



# **Multi Academy Trust Consultation**

## **March 2017**



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## Introduction

The Multi Academy Trust informal consultation concluded on Monday the 6<sup>th</sup> of March. At the time of closure the consultation had received 80 responses. These included responses from Staff, Parents and community members. The exact composition of responses is contained within Appendix 1.

Below is a summary of the responses received during this consultation. Where appropriate they have been broken down into school specific subheadings. If the same point was made by more than one respondent the number of responses is indicated at the end of each point (x).



# 1 Comments or Feedback Regarding the MAT

## 1.1 General Parental Comments

### In Support:

- It is a good idea (no other point made) (4)
- The consultation document was very clear and had good FAQs (2)
- Pleased that there will be greater opportunities for collaboration between schools, for example on curriculum areas and CPD (9)
- The structure sounds well organised (1)
- It will allow a greater opportunity for extracurricular activities (1)
- It will provide benefits for procurement and purchasing support services (1)
- The best solution given there will be inevitable academisation - control our own destiny before we are pushed! (10)
- The cooperative ethos is a positive framework (4)
- It will provide a real opportunity for School Improvement that is no longer available from the local authority (1)
- After listening to the Head and Chair of Governors speak I feel it is a positive step forward for pupils (4)
- It is positive that it is a Bristol based solution rather than a national corporate trust. (1)

### Against:

- Effective sharing of teaching strategies and good practice can be achieved without a MAT (2)  
*This is true as all schools are currently working well together however we want to safeguard this for the future. This will ensure stability so even if there are changes of staff the schools in the MAT will continue to work well together.*
- North Bristol and South Bristol have separate support systems such as Early Help and CAMHs (1)  
*Each school will continue to access their own support systems in their own areas; the MAT proposals will not have an impact on this.*
- The House of Commons Education Committee has raised concerns over the performance and accountability of MATs (5)  
*We are aware of this and are working closely with the regional schools commissioner's office to ensure that our MAT is set up to focus on learning*



*and teaching to ensure that standards remain high and progress is accelerated.*

- Worried about the future potential rapid growth of the MAT (1)  
*We understand this concern however any potential future growth will be carefully considered and managed effectively.*
- There is a concern that teachers being able to move between schools will result in disruption in teaching (1)  
*We are excited that teaching staff will be given opportunities to work across the MAT, where appropriate, but this will not be to the detriment of children or staff.*
- Strongly opposed to academisation as a principle (3)
- Worried that the nurturing and caring nature of the school will be lost within a MAT (1)  
*We value each school's individual identity and we will ensure that all schools will continue to offer excellent pastoral support for their children and families.*
- Senior Leadership Teams are stretched across MATs and the focus on community and inclusion is lost (1)  
*We anticipate that senior leaders will have more opportunities to focus on their own school and share effective practise as areas such as buildings management, finance and HR will increasingly become shared responsibilities within the MAT.*
- The focus on attainment will be at the detriment to those who are less academically able (1)  
*All schools within the MAT currently focus on attainment; all children have the right to make accelerated progress from their own starting points.*
- A concern that the academy will reduce SEN provision as other academy chains have done (1)  
*There are no plans to reduce SEND provision within the MAT however schools nationally are faced with funding cuts so by working more closely together we hope that SEND provision is not reduced.*
- We will lose access to the Local Authority for support. For example with budgets, maternity provision, disability access and negotiating committees (1)  
*Schools have been buying these services from a number of providers for the past 3 years anyway. We can still buy back into any LA services if we deem them to be effective and good value for money.*
- There will be a 2 tier workforce – existing staff and new staff on different terms and conditions (1) and we don't protect pay and conditions of service (1)



*There will inevitably be some new staff on different contracts as they are employed by the MAT however we are committed to adhering to nationally agreed terms and conditions.*

