



**Cronton CofE
Primary School**

The purpose of this document is to provide a consolidated list of questions and answers from the Multi Academy Trust consultation document of January 2016.

We have included a glossary (final page) to explain any abbreviations that may appear in this document.

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Responses to Consultation Document

1. Do Halewood and Cronton become one school on two separate campus?
 - No, they will remain as two separate schools but will work closely together as part of the MAT.

2. Does this mean at any point that Cronton children may have to be taught at Halewood campus and vice versa?
 - No, those families who apply for and are successful in gaining a place at either school will remain at that school and on that site throughout their primary education.

3. I feel this change should have been notified before the deadline at LA to apply for a place so that we could consider all the facts before deciding on a school place.
 - A school can consult at any time to become an academy. Consultation of the MAT proposal does not mean that the school will convert to an academy and timescales can vary tremendously.

4. I would like to know that financially the staffing wages will retain their current structure and if any increased.
 - There are no proposals to change any of the school teachers pay and conditions. The MAT will retain the school teachers pay and conditions document as a minimum entitlement for all teachers. The Diocesan Board of Education – Policy on Academies states – “a commitment by the Academy Trust must be given to retain the national terms and conditions of service as a minimum standard for the employment of Academy staff.”

5. If staff have to support another school then they would not have as much time to spend on their “own” lives or work at Cronton.
 - Supporting other schools is only one element of becoming a MAT. Both schools already have good track records of supporting schools. This is carefully monitored and managed to ensure it is productive for all staff whilst retaining outstanding provision for all pupils. If there isn't enough capacity within the MAT to support another school the Directors will commission school to school support from other sources.

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6. Why did both schools choose to work together?
 - Cronton and Halewood are both Church of England Primary schools working within the Southern Area of Knowsley. They have a history of collaboration and for the last 4 years have been members of the same family cluster. This is part of the school led improvement system model operating within Knowsley.

7. Is either school planning to expand the school building to accommodate a higher intake of pupils in the future?
 - There are currently no plans to increase the size of the school buildings and current DfE plans are to only allow Free Schools to be set up to meet the needs of rising numbers on roll.

8. Can you please confirm what (top slice) this funding is for and what this will be used for if the school transfers to an academy?
 - The LA currently top slices a school's budget for statutory services (eg Special Educational Needs) and also some school improvement work across the borough. If the school converts to an academy the funding would still be top sliced for some statutory services.

9. What instabilities have occurred within other outstanding primary schools recently converted to academy status?
 - We currently do not have information to be able to accurately answer this question.

10. What additional responsibilities are required by teachers and head teachers, immediately and long term? Sharing of staff- could this result in continuity issues and impact adversely on the children?
 - There are no additional responsibilities to teachers. Although the schools could potentially share specialised teaching eg. PE/Music to enhance the curriculum, each school will retain class teacher per class to ensure continuity for the children. Future staff appointments will be made, to be employed by the MAT, to enable better flexibility and capacity building in the future.

11. Who insures the school? What would happen if arson/flooding/act of God destroyed any property?
 - The MAT fully insures the school through public liability and other insurances. Academies can opt for membership of the "Risk Protection

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Arrangement" for academy trusts. This is an alternative to insurance where UK government funds cover losses that arise. The cost for memberships is deducted from the General Annual Grant.

12. Why has this time period been identified as the best time? Are there any benefits to waiting? (eg 3 years)

Both schools have carefully researched academy conversion for the past 3-4 years. During that period, Halewood CE has become a National Support School and the Head Teachers of both Cronton and Halewood CE have been designated National Leaders of Education. Over the past two years both schools have, in an official capacity, supported schools that require improvement however this has ended approximately at the end of eight to nine months.

As a designated National Support School, we would like to have a vested interest in the schools that we support from now on, ensuring that further sustainability is continued.

The conversion to an Academy would create further opportunities for staff development across the trust and ensure that quality staff are retained within the MAT.

13. How much staff change has been seen in outstanding schools when converting to an academy?

➤ We are seeking to retain quality staff however inevitably, even if we do not convert, there could always be staff changes in any school.

14. How many converted schools in Knowsley have experienced financial difficulties after converting with another outstanding school to an academy?

➤ None.

15. What remains the average number of holidays for an academy school in Knowsley and nationally?

➤ The children in our Academy Trust will have the same number of holidays as they do now. Children are taught for 190 days (there are also 5 inset days that can either be taken as whole days or twilights).

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16. What changes will be seen in the curriculum short/med/long term?
- No immediate changes. However, as part of usual self evaluation, both schools will continually evaluate its provision for children and make necessary changes as and when necessary.
17. If we didn't convert, which schools would we be aligned to as an academy chain?
- With proposed legislation all schools over time will be expected to join a MAT. Currently, unless through a forced academy arrangement, it is up to individual schools to join a MAT of their choice.
18. What is the likelihood of a VC or Community Schools joining the trust?
- Before any new school joins the trust there would be an agreement that the ethos and distinctiveness of a VA school would be maintained. We are creating a mixed MAT which enables VC and community schools to join the trust.
19. Alternative Partner – is there not another more local primary school that would be a more appropriate partner?
- Having established good relationships with local CE Schools it was felt that this was a good starting point as we seek to grow the MAT.
20. Location of partner – travelling between sites is not straightforward.
- From time to time staff may attend meetings at each other's school. This currently happens. There is no intention to make this routinely happen on a weekly/daily basis.
21. Sharing skills – don't you already have a forum for that via the collaboration?
- Yes, however the collaboration and sharing of skills in the MAT will be on a more formal basis with any sponsored school.
22. Will the Governing Body change – (i.e. new governors established?)
- The established Local Governing Body in both schools will continue to be in post for their term of office however there will be a Board of Directors appointed by the Diocese that will be responsible for the Trust and the academies that belong to it.

