

Dear Parents/Carers

## **Consultation on a proposal to join with local schools to form a Multi Academy Trust**

### **Context**

Whickham School has continually focused on the quality of education we offer to our pupils and how we ensure that we make the most of all the opportunities that the future will bring. We believe that we have a responsibility to seek improvement and secure the very best for every child in our care, today and tomorrow.

Our Governing Body has been discussing how we might work in closer partnership with some of our local schools, to provide mutual support and challenge, that results in significant benefits for each other. We have been talking to other local schools who share the ambition for their schools to continue to provide an excellent education for their pupils, whilst protecting each school's unique character, qualities and strengths.

Each Governing Body has been considering the future plans of its school in a fast changing and increasingly challenging educational landscape. Collectively our Governing Bodies believe one of the best ways forward would be to establish a local multi-academy trust. Our Governing Body is consulting with parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders, about whether our school should become part of a multi academy trust.

### **Proposal**

The proposed multi academy trust (MAT) would have two founding member schools, listed in alphabetical order below:

- **Riverside Primary Academy (Dunston)**
- **Whickham School (Whickham)**

The proposed name of the trust will be finalised in due course.

We believe pupils and staff would benefit from the greater opportunities that formal partnership, through the Trust, would bring, which include:

- extending learning opportunities and activities for pupil
- enriching the curriculum through partnership working and shared resources

- enabling the sharing of excellent practice in teaching and learning
- enhancing the professional development of teaching and support staff
- building mutual support and accountability between the Headteachers and between the Governors, strengthening leadership at all levels
- securing cost and resource efficiencies through joint commissioning of services
- having the capacity to take swift and decisive action whenever it is necessary

### **Vision, Values and Ethos**

The Trust's aim is to build upon the existing strengths of the partnership with our schools and to offer "outstanding" education provision so that every child succeeds and reaches their potential.

We believe that:

**Everyone should be inspired to be the best that they can be.**

We will always strive to be the best we can be and in doing so we will resolve to ensure that all students in the Trust are given access to a range of exciting experiences that support personal development. We will place great emphasis on ensuring students are supported in developing the personal qualities that enable them to be people we are proud to know.

**Education is more than just academic results. How you develop is as important as what you achieve.**

Academic achievement is important and we will be proud of the success our students achieve but we believe that education is more than examination results, and we will ensure that every student develops into a well-rounded citizen who is able to make the most of their unique talents and abilities.

**Equality, diversity and inclusion should be embraced without question.**

We will be a Trust that cares about everyone in our community and values everyone for their unique contribution. We will celebrate difference [equality, diversity and inclusion are part of everyday life and not just a policy on a shelf]. Within our schools we will pride ourselves on the basis that every child is known and valued across both academic and pastoral teams.

**There is strength in unity. Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do.**

We believe that strong and positive relationships with all stakeholders, especially parents and carers are critical in ensuring a partnership is built that supports the success of each student. Collaboration across our trust will enable governors and trustees to draw on each other's experience to formulate strategic approaches. School leaders should work collaboratively to support each other and build on individual strengths.

**The Trust should be a great place to work for colleagues, enabling them to achieve their full potential.**

We wish to create a genuine family atmosphere across the trust rooted in a strong value system. We believe in providing excellent opportunities for professional development and career progression. We will embrace a diverse and friendly staff body across all schools who will benefit from cross-collaboration between a growing

network of teaching professionals across the Trust's schools. We want to make our Trust schools the place where outstanding educational professionals want to join and contribute to our shared vision.

### **Finding out more about the academies that are thinking of joining together to form a MAT?**

**Riverside Primary Academy** is a school of support and challenge. We have an ethos in which all children are encouraged to succeed and reach their full potential, push the boundaries and challenge themselves to do even better. This includes children who are quiet by nature, lacking in confidence, in need of support to complete their classroom work and those who are at the other end of the scale and are highly self-motivated and confident. All children are supported to succeed.

At Riverside Primary Academy we believe that children can best achieve their potential when they are happy, content and well stimulated at school. We strongly believe that success stems from very good partnerships between home and school, shared information between us all and an open and honest relationship between all of those involved in caring for your children. We aim to work together with parents and carers to make every child's experience at our school a very happy one.

We have a policy to employ the best possible staff with a wide variety of talents to enable your children to learn from some of the most successful adults in the profession. Our staff are all committed to the safety and welfare of the children in our care. We always ensure we have more than the required number of first aiders and child protection officers to ensure our safeguarding of your children is very high on our agenda.

We strive to ensure:

- children enjoy their time in our school and want to come to school to learn
- our curriculum is of the highest quality with real experiences regularly available so that children can learn for themselves and challenge stereotypes
- our children take an active part in their own education and enjoy the challenge and high expectation offered
- that we provide a high quality education in all subjects to ensure all children are offered the opportunity to develop their passions and talents
- that we offer a weekly element of self-chosen learning which allows every child to explore their own area of interest
- that everyone feels safe, valued and respected
- that those children who are quiet or less confident get the academic and social support they require to thrive.
- that all children leave our school knowing that their education with us is part of the pathway to a successful adult life and the opportunity to go to a good university.

Click [here](#) to link to the Riverside Primary Academy Website

**Whickham School** is at the heart of our local community and ensures that every young person develops into a well-rounded citizen who is able to make the most of their unique talents and abilities. This has enabled us to build an excellent reputation locally, of which we are very proud.

Our school is a happy community where we have high expectations of each other and work hard to realise our potential. Students learn to embrace challenge and develop the confidence, resilience and compassion to approach problems and new situations with a positive mindset. Our curriculum is underpinned by the Olympic and Paralympic values; excellence, friendship, respect, determination, courage, inspiration and equality. Important values for us all to embrace.

Standards are high and our students study a curriculum that enables them to develop knowledge and skills that prepare them well for higher education and employment. Academic achievement is important and we are proud of the success our students achieve, but we recognise success and happiness in life is much more than this. Wickham students access a range of exciting experiences that support personal development and develop the personal qualities that enable them to be people we are proud to know.

Behaviour is excellent and is a basic expectation of all our students. Our school community is built upon mutual respect and this ensures good relationships. This is crucial in effective learning and the creation of happy students and staff. All students are expected to maintain high levels of attendance and meet homework requirements. This is fundamental to achieving a culture of success.

The relationship between school and parents and carers is important to us. We work closely with parents and carers to ensure that each young person is happy, safe and successful during their time at the school.

Click [here](#) to link to the Wickham School Website

### **How do I learn more, and how do I respond to the consultation?**

Consultation will begin today, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020, for a period of three school term weeks and will end at 5:00pm on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

This letter together with the attached frequently asked questions document provides you with relevant information, additionally we are offering the opportunity to attend an interactive online information meeting at 5:30pm on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (details will be available on the consultation section of the school website soon).


Our Governing Body would very much like to hear your opinion and would encourage you to respond to the consultation by completing the attached feedback form (also available from the school website).

Please email the completed form to [consultation4RPAWS@outlook.com](mailto:consultation4RPAWS@outlook.com) by the deadline of 5:00pm Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Yours sincerely



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Headteacher



Sasha Ban  
Chair of Governors