- We will lose leverage over government if we are not part of a local authority (1)  
*MATs are directly accountable to central government and we will be working closely with the Regional Schools Commissioner's office.*
- We will be controlled by the secretary of state, who doesn't know the local context (1)  
*Our Regional Schools Commissioner does understand the local context as she has worked in Bristol for a number of years.*
- If we don't manage to convert we wouldn't get the conversion grant and we have already spent the money (1)  
*No money will be spent until the conversion has been agreed.*
- 7/10 Academies are operating at a financial loss so it won't save us money (1)  
*We will have a very robust financial plan to ensure best value for money; this will be closely monitored by a board of trustees. At least one of our trustees will have significant financial qualifications and experience.*
- We should be contacting the Mayor of Bristol to improve our schools that way instead (1)  
*We will continue to develop links across the city with the Mayor and other interested parties.*
- Worried that this is just about saving money rather than school improvement (1)  
*We are committed to working together to continue to improve all our schools; the MAT is an excellent way for us to do this.*

## 1.2 Staff Comments

### In Support:

- I think it is a very positive and encouraging governance model and one which has commendable values of collaboration and cooperation at its core (1)
- A positive step forward that allows continued improvements for the schools (2)

### Against

- I don't see the need or the benefit (1)  
*We foresee there being many benefits to forming the MAT. These are outlined on page 3 of the informal consultation document*



- Against academisation entirely within education (2)  
*There is a rationale for the schools' response to the national academies agenda on page 1 of the informal consultation document.*
- The decision has already been made so this is not a meaningful consultation (1)  
*This is the first stage of consultation and no firm decisions have been made as yet.*

### 1.3 Community / Other Agency Comments

- The consultation document was sent out on the last day of term and therefore it was not a meaningful consultation (1).  
*The document was sent out on the last day of term to give staff and parents plenty of time to read and respond to it. Each school also held informal opportunities for staff and parents to talk through any questions. The informal consultation period lasted for over three weeks.*
- It is an opportunity to bring together 2 very successful secondary schools of similar sizes from North and South Bristol (1).  
*We agree and are very excited by the prospect of all the schools in the MAT working more closely together.*
- There will be greater opportunities to enrich the school curriculums (1)  
*This is true, there will be more enrichment opportunities and each school will maintain its own school curriculum.*
- There will be a greater opportunity to share resources and expertise (1)
- The cooperative values are important for a school ethos. (1)
- The trustees need to be specialists and experts in education rather than management / finance (1)  
*The trustees will come from a number of backgrounds including education.*
- National Unions are against academies (1)

### 1.4 School Specific Comments

#### Ashton Park Specific Comments

- The ethos of the Co-operative values is important for any MAT that Ashton Park joins (1)  
*We agree and the cooperative values will be shared values across the MAT.*
- It is important that Ashton Park keeps its own identity (2)  
*All schools within the MAT will retain their own unique identity.*



- We would like reassurances that Ashton Park would continue to remain a happy school who put's children's wellbeing first (1)  
*All schools within the MAT will continue to promote the wellbeing of children and staff.*
- A worry that Ashton Park is being taken over. It is assumed that Redland Green has initiated this consultation as this time last year they submitted a bid to open a new free school in South East Bristol. (1)  
*The existing schools in the South West Bristol Cooperative Learning Trust have been actively working towards creating a MAT for the past two years; we are excited by the prospect of working together with Redland Green to form a new MAT.*
- There is a concern that the interim Headteacher arrangement at APS will mean that the head at RGS will automatically become the CEO. (1)  
*We will follow rigorous and transparent recruitment procedures for all posts within the MAT.*
- Ashton Park looks after my kids well, for which I am grateful (1)
- The school needs to continue to maintain the community ethos and not enter into a MAT where 'one size fits all' (1)  
*The community ethos of all schools will be maintained and nurtured within the MAT.*
- Yes if it means that APS can have more teachers. (1)  
*Teachers will continue to be employed as required by each school within the MAT.*
- Ashton Park is in need of support from another school. It has great leadership and relationships with the primaries but it loses its way from year 9 onwards (1)  
*Each school will bring its own strengths to the MAT and we will continue to build on these through the sharing of effective practise.*
- The Chair of Governors and the Head presentation to the PTA was very useful and reassured us it was the right decision for the school (3)
- The school name should not change to include the word academy. (1)  
*There have been no firm decisions at this stage about the names of schools or of the MAT itself.*

