

	Ashlyns School	Bridgewater Primary School	Greenway Primary & Nursery School	Swing Gate Infant School & Nursery	Westfield Primary School & Nursery
<i>Age Range</i>	11-18 years	4-11 years	3-11 years	3-7 years	3-11 years
<i>No. of students</i>	1249	282	381	194	255
<i>Headteacher</i>	Mr James Shapland	Ms Caren Doodson	Mrs Katharine Ellwood	Mrs Francesca Gallagher	Mrs Suzanne Stace
<i>Most recent Ofsted report</i>	Sept 2014 Good	Nov 2016 Good	Nov 2011 Outstanding	Feb 2017 Good	March 2010 Outstanding

Trust Vision and Values

The vision for the Berkhamsted Educational Trust is summarised below:

- To establish a Trust which provides a sustainable and continuously improving educational experience for our children and young people from the age of three to nineteen
- To embrace the changing educational and political landscape as we grow for the benefit of the children and young people in our care
- To become nationally recognised as a high performing educational Trust.

Our Trust would be dedicated to providing a well- rounded education for the whole child/young person. The following aims underpin our work:

- To ensure that the experiential side of school life is a priority in our children's/young people's education. We believe this is fundamental in forming well-rounded young adults prepared for life
- To ensure that our children's/young people's academic achievement is excellent
- To ensure that all of our children/young people are looked after to exceptional levels during their educational experience. This is built on the idea that '*the child's needs come first*' and is central to the Trust's pastoral care system.

Trust governance, leadership and management

The Trust would be governed by a single board of trustees including existing governors from the founding schools. The trustees would have the range of important knowledge, skills and expertise needed to oversee an organisation of 2300+ students, 300+ staff and over £10m of public funding. The trustees would not be representing individual schools. A Chair of Trustees would be appointed.

Each school would continue to have a Local Governing Body, with representation for parents, staff and the wider school community as now. Governors and Headteachers would continue to decide how their school is run with the vast majority of decisions still made locally.

The Trust would have overall accountability to the Department for Education (DfE) but each school would be subject to individual Ofsted inspection.

Each Headteacher would continue to be responsible for running their school but would form a leadership group responsible for developing and implementing trust plans for school-to-school support and collaboration. Initially, one of the Headteachers would be appointed as CEO (a DfE requirement) with specific responsibility for overseeing the trust's legal, financial, governance and HR functions. Unlike some trusts the CEO would not be an executive Headteacher.

The funding would still be calculated and allocated on a school-by-school basis. The schools would contribute to the central costs of running the Trust, which would be kept as low as feasible. The Trust's finances would be subject to close scrutiny by the DfE's Education Funding Agency and independently audited accounts would be published. The Trust would be the employer of all staff in all schools.

School management and operation

In each school, students would continue to be taught by the same teachers in the same classrooms, wearing the same uniform. Over time students might notice changes in the way they learn and would be able to access a wider range of opportunities, as the schools develop Trust-wide initiatives to enhance teaching, learning and the curriculum.

The names and identities of the school would remain the same and schools would retain control over the admissions policies and processes, which must be compliant with the national admissions code.

All staff would continue to work in their current schools with the same responsibilities and terms and conditions as now. There would be opportunities for some staff to take on wider responsibilities across schools to enable the Trust to function effectively and efficiently. Staff would also have access to enhanced professional development. There are no plans to make any posts redundant as a result of the Trust being established.

Next steps

The aim is for the Berkhamsted Educational Trust to be established on November 1st 2017.

The first step is for each of the five founding schools to consult with their school communities on the proposal. This coordinated consultation will run from Monday, June 19th until Friday, July 14th and will include meetings when parents, carers and staff from all the schools will be able to hear more about the proposal and ask questions.

Meeting Venue	Audience	Time & Date
Ashlyns School, Chesham Road, Berkhamsted	Staff	4.00pm Monday, July 3 rd
Ashlyns School, Chesham Road, Berkhamsted	Parents & carers	7:30pm Monday, July 3 rd

On July 17th, the Governing Bodies of the five schools will then consider a report on the consultation and decide whether to proceed with the proposal. Then, subject to completion of legal tasks such as completing the agreements with the Secretary of State, the Trust would be established and the schools would convert on November 1st 2017. The transition would be carefully managed to ensure day-to-day running of the schools is not affected.

Parents, carers, staff, students and the wider community of each school would be kept fully informed as the Trust structures are developed.