

## REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A NEW MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

### 1. Background

The Governing Bodies of five primary and secondary schools in Peterborough are individually and collectively considering a proposal to establish a new multi-academy trust and for the schools to convert to academy status.

The five schools are listed in alphabetical order below:

- Jack Hunt School (a Foundation school)**
- Longthorpe Primary School (a Local Authority maintained school)**
- Middleton Primary School (a LA maintained school)**
- Ravensthorpe Primary School (a LA maintained school)**
- Thorpe Primary School (a LA maintained school)**

The five Governing Bodies each agreed in March 2017 to consult upon the proposal for the schools to establish a multi-academy trust.

The Academies Act 2010 requires the Governing Body of a Local Authority maintained school to carry out a formal consultation on this proposal. DfE guidance *Making Significant Changes to an Open Academy*, published in March 2016, states that 'Academy trusts will need to ensure that a fair and open local consultation has been undertaken'.

A working group of Governors from the five schools recognised that it was important for the consultation to be managed consistently and cohesively so agreed to run a coordinated consultation.

This report describes the consultation activities undertaken by each Governing Body, the feedback from this activity and makes a recommendation about the outcome of consultation.

### 2. Purpose of Consultation

It is recognised by the Secretary of State for Education and the DfE that the Governing Body and leadership team of a school is best placed to assess the benefits of academy status and to decide whether it is appropriate for their school. Therefore, the purpose of consultation is for each Governing Body to present the proposal to stakeholders, to gather feedback on the proposal and to understand the level of stakeholder interest, support and objection. Each Governing Body can then determine whether there is any significant stakeholder objection to the proposal that would cause them to reconsider.

### 3. Consultation proposal

To establish a multi academy trust of the five schools and for each school to convert to academy status.

### 4. Consultation Process

The academy consultation ran from Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup> until Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, a period of nearly five (5) academic weeks.

A summary of the consultation plan identifying the different stakeholders, how those stakeholders were consulted and what information was to be provided, is overleaf.

Stakeholder	Approach	Information
Parents and carers of pupils attending the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter and Consultation proposal sent to all parents on Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• Joint consultation meeting held on Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 6.30pm at Jack Hunt School</li> <li>• Online survey distributed after consultation meetings</li> <li>• Meeting Q&amp;A summary published Monday, May 22<sup>nd</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent &amp; Carer Letter</li> <li>• Consultation Document</li> <li>• Consultation presentation</li> <li>• Consultation survey</li> <li>• Meeting Q&amp;A summary</li> </ul>
Staff employed by the schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter, Consultation Document and FAQs sent to all staff on Monday, April 26<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• Joint consultation meeting held on Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 4.15pm at Jack Hunt School</li> <li>• Online survey distributed after consultation meetings</li> <li>• Meeting Q&amp;A summary published Monday, May 22<sup>nd</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff letter</li> <li>• Staff Consultation Document</li> <li>• Staff FAQs</li> <li>• Consultation presentation</li> <li>• Consultation survey</li> <li>• Meeting Q&amp;A summary</li> </ul>
Unions & professional associations for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint letter with copies of staff letters, consultation FAQs and survey sent to representatives on Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Union letter</li> <li>• Staff letters</li> <li>• Consultation Document</li> <li>• Staff Consultation FAQs</li> </ul>
Other local schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter sent to Headteachers of local schools on Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community letter</li> </ul>
Local MPs and Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter sent to local politicians on Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community letter</li> </ul>

The range of documents and information were published on the school websites with the URLs below:

<http://www.jackhunt.peterborough.sch.uk/news/?pid=2&nid=2&storyid=1026>

<http://www.longthorpe.peterborough.sch.uk/news/default.asp?pid=19&nid=6>

<http://www.middletonprimaryschool.co.uk/page/?title=News+%26amp%3B+Events&pid=3>

<http://www.ravensthorpeprimary.org.uk/Academy-MAT-Consultation/>

<http://www.thorpeprimary.co.uk/page/?title=Multi+Academy+Trust+proposal&pid=157>

## 5. Consultation meetings

### 5.1 Parent/carers consultation meeting: May 11th

The parent/carers meeting was attended by a total of 30 parents/carers from across the five schools.

