

# FAQs (updated on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018)

## Question 1

What is a MAT?

### Answer 1

A MAT is a group of Academies which have joined together to work outside of Local Authority control. A MAT is a single legal entity with one set of Trustees under which schools operate collaboratively, but with considerable freedom to maintain their own character and ethos. All schools within the MAT share a common vision and work together to improve the educational experience and outcomes for all their students.

## Question 2

What is King Charles I School currently?

### Answer 2

King Charles I School became a converter Academy on 1 April 2012 and has been operating very successfully as a single academy trust (SAT) for six years.

## Question 3

Why change to a MAT?

### Answer 3

The Governors of King Charles I School have been considering the option of establishing a MAT for some time and recently agreed that this was the best course of action for the future of our school. The Governors are aware of the Government's expectation that all schools will become Academies and that most schools will join together to work collaboratively. Our aim is for us to maintain control of our own destiny and we want to join with schools who we know would make good partners; not to be directed to form an alliance which might take us off the course we would want to map out for ourselves.

## Question 4

What are the advantages in becoming a MAT?

### Answer 4

We feel that three things are essential for school improvement: accountability, additional support and additional challenge. We are of the opinion that the current proposal would provide all three. We believe there are quantifiable advantages of being in a MAT, for example:

- sharing best practice, expertise and resources and raising standards across all key stages by working with local partner schools;
- maintaining and developing a shared vision and ethos;
- opportunities for students to share enrichment activities which might not be cost-effective for an individual school to offer;
- opportunities for staff to benefit from working in a larger organisation with access to high quality training, personal development and career opportunities;
- succession planning and retaining and developing staff, including at leadership level;
- training our own new teachers through the Teaching School Alliance;
- efficiencies and economies of scale through procurement and the provision or commissioning of services which may no longer be available from the Local Authority (LA). Funding for LAs has reduced over the last few years and support for schools from the LA is being steadily replaced by more collaborative and self-sufficient ways of working in schools.

## Question 5

Why are the Governors proposing to form a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) with Haybridge High School & Sixth Form?

**Answer 5**

The Governors are excited by the opportunity of forming a MAT with Haybridge and believe that the two schools working together would benefit the students and staff in the MAT and in our wider community generally. Over the years Haybridge has been a Technology College, a Leading Edge School, a Teaching School and National Support School and has recently been awarded SCITT (School Centred Initial Teaching Training) status. They are acknowledged by Ofsted to be an 'Outstanding' school and regularly receive recognition as one of the top 10 per cent of non-selective schools nationally in terms of outcomes for students.

**Question 6**

Which schools are planning to join the MAT?

**Answer 6**

Haybridge have already secured approval from the Regional Schools Commissioner to set up The Four Stones MAT. The proposal is that both schools will form the MAT together on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

**Question 7**

How large could the MAT eventually be?

**Answer 7**

We anticipate that our MAT would grow in a planned, gradual and carefully considered way. We do not want to become a huge, unwieldy organisation and we do want to stay local. It is likely that any schools who join us be no more than 45 minutes' travel time away. The school can be in any local authority although we do want to stay within about 45 minutes' travel of any school who joins us.

There are no plans to develop the MAT at speed. Current expectations are that it could be a MAT of up to eight schools, possibly including some specialist provision but a priority is to ensure that the organisation grows at a rate which can be best managed so as to support member schools to maintain and improve performance. A rigorous evaluation of any school wishing to join us ("due diligence") would be undertaken to identify any risks.

**Question 8**

How much responsibility would remain with each school?

**Answer 8**

This is for discussion and agreement between the Governors of each school who joins the MAT, the Members and the Trustees of the MAT and would be set out in our Scheme of Delegation. Each school would have a Local Governing Body (LGB) which would be responsible for a number of areas within its own school. Each LGB would have Governors from a range of backgrounds and would continue to have both parent/carer and staff Governors. The MAT board of Trustees, which is the overarching body responsible for the whole MAT, would be responsible for strategic aspects, financial planning, strategic staff development and policies. However, there is no intention to change how King Charles I School operates. As a high-performing school, its headteacher and staff would continue to be free to run the school as they see fit.

**Question 9**

Would the school lose its individuality?

**Answer 9**

No. All schools in The Four Stones MAT would maintain their individual ethos and distinctive features.

**Question 10**

Would the school lose its place in the local community?

