



Consultation on the question of whether or not Hannah More Primary School (HMPS) should convert to academy status within Cathedral Schools Trust.

Key information

- **How long is the consultation open for?**

The consultation will close on 21st May 2018.

- **How do I make my views known?**

There are a number of options available to you which are set out at the end of this document.

- **How do I find out more?**

Please come along to our Parents' Voice meeting on Friday 13th April at 9.30am OR our consultation evening on 30 April 2017 at 5pm

Current position

The governing body of Hannah More Primary School is considering whether or not the school should convert to an academy within the Cathedral Schools Trust. The governing body has applied to the DfE for an academy order, which is an 'in principle' decision of the DfE as to whether the proposal would be acceptable to the DfE. An academy order is not a final decision of either the governing body or the DfE.

Before making a decision as to whether or not to proceed, the governing body is keen to hear all of your views on the question. This document provides further information on the pros and cons of conversion to help you respond to the consultation.

How will the consultation impact on the governing body's decision?

The governing body will not take a final decision on the question until the consultation process is complete. You can comment in writing or by coming to one of our consultation sessions. You can also make an appointment to meet with Amy Creech, Chair of Governors or Sue Ramsay, Head teacher if you would like to discuss the proposal further. The governors will then consider any comments and representations received before making a final decision.

What is the proposal ?

The governors are exploring whether to convert the school to academy status within the Cathedral Schools Trust. If the governors decide to proceed, this would be effective from 1 September 2018 or as soon as possible after that.

What is Cathedral Schools Trust?

Cathedral Schools Trust is a multi-academy trust in the South West. The trust currently includes four schools:

- Bristol Cathedral Choir School – a secondary academy,
- Cathedral Primary School - a free school
- Victoria Park Primary – a primary academy
- Headley Park Primary - a primary academy

Cathedral Schools Trust believes in education that encourages young people to be imaginative, knowledgeable, hopeful and equipped to make significant decisions; it believes that children should be safe, healthy and happy. They value diversity, encourage excellence and believe that strong and trusting relationships are at the heart of good education.

Within the multi academy trust they want every pupil to have:

- An outstanding, inspiring classroom experience
- An education tolerant of other world views and interpretations
- Access to an enriched musical curriculum and support
- The opportunity to develop academically and personally through access to appropriate curricular and co-curricular education

Cathedral Schools Trust welcomes children of all faiths and none and hopes to create a community of learning that embraces teachers, students and their families. There will be a focus on working in partnership, with a rigorous but collegiate approach to support and challenge between school leaders, staff and governors. It will support and build leadership and management capacity, and it will value and encourage the continual professional learning of staff. Cathedral Schools Trust will always seek to improve.

What are the benefits of becoming an academy?

The governors are exploring this option as they consider that:

- as a school we will positively benefit from partnering with other schools and believe that schools working together get better results for their children, and help us to attract and retain great staff;
- academy status would ensure that the school has more freedom to choose how it spends its money in the best interests of the pupils; and
- working together as a group of schools within the Cathedral Schools Trust allows us to collaborate with other schools to create efficiencies in how we buy supplies and in the opportunities that we make available to our students and staff; and
- the experience and expertise of Cathedral Schools Trust would ensure that we can improve the performance of our school and that pupils will benefit from better access to resources and facilities, for example through access to specialist music expertise.

What are the negative aspects of becoming an academy?

There are some additional finance requirements of being an academy as it is a charitable company. One of the benefits of being within a group arrangement such as Cathedral Schools Trust is that this burden would be shared and we would benefit from their experience of operating within the academy sector since 2008.

If we agree to join CST, the trustees will have the ultimate say on how the school is structured and operates, so there could, in theory, be a transfer of decision making away from the Local Governing Body and Headteacher. However, CST's Scheme of Governance make it clear that the day to day running and decision making will remain in the hands of the Headteacher and Governors. The trust would only intervene to support the school should concerns arise about education standards or the effective management of the school.

Why don't we just stay the way we are?

Governors are concerned about:

- the continuing ability of the local authority to support the school into the future; and
- the ability of the school to respond to the continued drop in funding (in real terms) as a stand-alone school.

The government's preferred direction of travel for education in England continues to be that schools should become academies within multi-academy trusts. The governors have explored the various options available and consider that Cathedral Schools Trust is the best option available to the school.

How do I respond to this consultation?

There are a number of options open to you:

- to send any comments by email to Amy Creech at chairhannahmorep@bristol-schools.uk with the subject "Academy Consultation"
- deliver any hand written comments to the school reception marked "Academy Consultation – FAO Amy Creech"
- attend the Parents' Voice meeting with Governors and Cathedral schools trust staff on 13th April at 9.15am
- attend our consultation evening on 30th April 2018 at 5pm
- arrange a meeting with Sue Ramsay the headteacher or Amy Creech, Chair of Governors by contacting Amy by email or Ms Ramsay through the school office on 01179039936.

Please respond by 21st May 2018 in order that the governors will have the opportunity to take your response into account when making its decision.

Frequently asked questions and answers

What does this mean for staff?

Were the school to convert, the staff would transfer to Cathedral Schools Trust under the 'TUPE Regulations'. These Regulations ensure that staff transfer on their existing terms and conditions. Pensions for staff would also remain unaffected.

Within a multi-academy trust structure such as Cathedral Schools Trust there might also be the opportunity for staff to work in another school within the group, should they wish to. There are also opportunities for joint CPD and staff development.

Will the trust take over decision making on staff structures and appointments?