### Ashton Vale Specific Comments

- Not sure that RGS would want to help to improve Ashton Vale as none of their children will come from there (1)  
*Each school within the MAT is committed to all of the children within the MAT regardless of which school they attend.*



## Compass Point Specific Comments

- There is the potential for Compass Point to be swallowed up in a MAT (1)  
*Each school will retain its own identity within the MAT.*
- It is important that Compass Point doesn't lose its diversity and philosophy (1)  
*As above*

## Luckwell Specific Comments

- Opposed to Luckwell school joining the MAT as it will not improve better standards of teaching or learning for pupils (1)  
*We believe that every school within the MAT will benefit from working more closely with one another to raise standards and improve learning and teaching.*
- Luckwell school can't afford not to join a MAT when the funding per pupil is falling (1)  
*We believe that joining the MAT will help all schools to save money, this will help us to better use any funding for teaching and learning.*
- Opposed to Luckwell becoming an academy (1)  
*The rationale behind each school joining the MAT is outlined in the informal consultation document page 3*
- Luckwell should only be run by democratically elected governors and staff (1)  
*There will be transparency around the recruitment of all trustees; each school will also retain its own local governing body.*
- Parents would like to hear more from the Leadership of Luckwell about the benefits of the MAT (3)  
*Parents have been given the opportunity to discuss the MAT proposals in an informal way with the Head teacher.*
- This consultation is very advanced – is it really a consultation? (1)  
*Yes, this is the informal consultation part of the process.*
- Opposed as the school has a community feel and does not need to be involved with other schools (1)  
*Each school will retain its own identity within the MAT.*
- The only link should be with Ashton Park as our students will go there in the future (1)  
*Luckwell School is already working closely with schools within the trust.*
- Concerned that the school will be run like a business (1)  
*Schools will continue to be run to benefit the children and their families within the community.*
- It is much better to join a local group than an academy chain who will change the ethos of the school (1)



- Ashton Park is a low performing school so can't help us improve (1)  
*Ashton Park is a 'Good' school as judged by Ofsted and all schools within the MAT will work together to improve.*

### Redland Green Specific

- Redland Green should join with schools in its local area or it may become isolated within its own community (4)  
*The distance from Redland Green to Ashton Park is 3.4 miles. Bristol is already a very closely knit learning community where schools are already working closely together. Redland Green will continue to work with its local schools.*
- Redland Green is the strongest school so they cannot benefit from school improvement from the other schools (1)  
*Redland Green and Ashton Park are already working closely together on joint school improvement projects. Each school within the MAT has something to offer other schools.*
- A concern that Redland Green is engaging with primary schools where the children currently have no option to attend Redland Green and therefore not fulfilling its vision of serving the local community (1)  
*Redland Green will continue to work with its local schools as well as schools within the MAT.*
- Redland Green should not be joining the MAT without Cotham as they share a sixth form. (1)  
*Redland Green will continue to work closely with Cotham however the decisions around Cotham's future direction rest with their own governing body.*
- It feels like joining a MAT would be a distraction for teachers who should be focusing on curriculum related matters (1)  
*The MAT is a great opportunity to share effective practise between schools we feel that it will enhance the curriculum.*
- Redland Green has a fantastic academic record which is a great opportunity to help raise standards and results at APS (1)
- Redland Green should be focusing on its own children (1)  
*Redland Green will continue to focus on its own children as well as the other children served by the MAT.*



