

# The future development of the school

Multi-Academy Trust consultation: 10<sup>th</sup> October to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016

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## We want to hear your views

Further to our previous correspondence, the Academy's Board of Governors has taken a decision to move to a formal consultation on the possibility of Bricknell joining Sirius Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Our primary objective is to secure the ongoing success of Bricknell as a great school for all our children. We want to work with like-minded schools who share our vision and ethos. We are committed to engaging in a consultation with all relevant parties, taking into account the views of parents, carers, staff and the local community. Please take the time to get involved so that Academy can make a fully informed decision.

### **The best provision for our children**

We all want the very best for our children to prepare them for a successful future. Our aim is to maintain all the good and great things that we do, improve where necessary and continue to strive for excellence. This has been and always will be our priority.

### **Shaping our future and securing our aims**

The education landscape is evolving and changing at a rapid rate. Standalone academies and Umbrella Trusts (such as the ICA Partnership where Bricknell is currently a member) are no longer being approved and there is a clear drive from the Government, the Department for Education and the Regional Schools Commissioners that schools should work in the more formal partnership of a Multi-Academy Trust. As an outward facing and proactive school, we want to be in control of shaping our future. We want to ensure our core values, our vision and our ethos thrives and flourishes in this changing world. We feel that this will be best achieved through structured collaboration and partnerships in the form of a MAT.

### **Mutual support and challenge**

We want our staff to have the best opportunities to continue developing their skills and expertise. Working with partner schools within the MAT, we feel we would be better able to support and challenge each other. This will impact directly on securing the high quality of learning that we aim to provide for all children. As well as supporting other schools, we know that we also learn from them too.

### **Making the final decision**

The final decision will be made by the Board of Governors following this consultation. It is really important that we hear and understand the views of parents and other stakeholders to make an informed decision. For dates of meetings and how to get involved, please see the last page.

# FAQs about Academies and Multi Academy Trusts

## What is a Multi-Academy Trust?

In a Multi-Academy Trust, schools work together as a group of schools. The amount of governance (decision-making) kept at a local level varies according to the trust. In Sirius MAT, each school will retain their own governing bodies and headteachers, so that there would be autonomy allowing for the individual characteristics and ethos of each school to continue.

## Are all multi-academy trusts the same?

No. They vary in format and size. Some are very close in the same geographical region; some are far apart across a wide area. Some contain a small number of schools, including primary and secondary and some are very large.

## Will you be asked to support other schools?

We are proud that we already work in partnership with other schools, supporting where we can; we would continue to do this. Whilst supporting others we know that we also develop ourselves.

## What are the financial benefits?

There are no direct financial benefits to joining a MAT although there should be opportunities for efficiency savings by sharing some core services. As we face times of austerity, any opportunity for additional funding cannot be ignored.

## Are there any rules about pupil admissions for academies?

Yes. Academies have to follow the law for school admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as if they were a maintained school.

## Who deals with complaints when schools have become academies?

Parents or carers who have a complaint concerning their child's academy would contact the headteacher directly, as they would normally do, in accordance with the academy's complaints policy. If a parent is not happy with the response, they would then contact the MAT. If the parent is not happy with the trust's response, they would contact the Education Funding Agency which represents the interests of the Department for Education.

## What would be the changes for my child?

It is very unlikely that you or your child would notice any difference in their day-to-day schooling. The ethos of the school and the values we hold dear would stay the same.

## As a result of any conversion, what will remain the same?

- There would be no changes to the distinct ethos and values of our school.
- The school would maintain the same admissions procedures. The Local Authority would still be asked to carry out the admissions arrangements for the academy.
- There would be no job losses as a result of the academisation process.
- There would be no changes to staff employment rights, pay or conditions of service.
- Both teaching and support staff would enjoy the same pension rights as now.

- Continuity of service in local government would be recognised for employees.
- Union representation would continue to be encouraged.
- There would be no changes to the current school uniform.
- There would be no changes to the availability of free school meals for children.
- There would be no detriment to the provision of our support for children with SEN/disabilities.

### **How do I find out more about MATs?**

You can find out more from the Department for Education at [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk). The page on academies is a good starting point.

## **FAQs about joining Sirius MAT**

### **How did the Governing Body reach this decision?**

The Board set up a Working Party to explore all the options for Bricknell to join a MAT. This working party has spent many months investigating thoroughly and meetings have been held with local academies or MATs and heads in standalone schools.

During this process, the Board have come to see the advantages that come from converting to become part of a MAT and the benefits of working together with a group of schools to improve teaching and learning. Each local MAT has been thoroughly researched.

At a special meeting held in May, the Board decided to start the process of joining a MAT and move to a period of consultation to explore the possibility of joining Sirius Multi Academy Trust. The Board agreed that this MAT would have the most positive impact on Bricknell and being involved in this Trust will enable the school to improve quality of teaching and learning, putting children first and ensuring our values, ethos and core purpose thrive and flourish.

