



# Formal Consultation for a new Multi-Academy Trust in Bristol

Member Schools: Ashton Park Secondary, Ashton Vale Primary, Compass Point Primary, Luckwell Primary, Redland Green Secondary





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## Aim of the Consultations

The consultations are designed to share information and gather comments on the MAT proposal, to keep the school communities informed, receive and review any comments and provide additional information. Responses have been collated and used to inform the MAT implementation process.

## Outcome of the First Informal Consultation

The first consultation ran from 10 February 2017 to 4 June 2017. All schools posted the consultation documents on their websites simultaneously with links to the response forms. Notices were sent home to parents. Three thousand notices were distributed.

We had eighty responses. Eighty percent of these came from parents of the participating schools and other schools. Eleven percent came from staff. Others were from community members and others unspecified.

Sixty-five percent of the responses were positive and supportive of the MAT, benefits to staff and students and about the clarity and amount of information provided in the consultation documents. Twenty-five percent were a mix of general questions many on which were covered in the Q&As and other sections of the consultation documents. Ten percent were opposing views. Five percent were new questions or comments.

## Formal Consultation

This is the formal consultation to provide an update on the proposal, share new information, and collate the additional questions raised in the first consultation and responses to these queries and comments. You also have the opportunity to make further comments and these will be used to inform the successful implementation of the MAT. This formal Consultation closes on **Tuesday 31 October at 23:00 hours**.

## Why we are forming a new Multi-Academy Trust

As a group of schools, we have come together to improve the education in our schools to offer excellent learning and teaching for the children and young people in our care. We want to do this in a MAT that reflects our values, meets the specific needs of our local communities and preserves each school's distinctive ethos and identity. Working together provides an excellent opportunity for staff at all member schools to develop, progress professionally and strengthen our communities. Our shared ambition, embedded in cooperative and wider values, means that learning with and from each other will provide a secure base to develop a thriving community of schools.

## Our Values Statement

We are establishing a Multi Academy Trust built on strong core values, to drive rapid and sustainable school improvement so that each school is supported and engaged in raising standards, achievement and ambition for all, underpinned by cooperative and wider values. School individualities will be valued and preserved, yet they will feel part of community with a shared vision, mission and goals.



## Mission

All children are supported to achieve their best

- A local Bristol based MAT, built on a principle of equality and equity, where each individual school is known and well understood. Working alongside and in close collaboration with other local providers, MATs, LA, special schools, colleges and universities to improve outcomes for young people in Bristol and become a centre of excellence for diverse educational provision
- A MAT where the community and all partners have a clear voice in the development of the MAT and their respective schools
- A MAT connected to regional and national support networks, which broadens horizons, opportunities and support

## Vision

All children and partners are inspired to:

- Develop a passion for lifelong learning
- Build ambition, confidence and aspiration
- Foster a sense of resilience and perseverance
- Make a positive contribution to society
- Feel part of a collaborative and supportive network of schools and partners
- Share best practice and innovation to strengthen the network
- Promote pride and respect for each other's individual identity to allow each school to serve their diverse range of communities

## Our Commitment

We are committed as a MAT to working together to achieve:

- School improvement and the best outcomes for our young people both academically and in terms of personal and emotional well-being
- Develop highly skilled, well trained and motivated staff
- Coordinated operational and support services
- Sharing resources to ensure best value for money
- Developing high quality and coordinated enrichment opportunities across the MAT
- Growing and consolidating links with existing and new partners that improve the quality of provision and support we offer our young people and the community

## Name of the New MAT

The name of the new MAT is Gatehouse Green Learning Trust

## Opening Date

We have approval from the RSC / DfE to open on 1 January 2018. Schools joining have received their academy conversion orders.



## Original Informal Consultation on Proposal to form a Multi Academy Trust

For clarification and information about the aims of the proposal, frequently asked questions and the process.

