

Questions from the Academy Meeting on Monday 31 November 2016

Q: What is a MAT?

A: A MAT is a multi-academy trust. All academies in a multi-academy trust are governed by a single trust and a single board of trustees but they maintain their own identities.

Q: Why can we not stand still?

A: With the demise of the local authority, many maintained schools are looking at becoming part of a multi-academy trust.

Q: Why is there only one option?

A: Being a church school, we are unable to join other non-faith maintained schools as the diocese owns the land and they would not give it up. The diocese is also not keen on church schools joining together with one school taking the lead. This is because the lead school may favour its own school matters or if the lead has a dynamic head teacher and this head teacher moves on, it may leave the schools in the MAT vulnerable. The school could join a co-operative as an associate member, but it would not have any decision-making rights. Remaining on our own or converting to a single academy trust (SAT) would make us financially vulnerable. Therefore the diocesan MAT where all schools are equal (a flat MAT) would be the only viable option.

Q: Why do we need to move now?

A: We do not need to rush, but joining a MAT would make the school's position stronger and more secure.

Q: How many schools would the MAT need to be viable?

A: A minimum of 8 schools.

Q: Would the MAT choose the 8 schools?

A: No, if 13 schools wanted to join, then they could.

Q: Has thought been given to ensure that the MAT is sustainable if it grows larger?

A: Much thought has been given to this which is why Southwark has taken its time in forming the MAT. A chief operations officer has been appointed and will be in post from January 2017.

Q: How many schools have expressed an interest in the Southwark MAT and are they primary or secondary?

A: There have been 13 schools express an interest to date, 11 are primary and 2 are secondary. They are in Richmond, Croydon, Southwark and Lambeth. All are currently graded Good or Outstanding by OFSTED.

Q: What happens if a school in the MAT is judged as Requiring Improvement by OFSTED?

A: The MAT would support the school. However, this would not affect the budgets of the other schools in the MAT.

Q: Would staff need to re-apply for their jobs?

A: No, all posts will be transferred as they are.

Q: Will staff pay and conditions change?

A: No, there is no desire to alienate staff or to set schools against each other.

Q: Will staff be expected to move schools?

A: No, staff would only support another school on a temporary basis after discussion and negotiation with the school's head teacher and the member of staff concerned.

Q: How are the staff feeling?

A: After the initial meeting with staff, there was a general feeling of goodwill and positiveness.

Q: What are the disadvantages?

A: There are few as far as we can see.

Q: Will the MAT change the catchment area, term times, uniform etc.?

A: No. It would want all schools to maintain their autonomy in these areas.

Q: Will the school receive more funding being an academy?

A: It will not necessarily receive more money but it should not receive less.

Q: Is it a business?

A: The MAT is a trust but it is Not for Profit and has charitable status.

Q: Would the funds raised by the PTA have to be shared with other schools?

A: No.

Q: Will there be a change in the curriculum?

A: No. The diocesan MAT intends to follow the new primary curriculum as All Saints currently does.

Q: Will the school have to use all the policies from Southwark?

A: The school already uses many model policies from the diocese; they would continue to be free to alter them where the Local Governing Body (LGB) thought it were appropriate.

Q: What areas of expertise will the diocese offer?

A: It will offer expertise in the teaching of RE and Collective Worship, Admissions and Governance, School Improvement, Buildings, Finance and Personnel.

Q: Could the school leave the MAT?

A: This would not be easy. If the school was unhappy, it could make representation to the Regional Schools Commissioner but they may only be moved to another Diocesan MAT.

Q: Would the school be forced to change its ethos?

A: Definitely not.

Q: What would the local governing body look like?

A: It will remain the same as its current structure with parent, staff and foundation governors.

Q: When will All Saints Carshalton be joining?

A: The governing body have not formally made a decision. If it does, it would not be before September 2017, but might be after.

Q: Who makes the decision to join?

A: This rests with the Governing Body.

Q: What happens next?

A: The Full Governing Body meets on Thursday 24 November and intends to vote at this meeting on whether to apply to the DFE for Academy status. If they vote in favour, they would apply to the DFE and there would then be risk assessments drawn up by both the DFE and SDBE before the application is accepted by the DFE and then the diocese.