

**CONVERSION TO ACADEMY STATUS AND
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST (MAT)
CONSULTATION DOCUMENT:**

**CHELLASTON INFANT SCHOOL
CHELLASTON JUNIOR SCHOOL
HOMEFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL
CHELLASTON ACADEMY**



Introduction

Over the last few years the education landscape has changed significantly. It is clear that academies are here to stay. The government has set a clear expectation that schools should collaborate and establish a system of support for other schools and wishes to create hubs of schools within a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) to deliver greater efficiencies and effectiveness. In the City of Derby only one secondary school remains under local Authority control, and a significant number of primary schools have either converted or are making the transition to convert. The governors have been considering our position very carefully and have concluded that it is important for us all to engage in this change.

In common with many other local primary and secondary schools, we have been exploring the potential advantages and routes towards academy status within a Multi Academy Trust. We have registered an interest with the Department for Education (DfE), met with existing academy trusts, attended expert seminars, visited schools that have converted to academy status, and sought information from numerous sources. Importantly, we have been holding regular discussions about the possibility of joining together to form a Multi Academy Trust with like-minded schools.

It is our intention to form the **Peak Multi Academy Trust**; a Trust of schools who share a common vision for the future between the following:

Chellaston Infant School
Chellaston Junior School
Homefields Primary School
Chellaston Academy

As a result of these discussions, the Governing Boards of each school have decided that we should consult formally on whether Chellaston Junior School, Chellaston Infants and Homefields Primary Schools should make an application to the DfE to convert to academy status and subsequently join with Chellaston Academy to form a MAT. Future plans may include other schools of any phase who may apply to join the established MAT.

Consultation Process

This consultation will be carried out with as many stakeholders, staff and parents as possible to provide the Governing Boards with a clear picture of the school community's views about this potential change.

Having registered an interest with the DfE (the primary and infant schools), we have been able to receive more information about the process to convert. The final decision on whether or not to convert to academy status lies entirely with the Governing Boards of each school. Please note that the formal consultation process will be held until **Friday 2nd March 2018** and we would encourage you to communicate your support, concerns and questions. All communications received by this date will be considered at a meeting of representative Governing Boards of each school. Please submit your views by email or in writing to the respective school address:

Chellaston Infant School, School Lane, Derby, DE73 6TA - admin@chellastoni.derby.sch.uk
Chellaston Junior School, Maple Drive, Chellaston, Derby, DE73 6PZ – admin@cjs.derby.sch.uk
Homefields Primary School, Parkway, Chellaston, Derby, DE73 5NY –office@homefields.derby.sch.uk
Chellaston Academy, Swarkestone Road, Chellaston, Derby, DE73 5UB –
ContactUs@chellaston.derby.sch.uk

Please mark letters or emails with ‘Academy Consultation’ so that they can be quickly forwarded.

In order to keep you informed, further details on academies is included below. We have also set out our thinking on why we believe that becoming an academy is right for our school and have answered some of the questions which might arise.

What is an Academy?

Academies are schools that are funded directly by the DfE. That means that they have greater freedoms and flexibilities as they are independent from their local authority (LA). Schools that are performing well can apply to become academies. Some of the advantages of moving to be an academy are:

- Freedom from LA control
- Flexibility in delivering the curriculum
- Greater control of budget as they are funded directly by the DfE. In particular academies are able to receive and spend money currently held back by the LA for management and services.

Each academy or group of schools within a multi-academy usually takes the legal form of a charitable Academy Trust which holds the ownership of the school’s site, and is the conduit for funding. The Trust does not ‘own’ the school and it cannot make a profit from the wider academy. The Academy Trust appoints the governing board of each school. Academy Trustees have a legal duty to act in the interests of the academy. The freedoms, rights and responsibilities of the Trust are set out in a funding agreement between the Trust and the Secretary of State. Academy Trusts are ‘exempt’ charities and are not required to register with the Charity Commission.

Why should the schools become an academy?

Derby City local authority has in the past provided many of the services used to benefit pupils and staff. However much of this support is no longer available which means a do-nothing option is simply not viable. As the speed of academy conversion gathers momentum across all sectors, we judge that if we do not take the lead on this issue we may well lose control over our future destiny, as the remaining number of schools under local authority control gets ever smaller.