Decisions regarding staffing structures and appointments will remain with the Headteacher and Governors of Hannah More Primary School. However, any major appointments, such as a Headteacher or a comprehensive restructuring, will need to be ratified by the trust's Executive Principal and trustees. As the trust develops there may be opportunities to create joint appointments if required.

Will Ms Ramsay still be our headteacher? What about the other staff? Will our children be taught by people we don't know?

Ms Ramsay will remain as Headteacher and the pay and conditions of all staff will be protected and they will continue to work at Hannah More. Over time we do expect our children to benefit from and participate in additional enrichment activities which may be delivered by staff members from wider CST schools, for example in music and sport. There will also be some shared back office support staff.

How would the school be funded and will Hannah More have more money?

As an academy, the school will be funded centrally by the Education Funding Agency (EFA), but the level of funding would be as determined by returns provided by the local authority. In terms of capital funding, the school would also be able to bid for additional funds through the EFA's Condition Improvement Fund.

We are aware that pressure on school funding is increasing year on year. While converting to an academy will not mean that we will receive more money, we will have more control over how our funding is spent. We also envisage that the sharing of resources across the Trust will generate savings and better value for money, which will free up funding that will be spent within our school.

Would the school still have a governing body?

Yes. Cathedral Schools Trust has a board of trustees which would oversee the school as well as the other schools for which it was responsible. In addition, there would continue to be a local governing body which would have elected parent and staff representatives, as well as individuals drawn from the local community.

How would the admissions arrangements work?

There is no proposal that the admissions arrangements for the school would change were the school

to convert. As an academy, Cathedral Schools Trust would be responsible for our admissions and we would make the decisions in accordance with our published admission arrangements. We would however continue to be part of the local authority's co-ordinated admission arrangements.

We would continue to bound by and comply with:

- the School Admission Code and the School Admissions Appeal Codes; and
- the local authority's Fair Access Protocol

Will our children get priority admission to the BCCS secondary school (one of the schools in CST)?

No, the admissions criteria for BCCS secondary school will not change. Hannah More Primary School is not a feeder school for BCCS. Parents will be able to continue to apply in the same way as they do now.

How would the school change?

On a day to day basis, the pupils, parents and teaching staff would probably see little change should we decide to become an academy and join the Cathedral Schools Trust. Some new systems would need to be put in place e.g. for finance but we would ensure that all staff are fully supported to meet this change.

Over the longer term, we consider that the move to collaborate within the Cathedral Schools Trust group of schools will provide more opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through additional enrichment activities and to work with children of different ages and from different schools.

Would the uniforms or term dates change?

No there is no proposal for the uniform or term dates to change.

Why join a trust and not be an academy on our own?

Guidance from the Department for Education is clear that most schools will form or join multi-academy trusts, rather than become stand-alone academies. Guidance from December 2016 states that 'Where academies choose to work together in MATs they can become more efficient organisations, provide better opportunities to develop and retain their staff, both in teaching and in leadership, and develop innovative approaches to support learning.' (*Multi-academy trusts; December 2016*).

Would the school have the same name?

Yes

Is the school being forced down the academy route?

No. It is the choice of the Governors to explore this route

Will we still be a community school?

We will no longer be classed as a 'Community School' because we will be converting to an academy. However, Governors are determined that Hannah More Primary School will remain at the centre of our community and that all of our community activities will continue.

Will Hannah More Primary School become a church school? How will this influence what my children experience/are taught?

Hannah More Primary School will not become a faith school and there will be no change to the designation. CST are establishing a trust where children of all faiths and none are welcome and there will be no change to the way religious education is taught.

Which are the other schools in the Trust? Will it grow bigger? Will Hannah More be an equal in the trust?

Cathedral Schools Trust includes Bristol Cathedral Choir School, Cathedral Primary School, Victoria Park Primary and Headley Park Primary. It has been approved to open a secondary free school – Trinity Academy – in north Bristol, with a provisional opening date of September 2019.

CST have communicated their intention to grow modestly over the next couple of years to around 6-8 schools. They want to create a multi-academy trust where all schools play an equal role in shaping their approach and bringing their expertise to benefit the wider community.

What do we have in common with Cathedral Schools Trust? Do we really share the same values?

Through our meetings with representatives from CST and visits by Governors and Senior Leaders, Governors are convinced that the values and ethos of the schools are well aligned. All schools, while ambitious for children to succeed, believe enrichment and nurturing are paramount to a child's development and education. In addition, we support the emphasis that CST places on celebrating diversity and protecting the unique nature of individual schools.

Bristol Cathedral Choir School, one of the schools in the Trust, is quite academic or so I've heard. I want my children to have a rounded education. How can you guarantee they will get this?

Governors had considered other trusts and found that Cathedral Schools Trust shares our views around nurturing a broad based curriculum beyond just the subjects tested. If we join CST, Hannah More will retain control of its curriculum and maintain its emphasis on giving children a well-rounded and enlightened education.

What about the governing body's obligations under the Equality Act?

The governors are mindful of their duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and

persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are:-

- (a) age;
- (b) disability;
- (c) gender re-assignment;
- (d) pregnancy and maternity;
- (e) race;
- (f) religion or belief;
- (g) sex; and
- (h) sexual orientation.

The governing body will be carrying out its own assessment of any such impact on the protected characteristics of a decision to move forward with academy status, but if there is anything related to this which you would like to draw to the governors' attention, please get in touch.

Who are the governors?

The Governors' profiles can be found on the school's website. If you would like to talk to any of the governors please contact them via the chair's email address, or talk to them at any of the parent information meetings.