



St Paul's Church of England Primary School

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Headteacher: Elizabeth Vautier-Thomas BA Ed (Hons)

MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST CONSULTATION LETTER

Friday 14th June 2024

Dear Parents & Carers,

We are writing to you with details of a proposal for St Paul's CofE Primary School to join The Orchard Multi-Academy Trust.

The Orchard MAT, will be a local Church of England Majority Articles MAT that will comprise of Stretton Sugwas CE Academy, Canon Pyon CE Academy, Burghill Community Primary School, and St James CE Primary School.

When deciding on a MAT to join, Governors were eager to ensure the MAT's vision and ethos would align with that of St Paul's. As we already have a close working relationship with the schools in the Orchard MAT we see this as a natural fit. As a newly formed MAT, all member schools will have a hand in shaping the future of the organisation, which is an exciting prospect for St Paul's.

A recent proposal to government legislation has outlined that all schools must be part of a Multi Academy Trust by 2030; we feel we need to be proactive in the academisation agenda, as well as take ownership and control of the process. We believe by working together we can achieve great things and provide a first-class, educational experience in which all our children can flourish.

St Paul's Governing Body and members of the Senior Leadership Team have taken great care to explore all reasonable options to ensure that the children of St Paul's CofE Primary School are placed in the strongest position for the future. We believe the best way of securing the school's future – while maintaining standards, ethos, philosophy and community - is by joining The Orchard MAT.

There are numerous benefits of joining The Orchard MAT, such as shared resources and more opportunities for the children and staff to work together across the other member schools within the Trust.

St Paul's Governing Body priority is to enable the school to continue to provide an excellent education for our children, retaining their unique qualities and strengths while protecting the school's role in our community. We are therefore now consulting parents and carers about whether the school should join The Orchard Multi Academy Trust.



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†In your light shall we see light

The consultation period will start on the 14/06/2024, and end at Noon on the 11/07/24. There will also be an opportunity for parent and carers to meet with Mrs Vautier- Thomas, Mr. Pitcher Chair of Governors and ask the CEO of The Orchard Multi Academy Trust, Alex Davies any questions you may have about the process on **Wednesday 10th July at 5.00pm.**

Please see below some Frequently Asked Questions for you to read and if you would like to add your responses to this consultation please click on the link below by 12pm on Thursday 11th July 2024:

<https://forms.office.com/r/jKz0fXELEV>

Yours sincerely,

Tim Pitcher
On Behalf of the Governing Body

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is a Multi-Academy Trust?**

Currently St Paul's is a Single Academy Trust, a Multi-Academy Trust is a single charitable entity which controls a group of academies within the trust.

The trust's directors (or trustees) are responsible for overseeing the running of all the academies within the trust. The trust is accountable for all the academies within the MAT; however, before joining the MAT, the academy and trust would agree on the matters that would be handled by the trust, e.g. legal services and financial auditing, and those that will remain the responsibility of the local governing board.

2. **How would joining The Orchard MAT benefit our School?**

These changes are about enhancing teaching and learning for all children and allow us to share skills and collaborate with local church schools.

The Orchard MAT through partnership will work alongside St Paul's by:

- developing and sharing best practice in teaching, learning and curriculum.
- ensuring high standards through continual professional development and performance management.
- By achieving 'best value' for educational contracts and making optimum use of resources.

3. **Who will be responsible for running our school?**

The Orchard MAT will have a Board of Directors including individuals from the Local Governing Bodies of all member schools. The Trust Board will delegate many powers to a Local Governing Board (LGB), which will have a role similar to that of the current School Governing Body. These powers will be agreed by Governors from all member schools. Mrs Vautier – Thomas will continue to be headteacher of St Paul's C of E Primary School.

4. **What are the responsibilities of the MAT once St Paul's has joined?**

The main responsibilities of the MAT include:

- Setting the strategic direction for all the academies within the trust;
- Being responsible for the performance of the academies, including monitoring and, where necessary, intervening to improve performance;
- Ensuring that the right structure and organisation is in place to deliver the necessary high-standards for pupils;
- Ensuring value for money, maximising available funds and identifying and securing additional finance and support when required;
- Challenging progress in all aspects of academy operations and providing support and guidance to achieve the highest outcomes; and
- Leading involvement with parents and the wider community to promote the MAT and support the community.



5. **What are the members of a MAT?**

Members are like the shareholders of a commercial company, they appoint trustees to run the MAT and are the only people able to amend the trust's Articles of Association – the Articles of Association is the document that sets out the framework to which the academy and the trust will work together.

6. **What are the trustees of a MAT?**

The trustees oversee the day-to-day running of the MAT, determine what policies will be implemented and make the decisions that impact the entire trust.
The trustees are the official statutory governing board for the MAT.

7. **Will joining The Orchard MAT alter St Paul's existing ethos?**

Certainly not, St Paul's will retain its own values and ethos whilst working to the goals shared by the academies within the MAT.

8. **Will the academy still be inspected by Ofsted?**

Yes, all academies are inspected by Ofsted using the same framework and timescales as maintained schools.

The academies in the MAT will continue to be inspected separately; however, this may change in line with government policy.

9. **Would the school have to change its name, logo or uniform?**

There are no plans to change the school name or logo on the uniform.

10. **Who makes the final decision?**

- St Paul's Governing Body will consult with staff members and parents/carers in order to make an informed decision on whether or not to join the MAT.
- After collecting evidence, the final decision will be made by the Governing Body of St Paul's School who will then apply to the Diocesan Board of Education to officially join The Orchard MAT.

11. **Does the MAT have charity status?**

Yes, the MAT has charity status – the directors of the academy trust are the charity trustees. Academies in MATs are 'exempt' charities – this means they are not required to register formally with the Charity Commission, but the academies have the same charitable status as the organisations that are fully registered charities.

12. **What changes will parents and children see?**

Parents and children will notice more collaboration with our partner Church of England schools in the MAT resulting in greater opportunities to complement our exciting curriculum.

Children will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. We will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all our children, still working in close partnerships with our parents. The children may notice changes in the way that they learn, resulting

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from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the pupils' learning.

Parents may start to see and hear more information about the MAT, including correspondence sent by St Paul's, e.g. letters and emails, will include the MAT's logo.

13. Will parents be able to share their views?

Yes, the school is holding a full consultation which all parents, governors and staff members. We are encouraging parents and carers to complete the Microsoft form via the link in the letter to express their views.

14. How will admissions to the school be affected?

The school is already its own admissions authority and is required to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The Local Authority will continue to have responsibility for making sure there are sufficient places locally and will coordinate the admissions process for all schools. This means parents will still only have to complete one application per child.

15. Does becoming an Academy change the relationship with other schools and the community?

No. Academies must ensure that they continue to be at the heart of their community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other schools and the wider community. St Paul's will continue to work closely with the feeder high schools and schools in our locality.

16. Will our responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and exclusions change?

No. Responsibilities as an Academy in relation to SEND and exclusions will be just the same as they are now.

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