### Executive summary

Governors and school leaders have been considering how the school should adapt to the fast-changing landscape for school governance, both nationally and in the region. We have considered many options, and believe that it is in the best interests of the school to form a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) to enable us to shape the next stage in our development. We are now proposing to set up a new, local, bespoke MAT, specifically with Ashton Park and Redland Green secondary schools and Ashton Vale. Compass point and Luckwell primary schools. We do not believe that we can stand still and there will be positive benefits in working with other schools, particularly if they are schools that we have chosen.

Our informal consultation aims raised awareness and informed people about the proposals and to gathered views from across our school community. It informed our future planning before the submission of a proposal to the Regional Schools' Commissioner.

The government (DfE) expects schools to support each other to develop and improve rather than relying on the local authority to provide that role. In Bristol there are several local and national Multi Academy Trusts which means a group of schools, which can be primary, secondary and special, are governed by one overarching trust board with day to day operational decisions taken by a local governing board.

As a group of schools, we are looking to create our own Bristol based Multi Academy Trust that reflects our values, meets the specific needs of our local communities and preserves each school's distinctive ethos and identity rather than join an existing trust or large national sponsored chain.

### What are the benefits in becoming a MAT?

- to enable governors and leaders to come together and take responsibility to provide better education in their community, rather than just in their individual schools, supported by a common ethos
- to facilitate sharing effective practice across a group of schools, so that when a particular approach has been shown to improve teaching and learning, it can be implemented across the MAT
- to ensure no school is left behind. The leader or chief executive of the MAT has the levers to secure improved performance of all the schools within the MAT, and is accountable for doing this
- to extend the reach of great leaders and governors – at all levels – to support and develop teachers across a wider group of schools
- to produce a pipeline of future leaders, by enabling a greater array of middle leadership positions



## First informal MAT Consultation FAQ

### All

#### **Why do you want to set up a Multi-Academy Trust?**

As a group of schools, we are looking to create our own Bristol based Multi-Academy Trust that reflects our values, meets the specific needs of our local communities and preserves each school's distinctive ethos and identity, rather than join an existing Trust or large National sponsored chain.

We want to create a new Bristol Multi Academy Trust. We believe this provides an excellent opportunity to improve the quality of learning and progress for the young people in our care, develop staff and strengthen communities. Our shared ambition, embedded in cooperative values and learning with and from each other, will provide a secure base to develop a thriving community of schools.

Cooperatives are based on the values of democracy, equality, equity, self-help, self-responsibility and solidarity, plus the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others. An integral feature of our Multi Academy Trust will be the establishment of engagement groups so the views of pupils, parents, staff, partners and the wider community are fully represented to shape the development of the Trust for the benefit of all it serves.

#### **What is an academy?**

A state funded independent school run by an academy trust; a legal body operating similarly to a charity. Whilst the academy is funded directly by the Government, it is no longer run by the Local Authority. This means that academies have more freedom and control. Redland Green School converted to a single academy trust (SAT) in 2012 and has a board of trustees who act as governors.

The Academy Trust enters into an agreement with the Secretary of State for Education that sets out its responsibilities and accountabilities for the effective running of the academy.

#### **What is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)?**

The group of schools which form the MAT share a common ethos and vision. There are a variety of MATs across the country – some are made up just of primary schools, some are just made up of faith schools (Church of England or Catholic). It is anticipated that this Multi-Academy Trust will be made up of both primary and secondary schools and may also include other special schools in the future.

A Multi-Academy Trust allows the academies to support and challenge each other to improve still further, as well as sharing the high quality staff and resources. The Local Governing Body is responsible to the Trust Board, who must comply with DfE guidance.

In our MAT, the Governors and Trust Board are also accountable to the Cooperative Members, i.e. pupils, parents, staff and the community.

As the name suggests, a Multi Academy Trust incorporates a number of schools which have become academies, governed by a single trust board. The trustees have overall responsibility and a Local Governing Body (LGB) is usually established for each one. In terms of decision making, the board of



trustees usually make strategic, operational decisions affecting all of the academies whereas the LGB tends to make day to day decisions about the respective school, much like a governing body for a single school (see pages for diagrams of this arrangement).