**Answer 10**

No, we are determined that this would not be the case. We are committed to continuing to work in partnership with the local community, local schools and our post 16 partners. We would wish to continue the positive relationships with schools and the local college in the Wyre Forest (especially with our cluster primary schools and the schools and college in the ContinU Trust) and the local authority.

**Question 11**

Would there be any change to school names and uniforms etc?

**Answer 11**

No. We anticipate that it would be very much 'business as usual' in each school for staff, students and parents/carers.

**Question 12**

Would there be any change to the admission policies?

**Answer 12**

We are not going to change our admission policy, its catchment area or its feeder schools if we become a MAT.

**Question 13**

Would the MAT take on schools that are in challenging circumstances or which have financial issues?

**Answer 13**

For any school who wishes to join the MAT, we would conduct a detailed evaluation called a 'due diligence' process, which would identify any weaknesses in the educational performance, financial position and conditions of buildings, to ensure that there are no significant liabilities which would be a drain on the resources of the MAT. If the Trustees feel that a school could be an appropriate partner, a plan would be developed to address any problems which are identified and we would only move forward with the school provided there is a robust and sustainable plan to support the school to address these issues. The final decision on whether a school can join our MAT is taken by the Regional Schools Commissioner at the DfE, and they will only allow a school to join a MAT if they are confident that the MAT can provide the required support to address a school in challenging circumstances or one with financial issues or liabilities.

**Question 14**

How do the finances of a MAT work?

**Answer 14**

The MAT receives the funding of all schools that make up the MAT. Strategic financial planning is mostly undertaken at MAT (board of Trustees) level, although there is significant flexibility to allow financial planning, monitoring and management to be completed at either MAT or LGB level.

The funding for Academies is calculated on exactly the same basis as LA maintained schools, with the difference that the funding comes directly from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) who then issue the funding notifications. Academies with Sixth Forms also receive an allocation with their main stream funding issued by the EFA but this is calculated at a national level.

**Question 15**

How would budgets work within individual schools?

**Answer 15**

Each school would still have its own budget and make its own decisions on how to use this. A 'top slice' would be applied to pay for any services that are provided by the MAT centrally to make them more cost-effective, for example a centralised payroll and HR system, legal services, insurance and energy. In other MATs this appears to be at about 5%.

**Question 16**

If King Charles does not form a MAT, could the school be vulnerable?

**Answer 16**

It is very much the Government's expectation that schools and Academies will increasingly work together in MATs or similar formal collaborative structures. If King Charles does not take this initiative, the DfE may expect us to join another established MAT chain, which the Governors do not believe would be good for King Charles.

**Question 17**

Is this about Haybridge 'taking over' other schools?

**Answer 17**

No. The essential principle of a MAT is that schools work collaboratively for the common good, while maintaining their own distinctive ethos and character and retaining as much local control as necessary through their own governing bodies (LGBs).

**Question 18**

Is this a money-making enterprise which seeks to make a profit?

**Answer 18**

No, our approach is very much about working together in a group of local schools, not as part of a huge national chain. The MAT itself would have charitable status and its finances would be closely scrutinised and regularly audited by external auditors.

**Question 19**

Would teachers and senior leaders be distracted from their work in school by setting up and running the MAT?

**Answer 19**

No we are determined that this would not happen. The establishment of the MAT would be led by a small group of senior leaders from both schools. The improvements in the attainment and achievement of the students at King Charles I School over the last few years demonstrate that there is enough capacity in the school to continue the school improvement process and deal with the possible conversion to a MAT.

**Question 20**

What is the governance structure of the MAT?

**Answer 20**

At individual school level, there would be a Local Governing Body (LGB) with Governors including elected parent/carers, staff, etc as in the existing structure. The LGB would have responsibility for matters affecting its own school. It is likely that the LGB would be smaller than the existing Governing Body, as some functions would be dealt with at MAT board level. Governors are elected or appointed for a term of four years.

Above the LGB there would be a board of Trustees (MAT board). These people, who may be drawn from existing Governors of schools with the addition of key people with relevant experience

and skills, would oversee the strategic development of the MAT and issues affecting all schools in the MAT. The board of Trustees would meet several times a year. There would be linked committees which may involve senior leadership of individual schools who ensure that the voice of each school is heard equitably at board level. It is important to note that the board of Trustees are not representatives or delegates of individual schools – their function is to work at an overarching strategic level. Trustees are appointed for a term of four years.

The final accountability lies with the Members of the MAT. They are a small group of people with extensive experience, appropriate skills and commitment who have the power to appoint Trustees and amend the articles of association. There is likely to be some overlap with one or two Members also being Trustees, to strengthen the link between the two levels of governance. The Members meet once or twice a year. There is no time limit to the Members' term of office.

