# QUEENSMILL SCHOOL: information about becoming an Academy

# SECTION 1: Academy Information

**What is an Academy?**

Academies are schools which are publicly funded independent schools that are not managed by a local authority but their funding and accountability is directly with the Department for Education.

# Why is Queensmill School proposing to become an Academy?

For a number of years, the Governors of Queensmill School have been investigating the benefits of Academy status with a number of partner Schools.

We are interested in the idea of converting into an Academy and forming a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) which would be with Cambridge School.

Establishing a MAT will allow us to create a centre for excellence in the area and combine our expertise to open a new Free School.

Our preparation work for this has and will include;

* Devising the vision and values for our MAT;
* Identifying potential Members and Trustees;
* Undertaking a due diligence exercise on the finances of all Schools to ensure that all schools are financially sound and viable;
* Modelling the projected finances of a MAT formed from the two Schools to ensure it is sustainable;
* Considering the Trust’s approach to School Improvement by building on the combined strengths of the 2 Schools to create a SEND center of excellence in the area to support SEND pupils both in the Trust and, through outreach, in mainstream education; and
* Establish a CEO and Interim Finance Manager for the Trust.

This culminated in an application to the Regional Schools Commissioner for the 2 Schools to establish the Trust which was approved.

**What are the vision and values of the proposed MAT?**

* That our MAT is committed to being at the heart of its community, reflecting the diversity and richness of that community and responding sensitively to its needs;
* That SET will succeed and flourish when every constituent part of the SET family of schools support each other and engage positively with the wider SEND community and its partner organisations;
* That every student has access to bespoke tailored support, advice and guidance that will enable them to progress to a meaningful pathway after graduating from SET;
* That every student has the right to an excellent education through access to a stimulating and enriching personalised curriculum and provision delivered through the highest quality teaching;
* That every individual within the school is entitled to learn and work in a safe, secure and positive environment where their well-being is prioritised;
* That every member of the school community will be treated with respect and dignity at all times; and
* That every individual within the school community is valued and invested in to maximise their full potential and to feel empowered to achieve their goals and dreams.

# Is Queensmill School being forced to become an Academy?

No. Both of the Schools proposing to become a MAT are rated as either Ofsted ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ and thus eligible to voluntary convert under the Academies Act 2010.

**Will our commitment to Special Educational Needs change?**

No. This proposal will enhance our commitment to specialist SEND provision under the MAT and allow us to open a SEND Free School.

**Will joining the MAT change all the things that make Queensmill School a unique place to learn and work?**

No. The Governors and Headteacher of Queensmill School will continue to uphold the same ethos and values that have helped the School to flourish as the safe, supportive place it is today, where staff know the pupils and have high expectations of progress. Forming a MAT with Cambridge School will not change this.

The creation of a MAT will allow us to extend the knowledge we have gained in running a successful special school to benefit other SEND pupils.

# How will the MAT work?

Each School in the MAT has a Local Governing Body responsible for the day to day running of the School. These Local Governing Bodies which have powers delegated from the MAT under a Scheme of Delegation.

As an Ofsted rated ‘Outstanding’ School the MAT expects the Local Governing Body of Queensmill School to fulfil many of the functions of the current Governing Body with particular reference to the School Improvement Plan and quality of education

The MAT trustees act through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to offer both support and challenge to the Schools.

Support comes through a genuine partnership of schools in the Trust working collaboratively together.

Each school has its own Action Plan focusing on the quality of education and this forms part of the overall Trust Action Plan.

The ethos of the MAT is that all schools are equal partners in a shared overall aim of improving outcomes for pupils.

Each school is seen as central to its own community with the skills of each being used in a supportive way for all the others regardless of their current educational grading.

Joining the Trust will bring the following benefits:

* Access to locally based leadership and school improvement expertise to continue the drive for improved performance in teaching and learning;
* Sharing of best practice across all schools in the Trust;
* Greater resilience to future risks by joining a Trust containing other schools;
* Opportunities to benefit from shared services in terms of back office and procurement of goods and services to reduce costs and free up more resources for use in the classroom; and
* Improved recruitment and retention of the most skilled teachers and leaders attracted by the opportunities that a wider successful Trust organisation will bring.

The Trust is very clear that the individual ethos and character and good practices of each school are retained and that all the schools operate as equals supporting each other.

# When will Queensmill School become an Academy?

We would expect that the process will take 4-5 months, work is underway and the planned conversion date is 1st January 2020.

# Why is there a consultation?

The Academies Act 2010 requires Governors to consult “such persons as they think appropriate” on whether the school should become an academy.

The Governing Body will consult with all key stakeholders about the academy conversion including parents, staff, pupils and other schools over a 4-week period from Monday 9th September 2019 to Monday 7th October 2019.

# Does the school need agreement from the Local Authority to become an Academy?

No. The Academies Act 2010 has removed the need for the Local Authority to approve plans for the school to become an Academy.

The Local Authority retains statutory duties for aspects of Special Educational Needs, admissions coordination and provision of home-to-school transport. Local Authorities are also expected to play a key strategic role locally in areas such as pupil place planning admissions and sharing good practice.

Queensmill School has a good relationship with Hammersmith and Fulham Council and we expect this to continue after it has converted.