In terms of its legal status, a Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company, limited by guarantee. This means that it is registered at Companies House.

### **What is each school currently?**

Ashton Park Secondary School	Foundation Cooperative Trust LA maintained
Compass Point Primary School	Foundation Cooperative Trust LA maintained
Ashton Vale Primary School	Foundation Cooperative Trust LA maintained
Luckwell Primary School	Foundation Cooperative Trust LA maintained
Redland Green Secondary School	Standalone academy Converter

### **How many academies are there nationally?**

There are over 5000 academies in England. Nearly 20% of primary schools and 70% of secondary schools are academies.

### **Does a school have to convert to an MAT?**

No. However, the government's expectation is that all schools are committed to becoming academies and join a MAT by 2022. 'Good' and 'Outstanding' schools are being encouraged to convert to enable them to contribute to school-to-school support and improvement and underperforming schools may be required to convert. The government is also currently drafting legislation to trigger conversion of all schools within a local authority in two specific circumstances:

1. If a local authority area reaches a 'critical mass' where there are so many academies that it cannot support its remaining schools.
2. Where the local authority consistently fails to meet a minimum performance threshold across its schools, demonstrating an inability to bring about meaningful school improvement

### **What are the benefits in becoming a MAT?**

- Mutual support and challenge
- Sharing excellent practice in teaching and learning
- Enhanced professional development of teaching and support staff
- Greater opportunities for pupils to learn new skills and experience new activities
- A richer curriculum through partnership working and shared resources
- Attracting and retaining the most capable staff
- Financial and resource efficiencies through joint commissioning of services

### **Why do we need to change?**

We feel it is the right thing to do, the government is no longer forcing all schools to become academies however school improvement takes place through school-to-school support, a "self-improving system". We feel that we would like to be in control of our own destiny and make a



positive choice about the partner schools that we would wish to work with. The Governors feel that the opportunity to become an equal partner in a locally based trust directly benefits our children.

**What is the proposed name of the MAT?**

Gatehouse Green Learning Trust

**When will the MAT be formed?**

It takes about 6 months to complete the risk assessments and have the plans approved by the DfE.

**Will other schools join the MAT?**

Given the government’s drive for schools to becoming academies, it is likely that other schools will join the MAT over time. We believe we are developing a very attractive MAT that will be very appealing to schools with similar values who also believe in a local, Bristol based model of education.