The format of the meeting was that the Headteachers presented the reasons for and benefits of the proposal and then an advisor explained the multi academy trust's proposed governance, leadership and management principles. Parents were then given the chance to ask questions and a summary of the Questions & Answers is attached as appendix A.

### 5.2 Staff consultation meeting: May 11th

The staff meeting was attended by a total of 25 members of staff from across the five schools.

The format of the meeting was that the Headteachers presented the reasons for and benefits of the proposal and then an advisor explained the multi academy trust's proposed governance, leadership and management principles. Staff were then given the chance to ask questions and a summary of the Questions & Answers is attached as appendix B.

## **6. Consultation surveys**

A table of analysis is attached as appendix C.

### 6.1 Breakdown of survey response rates

Overall the response rates were below the averages for both secondary and primary school academy consultations, with the exception of Longthorpe parents/carers (13%) and Middleton parents/carers (7%). *(Note: the number of pupils is used as the universe for parent responses.)*

The consultation programme was very similar to others managed by the advisor, which would seem to rule out methodology as a reason for the low response rates.

The low response rates and absolute number of responses means interpretation of the survey results is statistically difficult.

A summary table is on page 4.

### 6.2 Breakdown of survey responses

There are a couple of points of interest from the breakdown of the survey responses.

- **Longthorpe parents** were more likely to object to the proposal than support the proposal with 8% (33 responses) responding NO compared with 6% (23 responses) responding YES.
- **Middleton parents** were notably more likely to support the proposal with 5% responding YES compared with 1% responding NO. (Note: rounding up totals 7% as above)

A review of the **Longthorpe** parent explanations for the response NO suggest three broad reasons for the negative response

- Mixed record of academies locally in Peterborough
- Concerns that being part of a multi academy trust would change the school's ethos and approach
- Unsure of the benefits that being part of a multi academy trust would bring.

A summary table is on page 5.

Table 6.1 Survey response numbers and percentage of the universe

SCHOOL	STAKEHOLDER	UNIVERSE	RESPONSES (NO.)				RESPONSES (% OF UNIVERSE)			
			YES	MAYBE	NO	DK	TOTAL	TOTAL	YES	NO
Jack Hunt School	PARENT	1480	14	0	4	0	18	1%	1%	0%
	TEACHER	114	7	0	2	0	9	8%	6%	2%
	SUPPORT STAFF	136	12	0	4	0	16	12%	9%	3%
	TOTAL	1730	33	0	10	0	43	2%	2%	1%
Longthorpe Primary School	PARENT	416	23	0	33	0	56	13%	6%	8%
	TEACHER	23	5	0	2	0	7	30%	22%	9%
	SUPPORT STAFF	55	5	0	0	0	5	9%	9%	0%
	TOTAL	494	33	0	35	0	68	14%	7%	7%
Middleton Primary School	PARENT	392	21	0	5	0	26	7%	5%	1%
	TEACHER	23	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
	SUPPORT STAFF	69	0	0	1	0	1	1%	0%	1%
	TOTAL	484	21	0	6	0	27	6%	4%	1%
Ravensthorpe Primary School	PARENT	291	4	0	0	0	4	1%	1%	0%
	TEACHER	16	7	0	0	0	7	44%	44%	0%
	SUPPORT STAFF	26	4	0	1	0	5	19%	15%	4%
	TOTAL	333	15	0	1	0	16	5%	5%	0%
Thorpe Primary School	PARENT	450	5	0	3	0	8	2%	1%	1%
	TEACHER	26	1	0	0	0	1	4%	4%	0%
	SUPPORT STAFF	62	1	0	0	0	1	2%	2%	0%
	TOTAL	538	7	0	3	0	10	2%	1%	1%
TRUST	PARENT	3029	67	0	45	0	112	4%	2%	1%
	TEACHER	202	20	0	4	0	24	12%	10%	2%
	SUPPORT STAFF	348	22	0	6	0	28	8%	6%	2%
	TOTAL	3579	109	0	55	0	164	5%	3%	2%

