

## **Academisation Consultation**

Thank you for visiting our website to read more about our consultation. This consultation opens on

**Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024**  
and closes at  
**midnight on Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2024.**

During that time, there will be open meetings in each school with school leaders, Governors and representatives of Clarion Corvus Trust (CCT). These are being held on

**Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> October at St William's Primary School at 6pm**  
and on  
**Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> October at Brundall Primary School at 5pm.**

The information here is aimed at answering some of the common questions you may have regarding the process of a school becoming part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), in this case Clarion Corvus Trust (CCT). These questions and answers can be added to as a result of the consultation process, including questions raised at the meetings and sent in via email.

### **Academy Information**

The Hive Federation, as a Federation, is proposing to join Clarion Corvus Trust (CCT). This Trust is a small, growing MAT and was formed by the merger of Clarion Trust and Corvus Trust. It currently consists of the following schools:

Hobart High School

Pakefield High School

Aslacton Primary School

Manor Field Infant and Nursery School

Thurlton Primary School

Watton Westfield Infant and Nursery School

Watton Junior School

Their website can be viewed here:

<https://www.clarioncorvus.org.uk/>

### **What is an academy?**

Academies are publicly funded independent schools that are not managed by a Local Authority and their funding and accountability is directly with the Department of Education (DfE).

### **Why did The Hive start looking at potentially becoming academies?**

The Governors began to consider becoming academies because of concerns about the sustainability of school budgets. This has been a growing issue for the last few years and has been compounded by the recent changes in funding for children with additional needs. These issues have impacted on our two schools in different ways but have led us to be concerned for our finances moving forward. There is also a concern going forward about falling rolls in all local schools; this brings a financial vulnerability as schools are funded for the children who are on their rolls.

Once the Governors started to research the possibility of academising, their consideration broadened to include other potential benefits for our schools of being part of a larger grouping of schools. As Local Authority maintained schools, many of the services around our schools have been cut back; many aspects of support for schools are traded meaning we pay for them.

### **What aspects of the work of our current schools were the Governors determined to retain?**

From the outset, the Governors were clear they would not compromise on aspects of autonomy and ways of working that we are not willing to change in either school. These included:

- The culture, ethos and character of the schools
- The schools' names and uniforms
- The schools' admissions policies
- The schools' behaviour and relationship policies
- The schools' curriculum (what and how it teaches)
- The schools' extra curriculum offer
- The schools' identified areas for further improvement and its work towards these
- The terms and conditions on which all staff are employed

Any change and improvements to these areas will remain in the hands of school leaders and their staff teams for the benefit of their school community.

The Governors were also very conscious of the reputation of some MATs taking large 'top slices' of money from schools' budgets to support their central services. At all times, they considered how much our schools were already paying for the services any MAT might provide. In seeking to support our finances going forward, this was a very important consideration.

### **What has happened to bring the Governors to the point of consultation on academisation?**

The Governors established a working group which included school leaders and a parent representative. Over a number of months, this group analysed the benefits and risks of both joining a MAT and of remaining as a maintained school. They identified more than one MAT to have detailed conversations with about how joining their Trust would benefit our schools and how it might impact on them.

Having decided that academisation would bring benefits, the Governors identified Clarion Corvus Trust as the Trust which best suited what they wanted for their schools; to maintain many aspects of school life (as listed above) but also to bring the support and security that being part of a larger groups of school can bring. As a small, growing trust, CCT felt our schools could also make a significant contribution to the development of their Trust.

The CCT CEO and Trustees were, therefore, asked to make a presentation to the full Governing Board which resulted in a vote to pursue joining their MAT.

Throughout this process, our Governors have sought advice from Governance experts and from the LA to ensure that they were considering all aspects of this potential change and appropriately scrutinising any information presented to them.

### **How will the pupils of the Hive Federation be impacted by the proposed academisation?**

On a day to day basis, there will be no changes to the experience of children in our schools, although school leaders and staff teams will continue to implement change and improvements in areas that they identify as needed in their schools.

The changes joining CCT will bring include ensuring our business functions (finance, HR, IT, Site management) are effectively managed so that we can maximise the money we have available for resources, opportunities and staff development – all of which will mean we can maintain the good work of our schools and continue to improve what we do for the benefit of our children and families.

Working collaboratively with staff in other schools will ensure our staff are well informed and well trained.

**How will Governance arrangements work?**

The schools within CCT retain a Local Governing Board. This contains representatives of the local community and parent governors. They retain the local scrutiny and support for academic outcomes, the school curriculum and safeguarding. If we were to join CCT, our present Governors of The Hive Federation would become this Local Governing Board for our schools.

**When will the school become academies?**

At the end of the consultation period, the Governors will review all the information that has been submitted to them. They will then make a final decision about whether to join CCT. At this point, if they decide to pursue academisation, there will be a planned conversion date. This is unlikely to be any sooner than 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

**Why is there a consultation?**

Schools are required to consult 'such persons as they think appropriate' on whether the school should become an academy. The Governors are consulting with key stakeholders including staff, families, Unions, local politicians and other members of our local communities to consider their views and to address any questions raised.

**Will CCT grow to include other schools?**

As a small MAT, it may be that CCT expands to include other schools. However, their plan is to do this in a very measured way and only work with schools that will bring broader benefits to the MAT.

**What will the relationship with the Local Authority be?**

The Local Authority retains statutory duties for aspects of Special Educational Needs, admissions co-ordination and provision for home-to-school transport. The schools have good relationships with the LA and will seek to maintain and cultivate this in the future. At present, our Executive Headteacher is a member of several LA bodies which work with both academy and maintained schools and we would look for this to continue.

**Will there be any change to the schools' responsibility for children with Special Education Needs?**

No. Academies have the same legal responsibilities towards all children with additional needs. The inclusive nature of both our schools will remain unchanged.

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

Academies receive the same amount of per pupil funding as they would receive in a LA maintained school.