**How large will the MAT grow?**

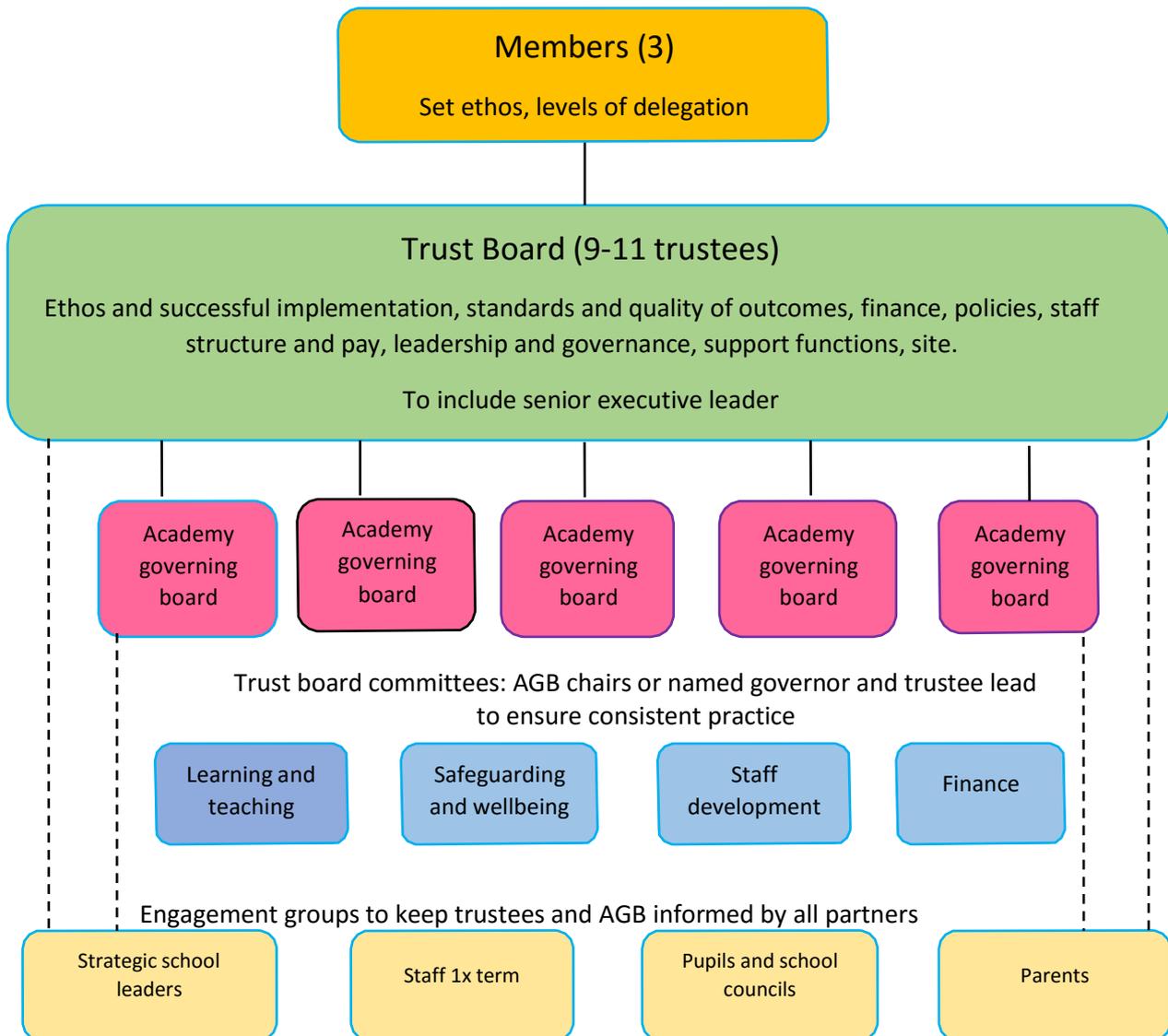
The MAT would, in the first instance, consolidate its ‘Starter Trust’ status which, by definition, is ‘a new MAT with up to 5 schools in one region’. However it is likely that other schools will join the trust in following years.

**Would schools within the MAT still work with and support schools that are not part of the MAT as we do now?**

Absolutely. We all have a long history of working closely and collaboratively with schools, both locally and across the City. There would be no change in this approach. We believe very strongly in a self-supporting and self-improving educational sector. We will still work closely with Bristol City Council and the local authority to support the best opportunities and outcomes for all young people in Bristol.

## What is the proposed governance structure within the MAT?

This is still to be confirmed, however a draft structure is shown here:



Information and discussion lines refer to all engagement groups to each governing body and to the trust board but have not been repeated for clarity.



## Who will make decisions in the proposed MAT?

This is still to be confirmed, however DfE (Department for Education) identifies the following four levels of responsibility and this table shows the types of decision which will be taken at each level:

Level of governance	What decisions take place at this level?	Comments
<b>Members (3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set the ethos</li> <li>Decide the structure of the MAT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This exists in all academy trusts</li> <li>Appointment based on skills and knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Trust Board</b>  9-11 trustees working for the benefit of the trust Includes CEO  CEO is accountable to the trust board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethos values and vision and their effective implementation</li> <li>Policies</li> <li>Staff wellbeing</li> <li>Curriculum structure</li> <li>Staff structure, pay, and deployment</li> <li>Staff: recruitment of headteachers and senior MAT personnel in shared functions (eg finance)</li> <li>Succession planning</li> <li>Finance of MAT and delegation of funding to schools</li> <li>Term and INSET dates</li> <li>Quality assurance of outcomes for students</li> <li>Leadership and governance of MAT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This level of governance would exist in all models</li> <li>Appointments based on skills and knowledge of trustees relevant to the trust</li> </ul>
Cluster: could be phase, or location or partnership between two /three schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training</li> <li>Students' activities</li> <li>Staff deployment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal structure not in place until MAT is 6 schools plus, however when 0-5 schools school leaders meet regularly.</li> </ul>
School / academy Governing board and SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching and learning</li> <li>Student interventions</li> <li>Enrichment</li> <li>Parental engagement</li> <li>Staff induction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for one school / academy only</li> <li>Will include parent and staff governors</li> </ul>

