



Proposal for new Multi-Academy Trust in Blackburn

Formal Consultation

Wednesday 14th November 2018
to Friday 14th December 2018

Member Schools

Blackburn Central High School
Crosshill School

Communication Address

Blackburn Central High School with Crosshill
Haslingden Road • Blackburn • BB2 3HJ

Consultation on a proposal for both Blackburn Central High School and Crosshill School to change from Foundation Trust Schools to form a Multi-Academy Trust

Consultation period

Wednesday 14th November 2018 to Friday 14th December 2018

Proposed conversion

1st April 2019

Aim of the consultation

In relation to Blackburn Central High School and Crosshill School, the consultation has been designed to share information and gather comments on the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) proposal, to keep school and local communities informed, receive and review any comments and provide additional information.

Responses to the consultation will be collated and used to inform the MAT implementation process.

Why are we forming a new Multi-Academy Trust

As two separate schools, we have worked together to improve the education in our schools and to offer excellent learning and teaching for the children and young people in our care. We want to form 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 for a number of years has provided an excellent opportunity for staff within both schools. We believe that forming a MAT will allow both 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 that share the same vision and values as our current schools.

Our Current Trust

The mission of our current Trust is to provide every student with a caring, inclusive, safe and secure learning environment which encourages and promotes a culture of academic excellence and outstanding achievement in all aspects of school life.

Our mission is that we develop the whole young person: emotionally, socially, behaviourally and academically. All students will demonstrate mutual respect and tolerance for all, promoting fundamental British values.

Vision of the Multi-Academy Trust

All students within any school within the MAT will achieve highly and go beyond what others thought possible, regardless of background, need or prior attainment in a culture of high expectations and support. Through providing a first-class education through partnership and innovation; world class teaching, unique in school therapy solutions, inspiring environment and innovative curriculum.

All staff will continue to be supported in developing and sharing their expertise, knowledge and skills through a culture of collaboration and high expectations across all schools within the MAT.

We believe that we are stronger and better working together and that the quality of partnership between schools and all stakeholders is critical to success. Together by pooling resources we are able to provide a richer provision; academic and therapeutic in the pursuit of excellence for all our children.

We believe that all our schools should be at the heart of their communities where they work in partnerships and collaborations with other agencies to raise aspirations, expectations and ultimately life chances for our young people.

Our Commitment

We believe that working together in a MAT strengthens our offer to:

- Achieve the best outcomes for our young people both academically and in terms of personal and emotional well-being
- Provide opportunities to develop highly skilled, well trained and motivated staff across a range of areas
- Provide career opportunities
- Provide coordinated operational and support services
- Share resources to ensure efficiencies and best value for money
- Develop high quality and coordinated enrichment opportunities across the MAT
- Grow and consolidate 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 Multi-Academy Trust

The name of the new MAT is the Champion Education Trust.

Opening Date for Lotus School in Blackpool

We are working towards a Spring 2020 opening for our new Lotus School in Blackpool, however this may be brought forward if we can accommodate it.

What is an academy?

An academy is an independent school which is funded by the state. It is independent of the local authority and receives its funding direct from central government.

It is proposed that BCHS and Crosshill will become academies as the founding schools of the Champion Education Trust. This means that ethos and values of both schools will be retained and form the foundations for the ethos and values of the Champion Education Trust.

What is the current status of each school?

Both Blackburn Central High School and Crosshill School are Foundation Trust state schools, and are independent of the local authority. The governors are our employers.

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 under-performing 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:

- If a Local Authority area reaches a 'critical mass' where there are so many academies that it cannot support its remaining schools
- 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?

- Academies are independent of local authority control – this means that academies have more freedom about how they conduct themselves
- Currently some funding is retained by the local authority for the provision of central services
- Shared resources – due to rising costs it is vital that we collaborate with other schools to share the cost of providing resources across a number of schools. For example minibuses, HR
- Shape our own destiny – we will create a trust that has the values and ethos of BCHS with Crosshill and grow the trust with like minded schools
- Growth – a trust can make applications for new schools where there is a demand for that type of provision, all new schools must belong to a trust (in the Blackpool we have done this in partnership with the Local Authority)
- Grants and funding – a trust can bid for funding to improve the quality of provision where a stand alone school can not
- Capacity to develop our unique specialism – improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children by sharing and growing our expertise
- Opportunities for career progression and development
- As companies academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects

Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?

The Champion Education Trust will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety, and property maintenance. However, as mentioned above, we do a lot of this for ourselves already. In addition academies receive slightly more funding from central government to help them meet these additional costs.

In the past one of the Authorities functions was to provide school improvement with funding cuts. This no longer exists and schools have to provide this for themselves, and is more effective when schools can work together.

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 the system is geared to make it more advantageous; school improvement takes place through school-to-school support, a "self-improving system".

In summary we feel we are both outstanding schools that have a lot to offer other schools. It is very hard to get the right recognition and access to funding that we currently deserve. Multi-Academy Trust status opens doors. We would like to be in control of our own destiny and make a positive choice about the partner schools that we work with.

The Governors feel that by forming a MAT we have the ability to the opportunity to benefit our children.

Next steps

Subject to decisions made by Governors from both Blackburn Central High School and Crosshill School, the estimated time-line for the stages of the process are set out below:

Stage	Date
Public consultation lasts 4 weeks and is a chance for you to submit your views on the proposal	Wednesday 14th November to Friday 14th December 2018
Governors from both schools will consider the consultation feedback and decide whether to pursue the academy conversion orders	January 2019
Proposed Academy conversion date	1st April 2019

How to submit comments on this proposal

Please complete the anonymous survey on our website at <http://bchs.co.uk/academisation-blackburn-central-high-school-crosshill/>

Your feedback is very important to us, please respond by midnight Friday 14th December 2018 if you would like the school Governors to consider your views.