## 2 Additional Questions Regarding the MAT

### 2.1 General Questions:

- Is there really a political imperative or is this just financially driven? (1)  
*There is a clear rationale for forming the MAT; this is covered on page 1 of the informal consultation document.*
- Will there be a lead school in the MAT? If so how will this be decided on? (2)  
*No, all schools will be equal.*
- How will the executive head be chosen? (3) Will they have a true understanding of both primary and secondary schools? (1)  
*A robust recruitment procedure will be used.*
- Will there be a commitment to maintain Terms and Conditions for new and existing staff (5)  
*Yes*
- Will the MAT still recognise and work with Trade Unions? (2)  
*Yes the MAT will continue to work closely with Trade Unions*
- Will there be a commitment that no school in the MAT would be permitted to use unqualified teachers (2)  
*There are no current plans to change existing staffing structures.*
- Is there any plan to have staff employed directly by the MAT rather than individual academies? (1)  
*New staff will be employed by the MAT*
- If there are new posts created will they be advertised externally or appointed internally from within the 5 schools? (1)  
*We will follow robust recruitment procedures.*
- Is it realistic that we can run joint curriculums across schools that are miles apart? (1)  
*Each school will retain its own curriculum however expertise will be shared and where appropriate some change may be made e.g. exam boards at GCSE.*
- Will the formation of the MAT trigger Management of Change in Staffing Structures? (1)  
*There are no current plans to trigger the management of change process as a result of the MAT.*



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- How would the MAT guarantee that setting up the MAT would not affect the leadership of each school? (2)  
*We are committed to maintaining quality leadership in each school to ensure that the setting up of the MAT does not affect learning and teaching during this period.*
  - What specific teaching benefits do you expect to see? (1)  
*See informal consultation document page 3.*
  - Would you be looking to use private services for support facilities such as educational psychologists and CAMHS? (2) How can you ensure objectivity and quality assurance of these facilities? (1)  
*Schools are currently able to procure services from a variety of individuals and organisations; we always quality assure the support services we use and aim for best value for money.*
  - What are the longer term plans for growth? Has any consideration been given to the speed of this growth? (1)  
*It is recognised nationally that there is an optimum number of school within a MAT; we do not have any plans to add to the MAT for the first year of its operation.*
  - Will this be an official Cooperative MAT or a MAT simply underpinned by cooperative values? (1)  
*Hybrid articles underpinned by Cooperative values.*
  - Was timing of sending out the consultation on the last day of term deliberate? (2)  
*The document was sent out on the last day of term to give staff and parents plenty of time to read and respond to it. Each school also held informal opportunities for staff and parents to talk through any questions. The informal consultation period lasted for over three weeks.*
  - Will schools be able to make their own budget decisions? (1)  
*Yes.*
  - What percentage of the school budgets will be 'top sliced' to run the MAT? (1)  
*This will be in line with national figures and is anticipated to be between 4-5%.*
  - How far has the proposal been reviewed by the DfE and Heads panel? Is it likely to be approved? (1)  
*We anticipate the proposal will reach the Head Teachers Panel at the end of May, the DfE are closely involved with us and have been supporting us with this for a number of years.*



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- What is your response to the 7<sup>th</sup> report this year on MATs by the Commons Education Committee that is far from clear that the public money is being used effectively? (1)

*We will ensure that rigorous methods of scrutinising spending are in place to ensure best practise and learn from others mistakes.*
  - Bristol City Council could be allowed to set up its own MAT as per new recommendations from MPs. So have you looked into the possibility of just joining that? (1)

*The schools within the South West Bristol Cooperative Learning Trust have been investigating the possibility of setting up their own MAT for two years. We believe it is important that we shape our own MAT rather than join a MAT which may not share our values.*
  - What are the plans for sixth form provision across the MAT? (1)

*Each school will retain its Sixth Form; we will look to collaborate where it enhances provision.*

*Ashton Park Sixth Form centre will continue to work in its own right*

*Redland Green School will continue in partnership with Cotham through NBP16C*
  - Will schools within the new MAT get representation on the Trustee Board? i.e someone from their existing governing body. If not how will we ensure that the interests of all schools are represented fairly in future decision making? (3)

*Every member of the Trust Board will represent all of schools within the MAT.*
  - How will we guarantee parental involvement via governance? (1) Can parents become trustees?