The Governing Board of each school share a vision for Peak Multi Academy Trust, and the primary, infant and junior schools believe converting to academy status and then forming a MAT with Chellaston Academy will provide the greatest chance of allowing us to continue with our current values and ethos. We think that the Peak Multi Academy Trust could be an asset to all within the community, as our ethos

of being inclusive, whilst striving for the best for all, will contribute to a stronger education provision. Our aim is to provide a stimulating learning environment in which pupils are excited to learn and are given the confidence to achieve their potential. As a MAT we would continue to be committed to fostering strong links between home and school and actively encouraging parents to be closely involved in their child's education.

The advantages to our schools

We have concluded that the best chance of preserving the good practice in our schools is to embrace the opportunity of converting to an academy and forming a MAT with like-minded schools.

In addition to preserving as much of our independence as possible, there are a number of practical advantages:

As an academy we would continue to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, including English, Maths and Science. However, while using the National Curriculum as a guide, we would have greater flexibility to be creative, tailoring the curriculum and personalising the content to meet the needs of our pupils.

In forming an academy, schools receive a funding grant of £25,000 to support the conversion process and, if they form a Multi Academy Trust with at least two other Primary schools and a Secondary School, additional funding is made available to share with the partner schools.

Academies have control of all of their spending. This means we would be better able to ensure our focus and investment on teaching and learning, which is our core business. This increased autonomy would enable us to purchase services and equipment more effectively, ensuring good value for money.

Managing budgets becomes more transparent as the funding becomes aligned to an academic year rather than the financial year.

In contemplating the move to academy status, the vision for our schools is to work in partnership with other like-minded schools. We feel that we will be able to use the strengths of each to maximize the opportunities available to provide the best education for all pupils educated within the partnership and to develop and maintain the highest standards of teaching. We will strive to retain our current single-school ethos whilst recognising and respecting the individual qualities of each other school in the partnership.

Potential risks to becoming an academy

There will be significant additional leadership, administration and support time needed during the application and conversion process. After conversion there will be additional time and responsibilities on our financial and business management staff. However, we would be in a position to qualify for additional funding to cover such costs.

There will be costs involved in conversion, although these are likely to be covered by the conversion grant available to all schools going through the process.

There could, in theory, be potential additional financial liabilities e.g. we will become fully liable for the cost of maintaining the buildings. In practice, however, we are responsible for most of these costs now.

What would not change?

There will be very little that obviously changes in the day-to-day running of Chellaston Infant School, Chellaston Junior School, Homefields Primary School and Chellaston Academy. Keeping all that is special about our schools is one of the drivers for conversion. We hope that pupils and staff will not notice any differences – except perhaps having more resources to invest in teaching and learning and more expertise to draw upon from the MAT schools.

We do not intend to alter radically the basis of selection admissions and intend to remain welcoming and inclusive schools, however as an academy we will be able to set our own admissions policy from 2019.

Initially there will be no immediate or significant changes in our curriculum delivery. We would expect any changes that come about because of academy freedoms to be gradual and evolve over time to meet the needs of our pupils.

The Governing Boards of each school are committed to retaining the existing names of the schools: Chellaston Infant School, Chellaston Junior School, Homefields Primary School and Chellaston Academy, as prominently in the new MAT structure as is possible. In addition, there are no plans to alter the school uniform, or make major changes to the dates of school holidays and importantly, we expect continuity of Headteachers. There will still be a Governing Board for each school, with governors drawn, as now, from a range of backgrounds. There will still be an opportunity for elected parents to join the Governing Board. We do intend to ensure a high level of continuity in our governance during the conversion period.

Academies have a range of explicit freedoms not available to Local Authority schools including setting the pay and conditions of staff and term dates of pupils. However, the Governing Boards of each school are committed to adhering to national agreements on pay and conditions.

It should also be noted that the employment rights of all current members of staff will be protected by TUPE, Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations. This means that these employment rights will transfer to the Academy Trust and the MAT under the same terms and conditions of employment. Pension rights and continuity of service record will be preserved.

The school will be subject to the exact same regime and cycle of Ofsted inspections.

The Local Authority will retain a monitoring role for all maintained schools in the Local Authority area including academies.

Further information

Further information about Academies can be obtained from the Department for Education website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies/academiesfaq/a0066018/conversion-process>. This is the definitive source of information about Academies. It clearly encourages schools to convert to academies.

Should you need to access this document in an alternative format, please contact your local school so that this can be arranged.

Please note that communications will be collated and responded to as appropriate in each case, most commonly through a frequently asked questions format.