



15th April 2024

Dear parents and carers,

Potential multi-academy trust involving Hall Green Secondary School, Kings Norton Girls' School, and Swanshurst School

I wrote to you in February to advise that Hall Green Secondary School, Kings Norton Girls' School, and Swanshurst School were exploring whether to form a multi-academy trust (MAT). This letter provides an update about that exploration.

Each Governing Body has agreed to continue that exploration and has agreed to submit an application to the Department for Education (DfE) for the necessary permission in order to determine whether the DfE is supportive. This in-principle decision is not a final decision. It does not authorise establishing a MAT or, in Swanshurst's case, becoming an academy. As I said in my previous letter, final decisions would only be taken after due diligence and consultation.

If the final decision is to form a multi-academy trust, it is proposed that it would be called West Midlands Academy Trust (WMAT). Governors have also agreed some draft principles for WMAT that are shown at the end of this letter. As we engage with stakeholders before a final decision is taken, we will test and develop these principles to ensure that they accurately reflect what we would want WMAT to stand for.

The earliest that public consultation about whether to form WMAT would take place would be the second half of this term, and the earliest that WMAT would be formed (if that is the decision of each Governing Body and if it is approved by the DfE) is January 2025. As I have said in my previous letter, these timings are indicative at this stage.

Yours sincerely

Mrs N Raggett
Headteacher



Draft principles for West Midlands Academy Trust (WMAT)

Mission

- Relentless focus upon delivering an excellent Quality of Education, resulting in strong progress and attainment for all groups of pupils.
- Emphasis upon personal development and well-being for staff and pupils.

Culture

- High ambitions and high expectations for all staff and pupils.
- Individual school identities matter – names, logo, uniform etc – not a ‘corporate look’.
- Staff focused culture – role of leaders is to facilitate outstanding provision, supporting and enabling all staff to perform exceptionally well and in pupils’ best interests.
- Collaborative practice – in all aspects of the trust (peer review, policy development) – horizontal and vertical – collaboration within and between schools is the cultural norm and is built into quality assurance / review processes in all aspects of trust operations.
- Collective responsibility – an issue is everyone’s issue, every pupil and staff member is of equal importance across the trust.
- Responsive to context, while strategic in approach – i.e. not one size fits all, but always looking towards the future implications or options.

Operations

- Earned autonomy with accountability – i.e. potentially variable delegations / school freedoms based upon performance and risk.
- Central services where they achieve more and / or cost less and / or enhance school leadership capacity to focus on educational provision and where they are accountable to, and work collaboratively with, Headteachers and the executive team.
- Central policies where they increase the ability to collaborate, reduce the risk of non-compliance, and reduce workload.
- Financial sustainability:
 - School led budgeting (including reserves being retained) with expectation of all schools being financially self-sufficient.
 - Maximise funding spent on direct T&L / pupil support.
- “Good growth” – i.e. the right schools at the right time.
- Safe and stimulating physical environment.