



Broomfields Junior School and Meadowside Community Primary School Consultation on joining TCAT

8 May 2019 - 14 June 2019



INTRODUCTION

Broomfields and Meadowside Consultation Document

8 May 2019 - 14 June 2019

This consultation paper has been written on behalf of the headteachers and chairs of governors of:
Broomfield Junior School and Meadowside Primary School.

It is endorsed by the Chair of the Trustees of the Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT) and the headteachers and principals of the current TCAT academies:

- Beamont Collegiate Academy
- Bridgewater High School
- Great Sankey Primary School
- Padgate Academy
- Penketh High School
- Penketh South Primary School
- Priestley Sixth Form College
- Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School

The purpose is to advise you that we wish to consult formally with parents, carers, staff and the wider community on the proposal that Broomfields Junior School and Meadowside Primary School join TCAT.

The governing bodies of the schools welcome receipt of any comments via the methods described in Section 1 by midday on Friday 14 June 2019.

Thank you in advance for your support.





SECTION 1

1.1 What is the TCAT consultation?

After careful consideration, due diligence and with the best interest of each school's community in mind, the respective governing bodies approved a recommendation that they apply to become an academy and join TCAT.

The governing bodies and trustees of TCAT have agreed to embark on a formal period of consultation as the due diligence period continues.

We are seeking your views regarding the decision to:
Convert to academy status and simultaneously join TCAT.

A joint consultation event will be held during this process.

1.2 The Consultation Process

Each governing body is seeking the views of:
Parents and carers
Staff and their associated union representatives
Pupils
Partner schools
The local community
Other interested parties

You can find out more about TCAT on its website
www.tcat.uk.com

1.3 How you can contribute your views

The consultation period will run from 8 May to 14 June 2019.
We hope this will give everyone sufficient time to consider all of the issues and benefits associated with the conversion.

You can express your views via any of the following methods:

- Email: info@tcat.com
- Letters marked "Private and Confidential - TCAT Consultation" and addressed to the Chair of Governors c/o Clerk to the governing body of each individual school (see Appendix 1)
- Staff Consultation meetings that will be held in both schools
- Open stakeholder events: Meadowside Primary School, 6pm

Monday 20 May and Broomfields Junior School, 6pm
Monday 13 May. You may attend either or both events if you wish.

In addition pupils will also be consulted throughout this period.

Once comments from the consultation have been considered the governing bodies will decide whether to or not to ratify the proposal to join TCAT.

The outcomes and response to the consultation will be published on the TCAT website.

SECTION 2 – KEY ISSUES

2.1 Background and Rationale

TCAT was formed in May 2017 when a group of primary and secondary schools, together with Priestley College chose to respond positively to the Government's white paper Educational Excellence Everywhere, which recognised that multi academy trusts are able, in a more formal structure to bring together leadership, autonomy, funding and accountability across a group of academies.

The TCAT vision is that from early years through to adulthood, TCAT will provide exciting and inclusive opportunities for every single learner entrusted in its care. That all learners will receive an outstanding modern education, from motivated and talented staff, supported by innovative and collaborative partnerships.

TCAT will provide an environment where every learner is nurtured, challenged, and inspired to achieve the very best for themselves and their communities.

TCAT's mission is to inspire, challenge and support learners to excel in learning and in life.

Since its formation TCAT has quickly established a reputation for investing in school improvement whilst also delivering financial stability through enhanced business functions.





Over the past year leaders from both Broomfields and Meadowside have been working with TCAT leaders on a number of initiatives to help both parties get a better understanding of each other's priorities and working practices.

Broomfields and Meadowside are now ready to formalise this collaborative working and to benefit from becoming part of one of the most exciting and innovative multi academy trusts.

2.2 What is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)?

A multi academy trust (MAT) is where a group of academies is governed through a single set of members and trustees. TCAT came about when a group of schools and the sixth form college came together to set up a new trust with its governance decided collectively.

2.3 What are the benefits of joining TCAT?

The rapid growth of academies across England does not mean that this approach is right for every school or college. However, we believe that some of the advantages of becoming an academy and joining TCAT include:

- Being an "all-age" MAT, TCAT is able to draw upon the experience and expertise of the primary, secondary and sixth form sector
- Access to TCAT's School Improvement network of hubs that sees staff working closely together to drive up the quality of provision
- Benefitting from collaboration that will provide enhanced educational opportunities for all learners
- Ensuring, through collaborative working, improved transition between primary and secondary and secondary and sixth form, thereby improving outcomes for learners
- The strong track record of working collaboratively together as a group of academies within TCAT will further embed greater transparency and accountability

- Financial efficiencies will help to mitigate the financial challenges facing all schools and academies over the coming years
- Due to its size TCAT receives an annual School Condition Improvement allocation that enables it to prioritise capital investment in agreed health and safety and condition improvement across all of its academies
- Being part of a Warrington solution to the national and local academy agenda and being able to shape our own futures
- Managers are allowed to focus on teaching and learning due to TCAT's central business functions
- Benefitting from TCAT's close working partnerships with universities including Oxford and its OxNet programme, employers and professional networks
- Sharing in TCAT's continuous professional development programme

2.4 How is TCAT governed?

As a charitable company TCAT is required to abide by its memorandum and articles of association which is based on a model prepared by the Department of Education.