*Schools will continue to have their own governing bodies; if parents meet the criteria for trustees then they could be recruited to the trust board.*
  - Is the decision to become a MAT reversible after a period of time? (1)

*Not currently.*
  - Why aren't Ashton Gate and other BS3 primary schools part of the proposal? (1)

*Each governing body makes the decisions for their own school. This question may be better addressed by the governing bodies of the other schools.*
  - Are there any implications for admissions criteria? Will pupils from the primaries get preference when applying to Ashton Park / Redland Green? (1) Or will we retain current admissions arrangements through the local authority? (1)

*There are no plans to change current admissions procedures.*



- 
- The consultation document contains lots of advantages. What are the disadvantages? (3)
 

*This is a new venture and there will be challenges in terms of embedding structure and ensuring every child achieves excellent outcomes in the long term; benefits will outweigh disadvantages.*
  - BS3 schools would like to hear why Redland Green wants to work with them. (3)
  - What extra advantages does that MAT bring to schools that are already part of the Co-operative learning trust already? (1)
 

*Please see page 3 of the informal consultation document.*
  - What qualities are each of the schools bringing to the MAT? (1)
 

*All schools have areas of strengths and effective practise which we will all be able to draw upon.*
  - How will you communicate with parents about the changes? (1)
 

*Parents will be kept up to date through our existing communication channels.*
  - If the DfE won't let us form an academy together will be made to join a chain such as Oasis? (1)
 

*No, not at present.*
  - What will be the relationship between schools and the Local Authority after academisation? For example who would parents raise complaints with? (1)
 

*We will continue to have a close relationship with the local authority however we will be accountable to the Department for Education.*
  - How are Redland Green and Ashton Park similar and different? Based on this how can Redland Green help Ashton Park? (1)
 

*Both schools have shared values based on an inclusive approach to education and a strong desire to improve outcomes for children in Bristol. Redland Green School is an outstanding school whose Headteacher is a National Lead of Education and Redland Green School is a National Support School, they have a great deal to offer all schools in the MAT. Also RGS, as a relatively new school can build upon some of the strengths APS and its partner schools, particularly in terms of community etc.*
  - Who would own the sites that the schools sit on? Would anyone sell off the land at a later date? (1)
 

*This is a complex legal matter which will be addressed as part of this process however we do not anticipate selling any land.*
  - Will there be opportunities for face to face consultation? (1) With a live debate? (1)
 

*There will be continued opportunities for face to face meetings as part of the formal consultation process. Each school as part of the informal consultation has given the opportunity for face to face discussions around this matter.*



## 2.2 School Specific Questions

### Ashton Park Specific Questions

- How can we ensure that that Ashton Park isn't disadvantaged by the priorities of the other schools within the MAT? (1)  
*Each school within the MAT will maintain its own set of priorities and shared commitment for collective improvement.*
- If the current Head of Redland Green becomes the Chief Executive Officer will that mean that they effectively control APS? (1) Can we not have a joint CEO so that one school is not favoured over another? (1)  
*The recruitment of the CEO position will be transparent and open to all head teachers within the MAT.*
- Will APS lose its A level teaching to Redland Green? (1)  
*There are no plans to move any teaching between sites.*
- Will APS lose its best teachers to Redland Green? (1)  
*No*
- Will APS take this as an opportunity to make the school uniform smarter? (2)  
*Each school within the MAT will continue to maintain its own policy around uniform.*
- APS needs a visual make over. Will it get that as part of the conversion? (1)  
*There are no additional funds for building work as part of the conversion process.*
- Can we share facilities with RGS? (1)  
*All schools within the MAT have facilities and equipment to share with one another.*