None of the Governors, Trustees or Members are paid. The governance structure therefore would not take money which should be spent on teaching and resources.

The proposal is that there would be equal numbers of Trustees and Members from Haybridge and King Charles I School.

#### **Question 21**

Who would be the Chief Accounting Officer of the MAT?

#### **Answer 21**

Caroline Hoddinott, the Headteacher of Haybridge, would be the MAT's Chief Accounting Officer. The headteachers from King Charles I School (Stephen Brownlow) and Haybridge High School (Caroline Hoddinott) would become executive headteachers.

#### **Question 22**

Is the MAT still bound by the same legislation?

#### **Answer 22**

All schools in the MAT are still bound by statutory codes for Special Educational Needs and Admissions and would participate in the Fair Access Protocol. The MAT is also still bound by primary legislation such as employment law, health and safety and equalities legislation.

#### **Question 23**

Do local authorities retain responsibility for identifying and assessing SEN?

#### **Answer 23**

Yes. Local authorities retain responsibility for students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education and Health Care Plan (EHC). Local authorities must:

- ensure that academy pupils are appropriately assessed and statemented where necessary;
- consider parents' representations for an academy to be named on a statement or EHC and act reasonably in considering those representations;
- fund any individually assigned SEN resources; and
- monitor arrangements for SEN pupils in academies and conduct reviews of the Statements/EHCs of children in academies at least annually.

#### **Question 24**

Would the transport arrangements to and from school be affected by the possible conversion to a MAT?

#### **Answer 24**

No

**Question 25**

What about changes affecting staff pay and conditions?

**Answer 25**

All staff have been assured that there would be no changes to staff pay and conditions and that all staff would transfer to the MAT under TUPE, in the same way that they did when we became an Academy. We would also ensure this commitment, along with the honouring of any National Agreements, would be written into the Memoranda and Articles to protect both current and future staff.

The main difference is that staff would be employed by the MAT rather than by an individual school, which gives them greater opportunity for staff development and training and career progression. Trade Unions would continue to be recognised and the MAT would welcome their support for their members. There may be opportunities for non-teaching staff to develop their careers by working at MAT level in 'back office' functions or to work at a different school within the MAT if they wish and if positions are available.

**Question 26**

Would you still recognise current service related benefits for staff?

**Answer 26**

We have already agreed that we would recognize current service related benefits for existing members of staff. We would also recognise current service related benefits for new members of staff.

**Question 27**

Would staff be expected to move around the MAT?

**Answer 27**

No. Whilst staff would not be required to move round the MAT, there may be occasions when staff would like to work in one of the other schools in the MAT for professional development. However, this would have to be agreed upon by all parties. There may be occasions when one of the schools in the MAT urgently needs a member of staff for a short period of time. This would have to be agreed upon by all parties.

There would be opportunities for staff to cross-fertilise ideas and share good practice and there would be career development opportunities. There is no intent to alter staff contracts or to force them to work at other sites. It is more about sharing expertise.

**Question 28**

Would LGBs still have parent Governors?

**Answer 28**

Yes

**Question 29**

If we join The Four Stones MAT and something goes wrong, can we opt out?

**Answer 29**

Yes. It would be a legal matter to do so. It is also possible to transfer to another multi academy trust if we wanted to.

**Question 30**

Would the students be able to interact with the students from the other schools in The Four Stones MAT?

**Answer 30**

Yes and I believe there are lots of exciting opportunities here for students-eg extra-curricular activities, increased range of subjects available in the sixth form etc.

**Question 31**

Who would you buy services (eg SLAs) from?

**Answer 31**

We would purchase our SLAs from where ever is most appropriate and best value for us as a school. Where we can gain from economies of scale we would-eg catering, finance etc.

**Question 32**

Would you still recognise the trade unions?

**Answer 32**

Yes

**Question 33**

Would you still contribute to the Worcestershire facility time?

**Answer 33**

Yes

**Question 34**

Will this be resolved at the next meeting of the full governing body?

**Answer 34**

The next meeting of the full governing body is on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June. The governors will consider all the responses during the consultation period and make a decision about whether to proceed to form a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) known as the Four Stones MAT with Haybridge High School & Sixth Form from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

**Question 35**

Are we still having two separate auditors or will there be just one for both schools?