We are required to have at least two groups of people to govern the trust, these are members and trustees. We also have a Central Executive Team consisting of principals and headteachers and a Chief Executive Officer. TCAT has also chosen to retain Local Governing Bodies.

The Members Board

This group is responsible for appointing trustees and amendments to articles of association.

The Board of Trustees (Trust Board)

The Trust Board is the accountable body of the trust and





is responsible for the conduct of all the academies within it. The board must fulfil the following three core functions, as described in the Governance Handbook:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Hold the CEO and Central Executive Team to account for the educational performance of each academy, the learners and performance management of staff
- Oversee the financial performance of the trust and make sure its money is well spent

The Chief Executive Officer or CEO

The Academies Financial Handbook makes it clear that all academy trusts must have a CEO. This person is the trust's nominated "accounting officer", a role which includes personal responsibility for the financial resources under the trust's control.

Local Governing Bodies

Each academy within TCAT retains a Local Governing Body and we expect that the governors at Broomfields and Meadowside will continue in their current roles.

Under the current Memorandum of Understanding each Local Governing Body is delegated powers according to the principles of "earned autonomy".

This sets out that the powers delegated to a Local Governing Body and may not be varied without its consent unless the following occurs:

- an OFSTED inspection or performance suggests intervention is appropriate
- the Trustees have serious concerns about the finances of the academy
- the Trustees have serious concerns about the governance of an academy

- it is necessary to take action because of safeguarding concerns
- the academy has breached the terms of its funding agreement

2.5 How are the institutions in TCAT led?

Each academy in TCAT retains its own leadership teams led by a headteacher or principal. Leaders at Broomfields and Meadowside will still be accountable to their Local Governing Bodies, but also to the CEO and ultimately the TCAT Trust Board.

2.6 How do the institutions in TCAT work together?

It is the responsibility of the Central Executive Team to lead and be accountable for the operational and strategic direction of the Trust, the latter in conjunction with the Trust Board.

TCAT has established a number of quality hubs that sees teachers from all academies working together to develop best practice in teaching, learning and assessment. It has also established a number of working groups for business support functions such as finance, computer services and estates.

The Trust has appointed a Director of School Improvement who oversees all of the quality improvement activities of TCAT and it also has a Director of Finance and an Operations Lead.

Bridgewater High School is designated a Teaching School and Learning at TCAT has quickly established itself as a hub for professional development. From September 2019 a bespoke professional development centre will be based at the Bridgewater Upper School site. All staff within TCAT will be able to benefit from this facility and a broad range of professional development activities including joint working with Oxford University.

2.7 What is the process for the schools to join TCAT?

The governing bodies of Broomfields and Meadowside and the TCAT Trust Board have agreed to explore the benefits of the two schools joining TCAT and over the next few months. Information will be shared to allow a final informed decision is made on all counts.

A formal application will be submitted to the Regional Schools Commissioner and the regional Headteacher Board will be required to give formal approval. We expect this whole process to take between five and eight months.

2.8 What are the implications for pupils, parents and staff?

Each school will maintain its current character and will look, feel and be the same as it is now.

The headteacher and Local Governing Body will continue to run their school on a daily basis as they do now, and parents will continue to be represented on the governing body.

Pupils will benefit from even better resources as collaborative working will help strengthen the curriculum pathways. By working in partnership with businesses, universities and public service providers, TCAT is able to offer a more enriched delivery through a variety of pathways including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths), Performing Arts, Modern Foreign Languages, Medical and Digital.



Pupils will be able to join our TCAT parliament which represents pupils and students of all ages. This year the TCAT parliament has prioritised reducing use of plastics in all academies.

Pupils will also be able to take part in TCAT activities such as musical performances and choir and the Oxbridge activities aimed at Years 5 and 6.

TCAT schools also continue to work with other local schools and will continue to do so.

TCAT will become the employer of all staff who are currently employed by Broomfields and Meadowside. All staff will transfer to TCAT under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) regulations, retaining their current pay, conditions and pensions.

TCAT has a Joint Consultative and Negotiations Committee and a Joint Recognition Agreement with key teaching and business support trade unions.

The day-to-day responsibility for the curriculum, teaching and learning approaches, and classroom management will rest with the headteacher, not the multi academy trust.

2.9 Admissions

The name of the schools will not change and there will be no change to the current admissions policies. As previously mentioned, effective progression and support across key transition phases is central to our beliefs. Parents and pupils will be supported and effective guidance provided no matter what their next school or college of choice will be whether it is within TCAT or not.