None of the governors, trustees or members are paid for their responsibilities to the MAT, unless they are employees, therefore the governance structure will not take money which should be spent to teaching and resources.



### **What is the role of the Members?**

- Meet once a year at the AGM. Appoint and remove trustees
- Amend and approve changes to the MAT's Articles of Association

### **What is the role of the Trustees?**

- Set the strategic direction. Create robust accountability
- Make sure all public money is spent fairly and effectively
- Ensure high quality of educational provision by standards, achievement and plans for improvement and making sure there is rapid progress for all pupils
- Ensure compliance with charity and company law and make sure the funding agreement is met

### **What is the role of the local governing bodies?**

- Support and challenge the leadership of the school
- Ensure high quality teaching and learning and excellent outcomes for all groups of children
- Ensure outstanding personal development and wellbeing for students
- Support the vision of the MAT

### **Is there a set model for how a MAT has to operate?**

The MAT's constitution is based on the DfE's model Articles of Association, but subject to certain prescribed policy requirements, the way in which a MAT operates, its governance structure and its vision and ethos are largely defined by the academy or academies that set up the MAT.

There are rules regarding how a MAT is funded. The MAT must comply with its funding agreement with the DfE.

### **How much local responsibility will remain with each school?**

This is for discussion and agreement with the governors, trustees and members of the MAT. We want to involve all schools who are interested in joining the MAT in the development of the structure, scheme of delegation and the level of local responsibility which will remain with each school. Each academy in the MAT will have an AGB (Academy Governing Body) which will have responsibility for a range of areas, such as curriculum, behaviour, etc. The AGB of each school would be able to have governors from a range of backgrounds and, in particular, would continue to have both parent and staff governor representatives.

### **What is the proposed role of the Headteachers in the MAT?**

The Headteacher of one of the partner schools will become the Executive Headteacher / CEO of the MAT and accounting officer so there is a single point of accountability.

The Headteacher / Principals of the other schools would remain as the substantive Headteacher / Principal of their individual schools.



## Does a school receive financial assistance to convert to an academy?

A converting school may receive a grant paid by the government to cover legal and other costs incurred during the conversion process.

### **Who funds a MAT?**

A MAT is funded by the government just as local authority maintained schools and single academy trusts are also funded by the state. The difference is that, for a state maintained school, the government pays the money to the local authority (Bristol City Council) who then pays it to the school, whereas both single academy trusts and multi-academy trusts get their money directly from the government. The basic level of funding is calculated in exactly the same way whether the school is a local authority maintained school or an academy.

### **Some academy chains have made large profit, how will you make sure this does not happen?**

Our approach is all about working together with local schools to provide the best possible education in Bristol. All the money we receive will be spent on the education of our children. Early MATs or those with business sponsors had high funding.

### **How will you ensure the MAT continues to be financially viable?**

There will be robust financial planning and due diligence before expanding or taking on new schools. The aim is for the trust to deliver high quality education which is cost effective and value for money. There will be opportunities to challenge and support existing practice, and build on what we know works well. We will be able to coordinate the effective use of staff, including improving the quality of professional development. It may be possible to generate income through providing services to other schools outside the MAT. Trustees will have the responsibility to ensure the trust, including all schools, are fully compliant in all financial matters. There can be efficiencies in procurement and in the way we organise support functions such as finance, facilities management, IT support and human resources.