### Compass Point Specific Questions

- Will this affect the catchment areas? Will students living outside the catchment area be made to leave the school? (1)  
*No.*
- Will the school day be shortened? If so what will happen to support working parents? (1)  
*There are no plans to change the school times at any school as part of this process.*

### Luckwell Specific Questions

- Will class sizes change significantly? (1)  
*No.*



- If Mr Jones became the executive head how would leadership at Luckwell be maintained? (1)  
*Every school within the Trust will ensure it has sufficient leadership.*
- What happens to Luckwell if we don't join? (1)  
*Luckwell Governing Body will make this decision.*
- Are there any other MATs that Luckwell is thinking of joining? (1)  
*No.*
- Luckwell is one of the smallest schools in the MAT. How would it make sure that it got its fair share of funding? (1)  
*Each school's funding will be protected.*

### Redland Green Specific Questions

- Why have you selected partner schools outside of the North Bristol area? (3)  
*Our vision is to create a Bristol MAT not confined to one area of the city.*
- Will any of the current feeder schools will be joining the MAT? (1)  
*We are in discussion with other schools and decisions rest with their Governing Bodies.*
- Would it be better to work with local schools and a closer secondary school? (2)  
*See above.*
- Why aren't you forming a MAT with Cotham? (2)  
*At the time of the start of our discussions Cotham were exploring other options. We continue to have an open dialogue.*
- Have the Headteacher and Governors of RGS tried to engage with local primary and secondary schools in this process? If so what has been the response? (1)  
*See above.*
- What will happen to the current Trustee Board at Redland Green? (1)  
*It will be local Governing Body proving excellent Governance for Redland Green School.*

## 3 Mailing List

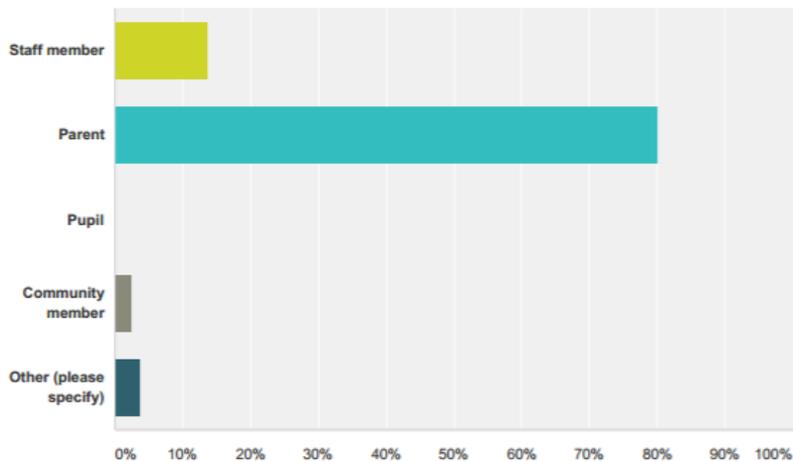
The final question asked if anyone would like to join the mailing list for further information. All respondents who left an email address and requested further information received a copy of the Informal Consultation Feedback directly.



## Appendix 1 – Consultation Responses Composition

### Q2 Please indicate your involvement or interest in the MAT e.g. Staff member/parent/pupil/community

Answered: 80 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Staff member	13.75%	11
Parent	80.00%	64
Pupil	0.00%	0
Community member	2.50%	2
Other (please specify)	3.75%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>

<u>Staff Composition:</u>	<u>Parent Composition:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ashton Park: 4</li> <li>Compass Point: 1</li> <li>Redland Green: 2</li> <li>Unknown: 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ashton Park: 17</li> <li>Ashton Vale: 1</li> <li>Compass Point: 3</li> <li>Luckwell: 10</li> <li>Redland Green: 5</li> <li>Unknown: 28</li> </ul>

#### Other Responses:

- 1) Parent at Cotham School
- 2) NUT Representative
- 3) Prospective Parent