Table 6.2 Breakdown of responses

SCHOOL	STAKEHOLDER	UNIVERSE	RESPON	RESPONSES				
			SES	(% OF RESPONSES)				
			(NO.)	YES	MAYBE	NO	DK	TOTAL
Jack Hunt School	PARENT	1480	18	78%	0%	22%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	114	9	78%	0%	22%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	136	16	75%	0%	25%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	1730	43	77%	0%	23%	0%	100%
Longthorpe Primary School	PARENT	416	56	41%	0%	59%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	23	7	71%	0%	29%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	55	5	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	494	68	49%	0%	51%	0%	100%
Middleton Primary School	PARENT	392	26	81%	0%	19%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	23	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	69	1	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	484	27	78%	0%	22%	0%	100%
Ravensthorpe Primary School	PARENT	291	4	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	16	7	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	26	5	80%	0%	20%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	333	16	94%	0%	6%	0%	100%
Thorpe Primary School	PARENT	450	8	63%	0%	38%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	26	1	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	62	1	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	538	10	70%	0%	30%	0%	100%
TRUST	PARENT	3029	112	60%	0%	40%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	202	24	83%	0%	17%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	348	28	79%	0%	21%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	3579	164	66%	0%	34%	0%	100%

## **7. Consultation summary and recommendation**

The consultation with the key stakeholders of all five schools has been comprehensive.

The first outcome of consultation is that in Jack Hunt, Middleton, Ravensthorpe and Thorpe schools, there was almost no objection to the proposal among any stakeholder group.

The second outcome of consultation is that while there was no significant objection among Longthorpe stakeholders there is a minority of parents with concerns. The Governing Body may consider further communication with parents to respond to these concerns.

Therefore, the Governing Bodies of Jack Hunt, Longthorpe, Middleton, Ravensthorpe and Thorpe schools are advised that the consultation has not demonstrated any significant objection that should cause them to reconsider the proposal for the schools to become an academy and establish a multi-academy trust.

APPENDIX A: Q&A from the joint parent consultation meeting

APPENDIX B: Q&A from the staff consultation meeting

APPENDIX C: Survey data

**APPENDIX A**  
**SUMMARY OF PARENT CONSULTATION MEETING**  
**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**Introduction**

A consultation meeting was held for parents and carers at Jack Hunt School on the proposal to join the Jack Hunt Group MAT. The meeting took place on Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 6.30pm.

This document is a summary of the questions asked at the meeting and the answers given. Where helpful, additional information has been provided in response to the questions raised.

**1. How will change management be funded and how will budgets be allocated?**

Each school will receive £25,000 from the DfE to cover the costs incurred by conversion and forming the MAT. There is additional funding available of up to £12,000 from the DfE for the additional work that is required for a PFI school to convert; which is the case at Jack Hunt School.

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. They also receive additional funding in the form of the Education Services Grant to cover the responsibilities of the MAT, in place of Local Authority, and to cover the additional costs of academy status. The whole of the school budget would come directly to the MAT from central Government and then be distributed to the school, allowing the school to control the whole of their spending.

**2. How will the curriculum change?**

Each school will remain autonomous and follow its own curriculum but will benefit from MAT-wide initiatives, for example the Accelerated Reader Programme, the Forest Learning Programme and the Success for All Programme. There will also be joint training days for staff to share best practice and we will continue with our Sports Partnership. The MAT has 3 specialist hubs for SEN/D and will continue to develop its expertise and share with others.

**3. Will schools have more freedom to nurture the children?**

Schools are already committed to nurturing the children and under the MAT, schools hope to be able to develop this further.

**4. Will it be possible to utilise MFL expertise of Jack Hunt at the primary schools?**

Jack Hunt School and Language College is heavily involved in supporting the development of language learning in the primary schools in the local area. Primary Transition Resources are already established between some of the member schools. A transition project was created and has been written to be accessible to all primary school teachers, both non-specialists and specialists alike. This is a good example of how best practice can be shared across the MAT.

**5. Any decisions that a Headteacher can't make as now?**

Headteachers will continue to have the same level of day to day responsibility for the running of their schools, with oversight from the LGB.