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23. Will directors be voted in? Would career history be taken into consideration of new Directors?
- There will be between 9-12 Directors appointed with a variety of skills and attributes; we will follow the model proposed by the Diocesan Board of Education and all Directors are appointed by the Board.
24. Will the academy's budget and annual spend be published for parents?
- Yes - the MAT will comply with all financial regulations via the EFA financial regulations.
25. What areas of the school and its teaching will improve and in what way? - training opportunities?
- Both schools will continue to work closely together to improve provision and outcomes for all children across the curriculum. Both schools have a range of skills and expertise to share across the MAT. There will be greater opportunities to work alongside other staff and attend relevant CPD externally and in house.
26. Will becoming a sponsor detract from the teaching quality for the children at Halewood and Cronton Church of England?
- Halewood CE and Cronton CE have previously, and are currently, supporting schools.
27. Is it possible for an under-performing school to be placed in the MAT against our wishes?
- No, the Diocesan Board of Education has the final say on this decision.
28. How will this affect the children's education?
- Our aim is to enhance the children's education through shared learning and curriculum development utilising specialisms and resources that are available across the schools. There will be greater opportunities for children, teachers and leadership teams to work collaboratively.
29. I understand the National Curriculum has recently changed, however what safeguards would there be in place to ensure children leaving these schools have reached a particular standard?
- By working collaboratively and sharing best practice we will be developing a self-improving system ensuring high standards and continued outstanding teaching and learning.

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30. Would this negatively impact their prospects in secondary and future education?

- No

31. Will Halewood teachers remain on site in usual classes? Or could we lose teachers to the Cronton site of the Trust?

- Staff from both schools will remain on site and in their usual classes (staff are occasionally given different classes to teach and this is current practise).

32. Is the idea for a sharing of ideas and methods of teaching, or will this include sharing of staff, i.e. could staff be seconded to another school within the group?

- We plan to share ideas and methods of teaching. No member of staff will be expected to be seconded to another school. However, they will be able to request a secondment and also to apply for a vacancy that arises within the MAT.

33. Will there be an overall head of the academy group or completely shared with Head Teachers of all schools involved?

- There will be one Executive Head and one School Improvement Director appointed from Halewood CE and Cronton CE.

34. Will all schools that become part of the academy group be church/faith schools?

- No, we are creating a Mixed Multi-Academy Trust so that Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled and Community schools can join the Trust. The Trust's Board of Directors, however, is based on a Voluntary Aided model. This means that Members and Directors are appointed by the Diocese with the majority being foundation directors.

In relation to former VC schools, the Trust will be required to ensure that the characteristics of the former VC are preserved in the areas of staffing, teaching of RE and the provision of collective worship. With regard to former community schools the Trust will be required to preserve the non-religious nature of the school. It is not possible as part of the academy conversion process for a community school to become a faith school.

35. Can a school be refused membership of the academy group?

- Yes

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36. If there is an increase to staff workload, will additional support staff/TAs etc be available to ensure pupils are not affected?

- We will carefully monitor workload as we do now and ensure staff and pupils are not affected. Teachers' Pay and Conditions will be adhered to and Teaching Assistants will continue with their current contracts.

37. Is the academy responsible for funding teacher pensions, and who set the pay/terms and conditions?

- **Teachers' pensions**

Decisions associated with management of the scheme are taken by Parliament and therefore are the same whether it is the Local Authority or the Academy employing the teacher. The difference is that an Academy will be required to undertake the employer responsibilities for making payments and data transfers as required by the scheme.

- **Support staff pensions**

Schools becoming Academies will need to register with LGPS (Local Government Pension Scheme) to be a scheduled body employer (not an admitted body) and take on the responsibilities for payments, year-end certification and data transfers for themselves.

38. Will there be any disadvantages to the school in joining?

- No, there will be no disadvantages to the schools as they are creating the Trust rather than joining an existing Trust where the schools will have minimal if any influence in the way in which the Trust is managed.

39. If a school joins the academy that other schools are not happy with their input or co-operation is there a way to remove that school?

- At the moment there is no straight-forward process for an academy to leave a MAT. If there were serious issues, we would try to resolve matters with the academy and the DfE.

**HALEWOOD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND CRONTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**
GLOSSARY

<u>ABBREVIATION</u>	<u>EXPLANATION</u>
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
EFA	Education Funding Agency
GAG	General Annual Grant
LA	Local Authority
LGB	Local Governing Body
LGPS	Local Government Pension Scheme
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
RSC	Regional Schools Commissioner
RPA	Risk Protection Arrangement
VA	Voluntary Aided
VC	Voluntary Controlled