### **Does a school receive more money as an academy?**

No. Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as local authority maintained schools but they have greater freedom and autonomy on how they spend the funding.

However school will receive a grant to cover the cost of conversion to an Academy.

### **Will there be big pay increases for the school leaders?**

Each governing body will set the pay scale in conjunction with the Trust Board for their school. They will pay the leaders from their own budget. These salary ranges will be set in relation to the School Teachers Pay and Conditions document. The Trust Board will review central salaries and have the oversight and accountability for the allocation of this public funding. This is not an exercise in creating excessive salaries for the MAT leaders.



## Pupils and Parents

### **Would the school lose its identity if it becomes a MAT?**

No, our own unique identity and ethos would remain, as our school uniform and logos would remain the same. An obligation of the MAT would be to protect the unique identity and ethos of each of the schools within the MAT. We would develop a new logo and identity for the MAT and each school would use that as an additional identifier.

### **How would converting to an Academy benefit the pupils?**

Becoming an academy within a strong MAT will give the school more freedom to make decisions about the best ways to provide an outstanding education for the children. This can allow for more unique and innovative approaches to teaching and learning, improving the experience and performance of the children as a result. Opportunities for students will be greater, for example in minority subjects at GCSE or in activities such as music and the arts through support for small group activities which may not normally be viable.

### **How are the pupils affected on a day-to-day basis?**

In many ways, the children will not notice any difference. The school may keep the same uniform and students will be in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff, who will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all children. However, in time, the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the experience for the children.

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

No, in our MAT that is a decision for the school. Redland Green would retain its name as it is already a standalone Academy. Other schools may replace the word school with academy to reflect its change in status. There are no planned changes to either schools' logo or uniform.

### **Will the school day change?**

There are no plans to change the length or structure of the school day; however, should this facilitate greater opportunities for collaboration, supported learning and improved outcomes, we may consider it in the future.

### **Will the school be open for more weeks in the year?**

We will continue to be open for 38 weeks per year for pupils as required by current legislation.

### **Will there be changes to the curriculum?**

All schools will be responsible for their own curriculum development. Any changes that occur over time will be in the best interests of the pupils in each school. Working collaboratively on curriculum design and delivery means we can be at the forefront of the best educational practice. In times of financial cutbacks, being part of a MAT provides an opportunity to run joint classes, for example for minority subjects at GCSE which would not be viable in a single school. Primary schools can enrich their curriculum in specialist areas through working with the secondary schools. Staff in secondary



schools can easily keep up to date in the latest improvements in primary education for example maths mastery.

### **How will we be sure that all schools maintain their strengths and continue to improve?**

It will be an essential part of planning school improvement in any area to ensure this does not have a negative effect on another group of pupils or another school. Building capacity among the staff will be a priority to make sure we undertake school improvement work successfully. All joint interventions will be carefully considered, including the potential risks to partners or other aspects of the school. We will monitor and evaluate the impact of any changes to make sure they are leading to improvement for all pupils and staff in the MAT. We know that together we can achieve more than working individually (see [Multi Academy Trusts good practice guide](#) pages 29, 37, 50 for examples of the factors we will have to consider).

### **How will schools in the MAT work together to feel a part of a single organisation?**

We will establish and share the clear vision for the academy trust. Its core purpose will be to drive school improvement in all our schools. We will share our principles and values and be transparent about making decisions and sharing information. Roles and responsibilities and lines of accountability will be clear so everyone in the trust understands how we are working together to achieve our core purpose. Engagement groups, which include staff, students, parents and the community, will be involved through the schemes of delegation.

### **Will the schools' responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs (SEN) change?**

No. Responsibilities in relation to SEN are covered by the same Code of Practice as with maintained schools. A child with an EHCP (Education Health Care Plan) can nominate an academy as their school of choice. All schools will retain their commitment to inclusion as a core value.

### **Will admissions to the schools be affected?**

No. Each school would retain its current admission arrangements and any future changes would be in line with the School Admissions Code.

