



## **Frequently Asked Questions that are often asked about MATs (Multi Academy Trusts)**

### ***What is an Academy Trust?***

An Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by Guarantee. It receives its funding directly from the Secretary of State rather than via the Local Authority

### ***What is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)?***

A MAT is formed when two or more academy schools join together as one legal entity.

### ***What is the current status of Thornden and Hiltingbury Junior Schools?***

Thornden has been an academy trust since 2011 and Hiltingbury Junior School is a Hampshire Local Authority school.

### ***Are there different types of academy?***

There are two types of academy – a sponsored academy and a converter academy. A sponsored academy is formerly maintained school that has been transformed to academy status as part of a government intervention strategy. They are consequently run by a Government-approved sponsor. Converter academies are usually high performing or outstanding schools that apply to the government to become academies. Thornden is one of the latter and the proposed new MAT would also be in this category.

### ***How many children are taught in academies?***

We know that over 50% of students in state funded schools are now taught in academies (Damien Hinds 23/1/19), a number that has significantly increased in the past 12 months.

### ***Why are Hiltingbury Junior School and Thornden School considering this?***

Forming a MAT could enable our schools to work together even more closely with a commitment do so with enthusiasm, creativity, ambition, reflection and enquiry. This shared ethos and accountability, along with a reduction in bureaucratic barriers, could strengthen transition to support a consistent and enhanced educational experience.

### ***Would one school be taking over the other?***

Both outstanding schools have a unique character and identity and this would be maintained and embraced. Neither school would be 'taking over'; a MAT would be formed which would oversee both schools.

### ***What could this do to the catchment of both schools?***

The schools would retain their own catchment areas and admissions criteria. A student being in Hiltingbury Junior School would not have preference over students from other linked primary schools when it came to admission into Thornden.

### ***Would the students from other primary schools be at a disadvantage?***

No. One of the positive factors in this option is that Thornden could develop even greater insight as to how students are working at the primary stage. Students from all primary schools could then be supported to develop and achieve to the best of their potential. Thornden draws students predominantly from linked schools but also takes individuals who are in a larger number of junior schools.

***Can other schools join the MAT?***

At this stage, consideration is being made only to Hiltingbury Junior and Thornden forming a MAT. If the MAT is established, other schools could show interest in joining at a later date.

***Can the MAT continue to work with the Local Authority?***

Yes. We will have the option to continue to work with Hampshire County Council, and will be able to continue to access services on a contractual basis. Alternatively, the MAT could source services from other providers if this would be in the better interests of the schools and pupils, or if financially it would be better to do so.

***What impact would this have on the relationship between Hiltingbury Infant and Junior Schools?***

There is a strong, positive relationship between the two schools which we will maintain and continue to build upon irrespective of any decision to form a MAT. As part of the due diligence work a joint project team between the two schools is looking in detail at all aspects of this area.

***How will governance be structured?***

In academies and MATs, the structure includes a group of Members who are similar to shareholders in a company; they can appoint Trustees and amend the Articles of Association. Generally, there are 5 Members. The Trustees are responsible for any academy operating individually or within a MAT (generally 9 Trustees). In a MAT each school will have a Local Governing Body with delegated powers for the specific school. Within the MAT we are proposing, the Local Governing Bodies would retain the strength and involvement one would expect to see in an outstanding school. Both staff and parental representation would be visible on the Local Governing Bodies. The exact structure of Governance would be decided prior to making a formal application.

***Autonomy in relation to school leadership?***

The Headteachers and Senior Leaders in each school are best placed to make decisions relating to students and the day to day running of each school. This would not change.

***How is funding allocated in a MAT?***

Each student in a school or academy draws a fixed amount based on the area the school is in, the age and phase of the school. Broadly speaking, best practice would see money spent in the area it is designed to go to. The MAT would have the best interests of all of its students and would, therefore, allocate and spend funding in the most appropriate way.

***Who employs the staff?***

In an academy/MAT, the staff are employed by the academy rather than the Local Authority. Thornden staff are employed by the academy. When Thornden became an academy, the staff moved from the LA to Thornden through a TUPE process. If a MAT is formed, staff would be employed by the MAT, but as most teachers have a background in an area related area, it is logical they would be linked to one school or the other. The same would apply to many of the non-teaching roles.

***Who will own the land?***

MATs/academies lease the land (generally from the Local Authority) on a long term lease (125 years), but the MAT/academies take responsibility and liability for the buildings and maintenance.

**Contact details for further questions**

If you have comments or questions, please submit them using the contact details below.

matconsultation@thornden.hants.sch.uk

or

matconsultation@hiltingburyjuniorschool.hants.sch.uk

**How can I find out more?**

Both school websites have some additional information relating to this process.

There is information about MAT academies on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>