



Listed below are questions that were sent into the office by parents and members of staff. They are in no particular order and have been copied exactly as sent in:

What is happening about the proposition to convert to church school status?

When we consulted on this proposition approximately 18 months ago, we received very positive feedback from parents. Most parents felt we already had strong links with the community and church so the proposal would have formalised this. Had the Diocese moved promptly at that point, we could well be a Church School by now. However, for various reasons, the Diocese did not move promptly and we tired of waiting. We have not completely ruled this out for the future but, at the present moment, this is not the right path for us.

One of our greatest concerns in terms of becoming a Church School was the diocesan ability to provide rigorous professional development for staff and school improvement and monitoring for the school as a whole.

How are schools currently funded and how does this change with the formation on of a MAT?

All schools in England receive a delegated budget. This is comprised of monies from the Department for Education. The DfE pays each Local Authority an amount of money equal to x amount multiplied by its number of schools. The LA will then top slice a portion of this money to pay for its services before allocating each school its annual budget.

However, an Academy receives its money directly from the DfE, therefore there is no top slice removed.

In a Multi-Academy Trust, the money is received by the directors of the Academy Trust who then distribute it across the MAT. These directors have an obligation to act in the best interests of the MAT and must have due regard to the funding needs and allocations of each individual academy within the MAT.

You have referred to a decline in the amount and type of support given by the LA. Is this just financial? How does a MAT provide non-financial support?

We have noticed a significant decline in the amount and type of support offered us by the LA. Prior to our OFSTED inspection, we were allocated support from a School Improvement Advisor who visited us fortnightly. We also had regular support from Learning and Teaching Advisors. However, almost as soon as we received our "Good" grading this stopped as the Local Authority channelled its support into struggling schools.

When Babcock Prime took over the School Improvement arm of the Local Authority, a number of Advisors left its employment. This has even further reduced the available support. Under the new LA guidelines, we would be entitled to a half day visit from a School Improvement Advisor annually.

This decline is duplicated in many of the services provided by the LA (ie Babcock). Over recent months, we have noticed that many of the individuals we have previously dealt with in departments such as SEN Services or Property Services are leaving the LA.



In a Multi-Academy Trust, the schools would be able to band together to provide economies of scale. For example, the schools could pool together to purchase the services of an Educational Psychologist or a Chartered Surveyor. The schools could also negotiate better purchasing costs for photocopiers or school supplies if necessary. Additionally, the schools could collaborate on Professional Development opportunities, for example providing training to all the schools that otherwise would have been too expensive for a single school.

What would the relationship be between feeder schools and high school?

From its outset, this MAT was proposed as one in which all of the schools had equal footing. The schools will work together in a spirit of equality and collaboration and not school will have a greater voice in decision making.

The High School has a commitment to ensuring that all of the pupils in its feeder schools will receive places. This will be strengthened by the formation of a MAT.

Would there be the opportunity for shared facilities (music at Hanley for example)

This pooling of resources (both physical and human) is one of the greatest attractions of this proposed MAT. There will be an opportunity to work together, to share facilities as well as staff expertise.

What control will be passed to the link secondary school (Hanley) and how much freedom/independence with regards to curriculum, etc, will be lost?

This idea is completely contrary to the principles and vision of the MAT. The Secondary School will not assume "control" of any aspect of the other schools. Each school will retain its own individual ethos and nature and will continue to have complete freedom in determining its curriculum and activities.

How will the curriculum be determined?

Each school will continue to determine its own individual curriculum. As academies, the schools will no longer be "required" to follow the National Curriculum but are "required to have a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life." Regardless of whether we become part of a MAT or not, we will continue our commitment to providing an engaging and balanced curriculum for our pupils, which sets them up as life-long learners.

How will the school be funded with no Local authority?

See above

How will the school ensure the "best" teachers if they are determining salaries as, with other schools involved, it will become competitive which isn't what brings the best for the children's education.