# What form of relationship will exist between the Local Authority and the school?

This is for individual Academies or Multi Academy Trusts to determine – there is no statutory requirement for any formal relationship between Local Authorities and Academies. Academies are directly funded and accountable to central government (Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency).

The Local Authority retains statutory duties for aspects of Special Educational Needs, admissions coordination and provision of home-to-school transport.

Local Authorities are also expected to play a key strategic role locally in areas such as pupil place planning admissions and sharing good practice.

Queensmill School has a good relationship with the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and we expect this to continue after it has converted.

# Will the school change its name and uniform as some Academies have done?

No. The school will not change its name or uniform after it becomes an academy.

# Are Academies subject to the same Ofsted inspection regime?

Schools converting to Academies will continue to be inspected in the normal way.

# What are the governance arrangements for the MAT?

The MAT has a Board of Directors currently comprising the Chairs of Governors plus community representatives selected for the skills and experience they bring to the Board.

Most day to day operations of the School will be delegated to the Headteacher and the Local Governing Body under a formal Scheme of Delegation from the MAT.

The Local Governing Body will include staff, parent and community representatives.

**What is the process for Queensmill School to join the MAT?**

As Queensmill School is proposing to establish a new Multi Academy Trust with Cambridge School, we will need to set up a separate company.

The conversion process includes the following key additional legal processes:

* Putting in place a Supplementary Funding Agreement between the MAT and the Secretary of State for the running and funding Queensmill School
* Transferring the employment of the staff from the local authority to MAT, following a statutory process (TUPE);
* Agreeing a Commercial Transfer Agreement for the transfer of assets and contracts from the local authority to MAT; and
* Arranging a 125-year lease for the land and buildings with the local authority.

# SECTION 2: Staff Issues

**Does the school have to hold consultation with staff?**

Under employment legislation the Local Authority which is the current employer will need to conduct a TUPE\* consultation with all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) and the relevant unions as part of the staff transfer process.

*(\*TUPE = Transfer of Undertaking – Protection of Employment)*

# Can the school alter teachers’ pay and conditions?

The terms and conditions of staff are protected on transfer under by the TUPE regulations. Academies do have the freedom to vary terms and conditions from national ones but the MAT does not have any plans to do this.

# If the school becomes an Academy, who takes responsibility for the pension arrangements?

Teachers working in an academy fall within the scope of the Teachers’ Pension Scheme (TPS), just as if they were employed in a Local Authority maintained school.

Non-teaching staff at schools are able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This is administered by the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham at present. Employees will pay the same rate as at present under both schemes, subject to any nationally imposed changes.

**How will the TUPE process work and what specific responsibilities does the school have?**

As the current employer the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham is responsible for informing and consulting with staff.

The MAT is responsible for informing the employer of any ‘measures’ which will impact on their employment. There are none planned in this case. The Academy Trust writes to each member of staff confirming that they will transfer under existing terms and conditions

# SECTION 3: Finance

**Will we get more money as an Academy?**

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school.

The Government is clear that becoming an Academy should not bring about a financial advantage or disadvantage to a school. However, academies do have greater freedom to decide how they use their entire budget.

# SECTION 4: Admissions

**Will becoming an Academy affect our admissions arrangements?**

No, the Local Authority will continue to be responsible for all admissions to complex needs schools and information will continue to be available from Children's Services.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham will continue to refer children to the School as it does now, based on an assessment of the needs of individual pupils as part of the SEND admissions process.

**Will the arrangements for pupil transport change?**

No. Home to School transport will continue to be provided by The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham as it is now.

# Does becoming an Academy change the way in which exclusions are dealt with?

Academies are required by their Funding Agreement to follow the law and guidance on exclusions as if they were maintained schools. This includes reporting exclusions to the Local authority. However, Academies do not have to consult the Local Authority before deciding to exclude a pupil and they can arrange their own independent appeals panel.

# SECTION 5: Further Information

**How do I find out more about the proposals?**

Come along to the consultation meeting being held for parents at the School at 10.30am on Wednesday 9 October.

A separate meeting is being held for staff.

There will be an opportunity for you to meet representatives of the MAT and Governors and ask questions.

**Please complete and return the questionnaire page below by email to** **consultation@queensmill.lbhf.sch.uk** **or to the School office by the 4 November 2019.**

**There is a word version of this document on the school website if you would prefer to complete it and return it by email to or in person or by post to the School Office.**

***Mr. Mike Walsh***

***Chair of Governors***

***Queensmill School***

***January 2019***

**Queensmill School**

**Academy Consultation Questionnaire**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Please tick the box(es) that best represent you?**
 |  |
| Parent |  |
| Employee at the School |  |
| Member of the Community/Local Resident |  |
| Local Authority Employee |  |
| Other |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Do you agree that Queensmill School should convert to an Academy and form the MAT with Cambridge School (by entering into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State)?**
 |  |
| Strongly agree |  |
| Agree |  |
| Undecided |  |
| Disagree |  |
| Strongly disagree |  |
| **Please give your reasons below** |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Do you have any other comments to make about the proposal for Queensmill School to convert to an Academy and join the MAT?**
 |
|  |