### **Will the current school leaders spend more time running the Multi-Academy Trust rather than focusing on the teaching and learning at their school?**

Setting up and running Multi Academy Trust will require extra strategic and administrative work, particularly in the early stages. However, we will be using start-up funding from the government to project manage this process and to get the partnership up and running. A few members of staff across the partnership may split their time between partnership activities and their responsibilities in their own schools. Where this is the case the school will be compensated from central funds to release their time. The strategic leaders will continue to be fully focused on delivering high quality teaching and learning and will benefit from developing their skills as they work across the trust. [Multi Academy Trusts good practice guide](#) pp 26, 37, 50.



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### **How will parents have a say in the running of the school?**

Parents and families will continue to be represented on local governing bodies through elected governors. Parents will also have the opportunity to share their views through engagement groups and the usual channels, which will be established over the first year.

### **Will the MAT be free from the Ofsted inspection regime?**

No. Academies are inspected in the same way as maintained schools and each school will continue to be inspected individually. The performance of all schools will continue to be monitored and, if there are signs of deterioration or other factors likely to cause concern, these could trigger an inspection.

If a school converts to an academy, they will not have an Ofsted inspection in the first two years, however standards will still be checked by the Department for Education.



## Staff and Governors

### **How will being an academy affect staff?**

After conversion, all staff at the school will be employed by the Academy Trust. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. This is explained further below.

The Trust will adopt in full the National Pay and Conditions for teachers and local government workers (Green Book).

The Trust will recognise unions and professional associations.

### **How are the staff's contracts of employment protected?**

Legislation known as the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employees) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) is a piece of legislation designed to protect the rights of employees who may be subject to a change in the legal identity of their employer. These regulations set out that employee terms and conditions such as pay, pension and policies are protected at the point of transfer, and the Academy inherits all rights, liabilities and obligations in relation to them. The regulations also provide that the current employer must consult with unions, professional associations and staff on the transfer.

### **Can the school alter staff pay and conditions?**

Unlike maintained schools, academies are not bound to follow nationally agreed conditions such as the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, Conditions of Service for School Teachers (Burgundy Book) or the NJC National Agreement on Pay and Conditions in Local Government (Green Book).

As explained above, these terms are protected for staff transferring under TUPE; however, for new staff appointed after the transfer, the MAT could, in theory, offer alternative rates of pay. Like any employer, the Trust could propose to change terms and conditions in the future. We are not proposing to change this in any negative way. We want our MAT to be attractive in terms of recruiting and retaining high quality staff.

### **How will future pay awards be decided?**

The Trust will seek to adopt the national and local agreements for annual pay awards approved between unions and employers for teachers and support staff respectively. The Trust will consult with staff, unions and professional associations on these pay awards each year. We will ensure that all staff across the Trust are equitably treated.

### **If these schools becomes an Academy Trust, who takes responsibility for the pension arrangements of staff?**

The Academy Trust will have an agreement with the Secretary of State, making it a requirement to offer participation in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) to all teaching staff and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to all support staff, just as if staff were employed in a Local Authority maintained school.



The TPS runs teachers pensions on behalf of the Department for Education. As the employer, the Academy Trust would be responsible for collecting and paying employer and employee contributions to the TPS and for all other administrative responsibilities set out in the Teachers' Pensions Regulations. The TPS determines the employer and employee pension contributions, which cannot be varied. Any future changes will be decided by the TPS, not the Academy Trust. Benefits paid to teachers on retirement are not affected by academy status. There are similar arrangements for all staff who are part of the local government pension scheme

**Will staff be made to work in other schools in the MAT?**

Staff will have the opportunity to request to work in other schools to gain professional development as opportunities arise. Anybody who is currently employed by one of the schools cannot be forced to move to another school due to TUPE arrangements. New employees will be employed by the trust and may be asked to work in more than one school.



## School Specific Questions

### **What will happen to the North Bristol Post 16 Centre**

This partnership will continue and deliver excellent education for the students who attend. The formation of this MAT will not affect the partnership.