**6. How will the MAT avoid effort focussing on supporting weaker schools?**

Each of the schools has individual strengths as well as areas for development, to identify which the Headteachers will use a combination of data analysis, lesson observations and workbook scrutiny. Each school will develop a plan for school improvement and draw upon the appropriate expertise from other schools. Key to school improvement is the development of best practice teaching and learning through teachers working in partnership

**7. Why will a MAT make a difference over an informal partnership?**

Formation of a MAT offers the opportunity to formalise existing arrangements and in addition, offers the following key benefits: long-term sustainability, formal governance arrangements, unifying charitable objectives, external accountability to the DfE (and others), collective accountability and responsibility for



pupil outcomes, formal challenge for Headteachers, single commercial entity, single employer of all staff and single commissioner of services.

#### **8. What factors will prevent the MAT formation?**

There are three main reasons why the proposed MAT would not go ahead:

- MAT finance concerns
- MAT offers insufficient benefits
- Negative consultation outcome

The results of the survey will be an important part of the consultation report that Governing Bodies will consider before making a decision. Governing Bodies will use their judgement to decide whether there is evidence of a substantial objection to the proposal.

#### **9. Will there be any redundancies?**

No, there will be no redundancies made as a direct result of formation of the MAT.

#### **10. Admissions & Growth? Policy of waiting lists?**

The MAT would not give parents any greater chance to get in to any of the schools.

The application process for parents and carers will remain the same. The Trust will become the admitting authority for the schools but each would have its own admissions policy as now. Any future policy changes would need to be clear and fair and 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 school places locally and it will coordinate the admissions process for all schools.

#### **11. Can you guarantee entry for feeder primary schools?**

The application process for parents and carers will remain the same. The Trust will become the admitting authority for the schools but each would have its own admissions policy as now. Any future policy changes would need to be clear and fair and 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 school places locally and it will coordinate the admissions process for all schools.

#### **12. What is the consequence of not converting?**

All schools face a number of challenges:

- the increasing financial pressures, squeezing staffing and resources,
- the difficulties in retaining, developing and recruiting high quality staff and leadership,
- the cost and availability of relevant, impactful professional development,
- the continuing decline of the Local Authority's capacity to support schools and
- the need to respond to a continually changing educational landscape.

It is the professional judgement of the Headteachers that by working in partnership through a MAT, their schools will be able to cope with these challenges far more effectively than continuing as Local Authority maintained schools. This view is supported by the Governors of each school, which is why the MAT is being proposed

#### **13. Why academies are in place?**

It is still Government policy for all schools to become academies, as set out in the White Paper, published March 2016. In July 2016 the Government announced that schools would not be forced to become academies by 2020 in response to pressure from a number of MPs concerned about schools in their constituencies.

#### **14. Who decides school funding?**

Each school will be entitled to the same per pupil funding as they would as a LA maintained school. The whole of the school budget would come direct to the school from central Government allowing the school to control the whole of their spending.

Each Headteacher will retain responsibility to develop their school budget. They will consult with colleague Headteachers to identify opportunities for joint commissioning or resource sharing if appropriate. The budget will then be reviewed by the Local Governing Body and proposed to the Finance & Audit Committee.

The Finance & Audit Committee will then review all the school budgets as part of a consolidated Trust budget. They will then recommend the Trust budget to the Board for approval.

**15. Will the MAT decide catering?**

Any existing catering contracts will transfer across to the MAT. There are no immediate plans to review catering in the MAT.

**16. How will savings be secured?**

The schools currently have £3million non-staff costs. To enable the MAT to become self-funding, a modest % efficiency saving will need to be made to non-staff costs.

Joint commissioning is when the MAT buys services on behalf of the schools. The MAT will be able to secure savings against five schools buying individually because it will be a single contract with a single point of contact.

**17. Will uniforms change?**

No, uniforms will remain the same for all the schools.

**18. Could someone else take over the MAT?**

The MAT cannot be taken over and as long as the schools are performing well they are protected.

The aim of the MAT is to enable schools to sustain their performance. However, if a school started to under-perform then the DfE would ask the MAT to present an improvement plan and would monitor progress.

If a school was judged by Ofsted as *Inadequate*, then it is possible that the DfE would take the school out of the MAT and place it in another MAT.

If a school wishes to leave the MAT of its own accord, then the consent of the Secretary of State would be needed. The school would have to join another MAT: it could not return to Local Authority control.

**APPENDIX B**  
**SUMMARY OF STAFF CONSULTATION MEETING**  
**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**Introduction**

There was a consultation meeting for staff from the five schools on the proposal to form the multi academy trust, which took place on Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 4.15pm.

