



Wheeler's Lane Primary School  
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Dear Parents and Carers,

This is an information sharing document, jointly produced by the governors and headteachers of a group of local schools to consider the possibility of beginning consultation on the formation of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The schools involved are:

**Primary**

Kings Heath Primary School  
Park Hill Primary School  
Wheeler's Lane Primary School

**Secondary**

Kings Heath Boys  
Queensbridge School  
Swanshurst School  
Wheeler's Lane Technology College

**Background**

These schools have been working together informally as STEP (Stronger Together Education Partnership) for a number of years to improve educational opportunities for the children in our community. There is a commitment amongst the leaders of all of the schools to serve the children and families of the local area and a recognition that this is best done within a partnership which enables the sharing of best practice, expertise and resources. Examples of successful collaborative working so far include: peer-to-peer reviews, curriculum network groups, parental training around e-safety and joint community development projects for pupils.

We are now working in a more complex and challenging environment. Although the government has rescinded its threat to make all schools academies it is still its preferred option for schools. From September 2017 the role of local authorities is likely to change further. School budgets are under considerable pressure and schools will need to explore new ways of working to sustain existing services.

In the light of these pressures and more importantly, through consideration of the opportunities a more formal organisation opens up, we would like parents to consider supporting the conversion of STEP schools to a multi academy trust (MAT). We can formalise our existing strong links to make sure that all

schools in STEP are challenged and supported to ensure the very highest outcomes for your children. We can seek economies of scale through future shared appointments and increase our ability to seek best value when purchasing goods and services through our increased scale. We can use our increased size to help with recruitment of high quality staff and offer better training and development for our existing workforce. We can ensure that local accountability is retained through autonomous local governance structures.

We believe it is now the right time to be proactive and begin consultation on the formation of a locally based MAT **that incorporates our values and principles**. We have established our consensus on a set of broad principles that we would want to see at the heart of the formation of a STEP Multi Academy Trust. **No individual school has yet made a decision to move towards a STEP MAT and this decision rests in the hands of each school's governing body.**

Further progression towards this outcome will only be made following thorough consultation with the stakeholder community in each school, including formal consultation with parents.

### **Ethos**

Each school within STEP has its own distinct values and characteristics that offer valued choice and diversity to parents. **The MAT structure and governance arrangements must enable those distinct school characters to flourish** within a strong community of schools that shares the following aims:

- To jointly provide the very best educational opportunities and achieve the highest educational outcomes for the children and young people in our school communities.
- We would seek to promote and maintain the ethos and principles of comprehensive education.
- Each school should retain its own individuality with regards to character and day to day operational practices.
- The MAT will continue to operate the admissions code of the Local Authority.
- To build a collective strength that will enable all our schools to thrive in the ever-changing educational landscape.
- To recognise that our staff are our greatest asset and commit to operating within national terms and conditions for teachers and support staff. To provide high quality training and increased opportunity for professional development and promotion.
- To commit to a continuous process of school improvement that recognises the value of working with each other as a key feature. This would include a commitment to an open and honest analysis of performance and use of quality assurance tools such as 'peer to peer' review.

### **Governance**

We wish to establish a governance structure which retains local accountability for each school in the MAT. In order to ensure that accountability to our local community is preserved, we will keep discrete individual Local Governing Bodies for each school (LGBs).

All members of LGBs and the Board and the Members of the MAT should be unpaid for all duties relating to the governance of the MAT. Periods of office should be fixed, with a maximum number of terms defined.

The structure of a LGB is decided by each individual governing body but they would be expected to:

- retain an allocated number of places for the appointment of parent governors on the board in the interests of maintaining a level of community/stakeholder accountability.
- retain an allocated number of places for the appointment of staff governors on the board in the interests of maintaining a level of stakeholder accountability.

The LGB of each founder school should have full earned autonomy, to include the setting up and establishment of its own sub-committees with delegated powers as agreed by the LGB, and the appointment and performance management of Head Teachers.

If a school, supported by other MAT schools, fails to act effectively to address vulnerabilities (in pupil outcomes, finance, leadership, safeguarding, OFSTED grading) the Board will have the power to intervene and reduce the autonomy of the LGB.

### **Funding**

Whilst funding will come directly to the MAT, all monies, subject to an agreed percentage contribution, should be allocated to individual schools in the MAT using the formula defined by the DFE for individual schools. No source funding should be allocated in favour of one school rather than another because of financial difficulties or for other reasons.

### **Leadership of the MAT**

The board will be responsible for appointing a leader for the MAT who will be committed to the principles of individual school autonomy as set out above.

Our governing body will be discussing this further at our December governing body meeting. If they decide to proceed with this proposal, a more formal period of consultation with you will follow. If you have any comments you would like to make at this stage please contact:

[enquiry@wheelerslane-pri.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@wheelerslane-pri.bham.sch.uk) with 'For the attention of the Governing Body' in the subject line

or write to the Governing Body care of Mrs Ascough (Clerk Governors) at the school office.



Mrs S. Pecheur  
Head Teacher



Dr. J. Uppal  
Chair of Governors