### **What will happen to Claremont Special School for children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties?**

Redland Green School is located on the same site as Claremont and there are agreements to share services such as catering and premises. Claremont is maintained by the local authority and will continue to be so.

### **What will happen to the South West Bristol Community Learning Trust?**

It will continue as a community hub BS3 connect.

### **What will happen to the Children's Centre Health Visitor service at Compass Point?**

It will return to the remit of the local authority.

### **What will happen to the Sports Centre at APS?**

Ashton Park Sports Centre is an integral part of our community engagement work and fulfils the needs of the school, Schools Sport Partnership and wider community. We are very proud of the Sports Centre and the work it does; therefore it is our intention to maintain it as a community facility. The funding agreement requires it to remain open to the public until 2025, but we plan to extend this beyond that date.

### **What will happen to the Gatehouse at APS?**

The Gatehouse restoration was achieved through excellent partnership, working with a range of external bodies. The funding agreement ensures it remains open to the public until 2046 at least. As per the Sports Centre, we plan to establish this as a community facility beyond the funding terms and agreement.

### **What will happen to our community based activities. Eg Handfuls of Harmony and Schools Sports Partnership**

We are very proud of these activities as they enrich the life of the school. They will continue to flourish and, hopefully, will be extended to wider a range of schools and young people so they can be further enhanced in the future.



Further reading and information about Multi Academy Trusts from Department of Education

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/576240/Multi-academy\\_trusts\\_good\\_practice\\_guidance\\_and\\_expectations\\_for\\_growth.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/576240/Multi-academy_trusts_good_practice_guidance_and_expectations_for_growth.pdf)



# Responses to the Informal Consultation on Proposal to form a Multi Academy Trust

## Introduction

The Multi Academy Trust informal consultation concluded on Monday 6 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 schools' 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 cooperative 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 puts 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's 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 Headteacher's presentation to the PTA was very useful and reassured us it was the right decision for the school (3)



- The school's 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 Headteacher.*
- 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 a closely knit learning community where schools are already working together in a variety of partnerships. 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.*



## 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)  
*The trustees have oversight of all schools equally.*
- 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 changes 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.*
- 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) We follow rigorous financial process to ensure value for money.  
*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 on many areas, however all spending will be subject to scrutiny by the trustees and the DfE.*
- 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 Headteachers 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.*

*Update: the Headteachers Board approved this proposal on 31 August 2017.*
- 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 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, 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)  
*Staff and governors at Redland Green recognise the benefits of working with other schools; it provides professional development and enhances the curriculum as well as providing benefits to other schools.*
- What extra advantages does that MAT bring to schools that are already part of the cooperative 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 we 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 of 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's position will be transparent and open to all Headteachers 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's 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

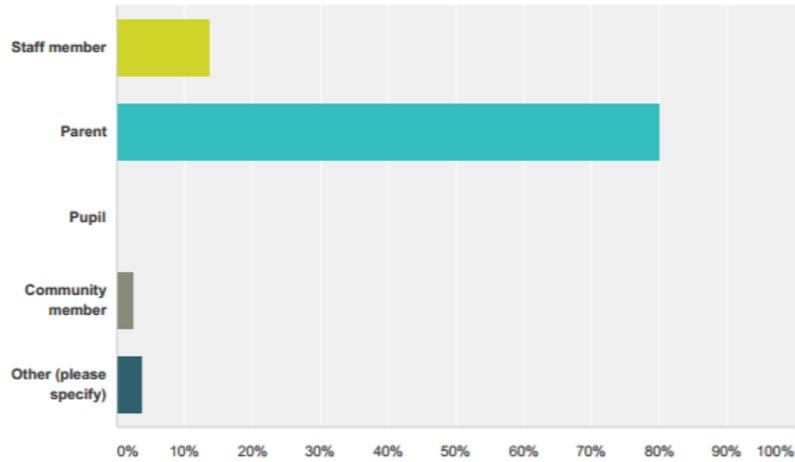
The final question asked if anyone would like to join the mailing list for further information. All respondents who left an email address and requested further information received a copy of the Informal Consultation Feedback directly.



## 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