This document is a summary of the questions asked at the meeting and the answers given. Where helpful, additional information has been provided in response to the questions raised.

**1. Who will the Trust Members be?**

The Trust Members are not actively involved in the day-to-day running of the Trust but have an important role as guardians of the Trust vision, ethos and values. The five Trust Members were chosen by the headteachers following invitation to apply for the role and their agreement.

**2. Will Continuity of Service be recognised by a new employer? How much of a risk is this?**

Continuity of service is protected through the transfer of employment. The Jack Hunt Group Multi-Academy Trust will also recognise the continuity of service of new employees joining the Trust.

Currently, there is no legal obligation for a Local Authority or another academy trust to recognise continuity of service of academy trust employees for all aspects of employment. Importantly, however, your previous service will be recognised by any local authority or academy for the purposes of pensions and redundancy payments.

If you were to take a job with a school outside the Jack Hunt Group Multi-Academy Trust your continuity of service may be broken. Your new employer may treat you as a new starter for the purposes of enhanced sickness and maternity or paternity benefits, however this will be dependent on the particular trust or academy to which you are appointed. Before accepting any future offer of employment with an academy or trust, it is recommended that you check that the new employer would recognise your continuity of service.

**3. Is the CEO remunerated?**

No final decision has been made around remuneration of the CEO role. If necessary, the salary of the CEO would be met from the trust central budget.

**4. What happens if school funding is reduced? You read about MATs folding due to financial problems?**

As part of the MAT development, schools have carried out detailed financial planning and are confident that this is not a significant risk.

As part of a Trust, we will also achieve greater efficiencies through increased buying power and joint commissioning of services. The schools have already prepared future budgets and are appropriately confident of the Trust's financial viability.

**APPENDIX C: Consultation Survey Data**

SCHOOL	STAKEHOLDER	UNIVERSE	RESPONSES (NO.)					RESPONSES (% OF UNIVERSE)			RESPONSES (% OF RESPONSES)				
			YES	MAYBE	NO	DK	TOTAL	TOTAL	YES	NO	YES	MAYBE	NO	DK	TOTAL
Jack Hunt School	PARENT	1480	14	0	4	0	18	1%	1%	0%	78%	0%	22%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	114	7	0	2	0	9	8%	6%	2%	78%	0%	22%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	136	12	0	4	0	16	12%	9%	3%	75%	0%	25%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	1730	33	0	10	0	43	2%	2%	1%	77%	0%	23%	0%	100%
Longthorpe Primary School	PARENT	416	23	0	33	0	56	13%	6%	8%	41%	0%	59%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	23	5	0	2	0	7	30%	22%	9%	71%	0%	29%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	55	5	0	0	0	5	9%	9%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	494	33	0	35	0	68	14%	7%	7%	49%	0%	51%	0%	100%
Middleton Primary School	PARENT	392	21	0	5	0	26	7%	5%	1%	81%	0%	19%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	23	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	69	0	0	1	0	1	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	484	21	0	6	0	27	6%	4%	1%	78%	0%	22%	0%	100%
Ravensthorpe Primary School	PARENT	291	4	0	0	0	4	1%	1%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	16	7	0	0	0	7	44%	44%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	26	4	0	1	0	5	19%	15%	4%	80%	0%	20%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	333	15	0	1	0	16	5%	5%	0%	94%	0%	6%	0%	100%
Thorpe Primary School	PARENT	450	5	0	3	0	8	2%	1%	1%	63%	0%	38%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	26	1	0	0	0	1	4%	4%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	62	1	0	0	0	1	2%	2%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	538	7	0	3	0	10	2%	1%	1%	70%	0%	30%	0%	100%
TRUST	PARENT	3029	67	0	45	0	112	4%	2%	1%	60%	0%	40%	0%	100%
	TEACHER	202	20	0	4	0	24	12%	10%	2%	83%	0%	17%	0%	100%
	SUPPORT STAFF	348	22	0	6	0	28	8%	6%	2%	79%	0%	21%	0%	100%
	TOTAL	3579	109	0	55	0	164	5%	3%	2%	66%	0%	34%	0%	100%