### **Which schools are involved in Sirius MAT?**

The MAT currently consists of two secondary schools; Sirius Academy West and Sirius Academy North. Both schools are Good or Outstanding. They share the same vision to put children first and ensure every child succeeds as a result of high quality teaching and learning. The sharing of vision and values and a deep commitment to working together for the benefit of the children is the most important thing and not the geographical area of these schools.

Each school's own ethos and character will be preserved and it is part of the vision for the future development of the Sirius MAT. It is expected that every MAT supports a school that needs to improve and it is likely that Sirius MAT will do this in the future.

### **There are other local MATs in Hull, some involving local primary and secondary schools. Why are we not joining one of them?**

The Working Party considered a range of options and met with representatives from other MATs or academies in the City. The ability to work together with a shared ethos and vision is absolutely crucial and the Board decided that joining Sirius MAT was by far the best option for our school. Sirius was completely aligned with Bricknell in a deep desire to put children first, work with

families, develop teaching and learning, improve training for staff and using resources to improve outcomes and raise aspirations for all children.

### **Only a few of our children currently move on to Sirius Secondary schools. Will this change?**

Joining a MAT has nothing to do with primary secondary transition. There are no plans to change the way catchment areas work in the city and the LA Admissions Policy is still the responsibility of the Local Authority. Parents and carers have always had the option to state a preference for any secondary school in Hull. Joining a MAT with a secondary school does not mean the children will have to or be able to go to that school. It will not mean that places will be made available for our children at Sirius. Nor will it change the LA Admissions Policy.

### **How will joining the Sirius MAT affect our relationships with local primary and secondary schools?**

Our commitment to working in partnership with our cluster schools and especially with our feeder secondary schools remains strong and will continue as it always has. We already have a strong partnership with Kelvin Hall and Newland School for Girls and we will continue to involve our children in visits, activities and events that enable them to work with these schools. Local primary Headteachers will continue to meet together regularly. Teachers meet together to look at children's work and compare how they mark and give feedback. All of this will continue as it has done in the past.

Our future commitment to being a part of the Sirius MAT will be based on a shared vision for teaching and learning and a shared commitment to families and their needs. This makes us strong together and provides a solid foundation on which to improve our schools.

### **Will Bricknell have to change its ethos?**

Not at all. Part of the values of the Sirius Trust ensures that each individual school's ethos and unique character will be preserved. No school will have to change its designation or ethos. The Trust will ensure each school is respected and valued for what it is and this is one of the key values we share.

### **Would teaching standards change?**

Joining a MAT would support the continued training and development of our staff, and enable us to provide and extend the curricular and extra-curricular activities that are currently enjoyed by our children. Bricknell would still be inspected by Ofsted. We expect that the support and challenge that comes from being a part of a MAT will continue to raise the quality of teaching and learning at Bricknell and help us on our journey to maintain our Outstanding school status. We want to learn from other schools in the MAT and we want to support these schools by working together.

### **Will this mean the Headteacher will have less leadership in our school, or staff will be sent to work in other schools in the MAT?**

The Headteacher / Head of School in each school involved in the MAT will continue to lead their schools. It is a part of the vision for this MAT that schools run themselves and continue to be led and managed by their own Headteacher or Head of School.

Staff will continue to be based in their schools and will not have contracts that mean they will be moved from one school to another in the MAT. However, there will be opportunities to work

collaboratively across the MAT, with great benefits to staff in terms of their professional development.

### **Will the school change its name, uniform or term dates?**

There will be no changes to practical things like this.

### **Who will be in charge of the finances and policies once we join a MAT?**

Every MAT is a charitable Trust with a clear leadership structure. A Trust Board (or Board of Directors) will oversee the leadership of the MAT and this board will contain representatives from the schools in the MAT. There will be some savings and efficiencies resulting from a sharing of finance, policies and HR for example, but each school will continue to have its own budget and make financial decisions within a delegated budget.

Local Governing Bodies will continue to be responsible for the leadership of each individual school and Headteachers will continue to lead day by day in their schools. In Sirius MAT, all the Headteachers meet together each half term to share in this leadership and ensure each school is both challenged and supported to improve. The Sirius Board will hold all schools to account for progress and will monitor to ensure each school is Good or Outstanding.

*Link to Sirius website [www.sirius-academy.org.uk](http://www.sirius-academy.org.uk) for more information*

## Consultation Meeting Dates

Consultation events for Bricknell parents and carers will take place as detailed below. In addition, we will be consulting staff, prospective parents and our local community.

Please check our website, [www.bricknellschool.co.uk](http://www.bricknellschool.co.uk) for latest updates.

Date	Event
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> October 3.30-5.00pm	Informal drop-in sessions with Governors School Library
Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> October 5.00-7.00	Informal drop-in sessions with Governors School Library

Your views are welcome and can be sent to the Chair of Governors either via our school reception in an envelope marked; *Consultation, FAO Michele Colthup* or by email to [admin@bricknell.hull.sch.uk](mailto:admin@bricknell.hull.sch.uk) marked for the attention of Michele Colthup.

**Consultation closes on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016**