2.10 What are the financial implications?

A master funding agreement with TCAT and supplemental funding agreements with each individual academy is signed by the Secretary of State for Education on behalf of the Education and Skills Funding Agency. TCAT will also receive funding to address school condition issues across the trust based on external reviews of priorities.

The overall budget for the trust is under the control of the Board of Trustees who will delegate individual budgets to the academies in line with the local funding formula for all Warrington schools. The trust will run a number of central activities that will require a central levy to be applied, for 2019/20 we expect this levy to be 3%. This will cover costs such as insurance, school improvement functions, finance roles and audit.

2.11 What are the implications for pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) or in a designated provision?

TCAT is committed to supporting all learners with EHC plans and maintaining Designated Provision where it exists and it will continue to work closely with the Local Authority in terms of meeting these needs.

SECTION 3

Frequently Asked Questions

We anticipate that there will be other questions raised during our consultation period. We seek to address a number of these below. We will also address others that are raised during the consultation process as part of any formal response.

3.1 Have the governing bodies already made the final decision to convert?

No. Governing bodies and the TCAT Trustees have spent a great deal of time discussing the benefits and risks associated with Broomfields and Meadowside converting to academies and joining TCAT. Having followed this process both governing bodies are of the opinion that joining TCAT is in the best interest of the schools and their communities. The final decision will only be made once the consultation and due diligence process has been concluded. The final decision will rest with the Regional Schools Commissioner.

3.2 What changes would pupils, and parents/carers see if the schools join TCAT?

In essence there would be very little that visibly changes as a result of joining TCAT. The schools would keep the same name and uniform and their unique values and ethos. By working together with other TCAT academies, pupils will benefit from a wider range of enrichment, cultural and faith opportunities as well as improvements in the curriculum provision.

3.3 Until what point can the governing bodies pull out of the conversion process?

Any governing body and/or the TCAT trustees can withdraw at any point up to the final signing of the Funding Agreement. Nothing is binding until it is signed.

3.4 If the schools choose to go ahead with joining TCAT, when would it happen?

If the governing bodies and TCAT Trust Board agree to go ahead we would expect the conversion to take place early in the autumn term.

3.5 What impact, if any, will the conversion have on current staff?

All qualifying staff would transfer from their current employer, Warrington Borough Council, to TCAT. Qualifying staff are generally those who have contracts of employment at either school on the date of conversion. The transfer will take place under TUPE regulations.

3.6 What does TUPE protect?

The TUPE Regulations provide that the current employer's rights and obligations arising from a contract of employment existing on the date of transfer shall, by reason of such transfer, be transferred to the new employer.

3.7 What freedoms do academies and MATs have over staff terms and conditions?

Academies have the freedom to move away from existing terms and conditions for any new staff that join the academy. However, TCAT does not see this as a priority.

3.8 What about pension schemes?

The teachers' pension scheme is unaffected by this change in status. Each school would take responsibility for support staff pensions and would have to fund any deficit in the pension fund via employer pension contributions. Each school would have to obtain an actuarial evaluation and pay off this deficit over a period of years. However this deficit would still need to be repaid even if a school does not become an academy so either way the budget would be affected.

3.9 Will other schools be able to join TCAT?

TCAT will continue to talk to schools who are local and whose ethos and values fit with ours, but any further growth would be limited.



APPENDIX 1

School and TCAT contacts

The Clerk to the Governors
Broomfields Junior School
Bridge Lane
Appleton
Warrington
WA4 3AH

The Clerk to the Governors
Meadowside Community Primary
School
Clough Avenue
Warrington
WA2 9PH

The CEO
The Challenge Academy Trust
C/O Priestley College
Loushers Lane
Warrington
WA4 6RD

APPENDIX 2

Useful additional links

1. Educational excellence everywhere

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508447/Educational_Excellence_Everywhere.pdf

A government white paper setting out the vision for schools in England

2. Governance in multi academy trusts

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/458632/governance-in-multi-academy-trusts_Sept2015.pdf

Guidance for governors and school leaders considering becoming part of a multi-academy trust.

3. Multi-academy trusts: good practice guidance and expectations for growth

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-academy-trusts-establishing-and-developing-your-trust>

Good practice guidance for academy trusts, including those establishing new trusts and existing trusts planning to grow.

TCAT Consultation Feedback

Consultation response: Becoming an Academy and joining The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT). The consultation is open from 8 May - 14 June inclusive. Open Events are 13 May Broomfields Junior School at 6pm and Meadowside Community Primary School 20 May at 6pm.

* Required

Your name *

School/College/Organisation (if applicable)

Address

Email address

Please indicate which group you represent *

Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
School or College	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funding or Government Agency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local resident	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other :	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you support the proposal? *

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional comments



Please continue on additional paper if needed





Meadowside Community Primary
& Nursery School