For several years now, the school pay policy (much like schools across the country) has dictated that schools can determine the starting salaries of any teachers it employs. So, for example, if we employ a new teacher, we can decide to start them on a lower salary than they were currently making in another school, just as we can decide to pay them on a higher rate. Additionally, under new national pay guidelines, progression up the pay scale for staff is based upon performance in the classroom and progress of pupils.



However, at KPS, we have a strong commitment to ensuring we employ the best members of staff – teachers and teaching assistants - who share our focus on an engaging, children-centred education and who believe in our school vision. This commitment will not change if we become part of a MAT.

Further, because of the autonomy that each school will retain under the MAT , we will continue to remain responsible for appointing school staff and will, therefore, continue to employ “the best”. Only the head teacher of each school in the MAT is appointed by the Board of Trustees.

How will this affect Kempsey school staff? Do pay and conditions remain the same? Who will KPS staff be responsible to? What about pensions?

All staff will be transferred over to the MAT under TUPE – the “Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations” of 2006. These rules protect employees’ rights when the organisation they work for transfers to a new employer (i.e. the school moving from WCC to academy status).

Further, built into the vision of the MAT is a commitment to maintaining the current staffing structures and protecting all school staff.

How will school improvement be monitored?

There will be opportunities among the schools to share good practice in teaching and learning. Further, the leadership teams in each school will be able to work together in a spirit of collegiality to share monitoring activities.

Some of the members of the MAT’s Board of Directors will have experience in School Improvement.

Additionally, each school individually, or working together with others in the MAT, will be able to purchase the services of external School Improvement Advisors. Gill Ellis, who worked closely with us here at KPS on our School Improvement journey towards our OFSTED inspection, has resigned from the Local Authority and will be working with us on ongoing monitoring and school improvement. Given the vastly reduced numbers at Babcock now, most schools in Worcestershire, whether LA controlled or academies are having to “buy in” their own school improvement advisors and support at the moment.

Will Mrs Baynes be moved or not be around as much?

Absolutely not. Mrs Baynes continues to have KPS as her Number 1 priority. This will not change under the MAT structure. However, the MAT could possibly offer senior staff who are eager for additionally challenges, the opportunity to extend their leadership skills in other schools (i.e. a Deputy seconded for a time to another school as Acting Head in a Head’s absence)

Will SEN services (i.e. Ed Psych, Learning behaviour advisors) still be available?

Again, regardless of whether we, at KPS, become an academy or not, we will have to “buy in” these SEN services. The benefit of a MAT is the potential for the schools to band together and, thereby, reduce costs.

Where does the funding come from (i.e. direct from the DfE or from Hanley Castle High)?

The funding will come directly from the DfE to the MAT Board of Directors and then distributed across the schools. Hanley Castle High School will not “control” the money.

**What is the time scale for this process?**

Two of the schools in the MAT are Church of England Schools and must, therefore, receive "permission" from the Diocesan Board of Education to join this MAT. They are currently in negotiations with the Board of Education. Once given, the remainder of the "setting up" of the MAT is fairly straight-forward and should, hopefully, be accomplished in a few months.

Will the school day and terms change?

There are no plans to make any such changes at this point. The MAT has a commitment to maintaining continuity among the schools in the MAT so that parents with children in different schools are not inconvenienced (i.e. same term dates).

Would there still be OFSTED inspection?

Sadly, academies are not exempt from Ofsted inspections. Indeed, converting to an academy could potentially bring forward an OFSTED inspection. In its "Policy statement for inspecting new schools and schools that undergo a change in status" (Ofsted, 2nd December 2015), Ofsted says that most academies will be inspected within the first three years of opening. For schools such as KPS, which were deemed "Good" at our last inspection, this will be a full Section 5 inspection.

However, on a positive note, such an inspection would be an opportunity for us to demonstrate that we truly are an "Outstanding" school!