**Answer 35**

Both schools will have to work with their current auditors re the 'Trustees' report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2018'. Following that there will be one auditor for the MAT.

**Question 36**

Will the finance departments in both schools be expected to follow the same processes so that they are streamlined?

**Answer 36**

Not necessarily but we must be open to the possibility of change. There would need to be a period of review and evaluation of various processes across both schools. Changes would only be made where necessary-policies and practices that are working will not change, unless it was felt they needed to after looking at the good practice already available within the two schools. Like in all successful schools, the policies and practices will be regularly reviewed.

**Question 37**

Would the name of the school change?

**Answer 37**

No. King Charles I School would remain the name of the school but it would operate as part of The Four Stones Multi Academy Trust

**Question 38**

Will the financial assistance from the King Charles I School Foundation Trust, Roy Woodward Educational Foundation Trust and Old Carolian's Association be extended to all students in the MAT?

**Answer 38**

No. The criteria for the financial assistance will remain the same and it is only available for students who are currently at or studied at King Charles I School.

**Question 39**

Would the years of continuous employment continue with the MAT?

**Answer 39**

Yes. Under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006) your years of continuous employment for determining statutory employment rights will be preserved.

**Question 40**

Will we have TEDs together and meet at one school?

**Answer 40**

Yes there would be some joint TEDs each year where all members of staff can meet at one of the schools. We would also consider having two extra TEDs during 2018/19.

**Question 41**

Will staff have to re-do their DBS and have new pay numbers, new online logins and email addresses?

**Answer 41**

No

**Question 42**

If there are two executive headteachers, who is ultimately in charge?

**Answer 42**

Stephen Brownlow will stay in charge of King Charles I School and Caroline Hoddinott will stay in charge of Haybridge High School. Decisions at the MAT level would be made by both myself and Caroline.

**Question 43**

Having spent 2 years creating resources for new GCSE and A level courses, we are concerned that we may be forced to change exam boards to be the same as Haybridge for sharing resources etc. Is this likely?

**Answer 43**

No. The choice of exam board is a decision taken by an individual C/SAL.

**Question 44**

Will there be common entrance requirements for A level (e.g. currently a grade 6 is needed at Haybridge to start an A level course but a grade 4 here)?

**Answer 44**

There are no plans at the moment to change the entrance requirements for A Level courses. However, like now, they will be reviewed and evaluated on an annual basis.

**Question 45**

Will it be a secondary school only MAT or will primary schools be considered?

**Answer 45**

There are no plans to develop the MAT at speed. Current expectations are that it could be a MAT of up to eight schools, possibly including some specialist provision but a priority is to ensure that the organisation grows at a rate which can be best managed so as to support member schools to maintain and improve performance. Initially we would expect secondary schools to join the MAT as that is where we have the expertise but of course primary schools would be considered.

**Question 46**

Will there be transparency of wages for the leaders of the MAT?

**Answer 46**

Yes. The salary ranges for the members of the senior leadership team would be in the pay policy. The salaries for the executive headteachers would be listed in the annual financial statements and at Companies House.

**Question 47**

Regarding the sixth form, are there any plans to consolidate King Charles I School's sixth form into Haybridge's sixth form next year or in the future?

**Answer 47**

No there are no plans for this. The plan is to have greater collaboration post 16 with Haybridge High School and Hagley Catholic High School but for each school to maintain their own sixth forms.

**Question 48**

How would the 'top slice' be managed?

**Answer 48**

Each school would still have its own budget and make its own decisions on how to use this. A 'top slice' would be applied to pay for any services that are provided by the MAT centrally to make them more cost-effective, for example a centralised payroll and HR system, legal services, insurance and energy. In other MATs this appears to be at about 5%. However, this is a figure that we would aim to achieve over a number of years and the centralised team would be dependent on the needs of the individual schools within the MAT. The staffing for the 'top slice' would come from within the individual schools. There might be an opportunity in the future for an external appointment but we would have to consider the overall budget.

**Question 49**

Could a line be added to the contracts to state which school staff will be working at within the MAT?

**Answer 49**

As you know existing staff would not be required to move round the MAT. There may be occasions when staff would like to work in one of the other schools in the MAT for professional development. However, this would have to be agreed upon by all parties. There may be occasions when one of the schools in the MAT urgently needs a member of staff for a short period of time. This would have to be agreed upon by all parties. There is no intent to alter staff contracts or to force them to work at

other sites. It is more about sharing expertise. Therefore, for existing members of staff and anyone who is due to start by 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018, a line can be added to their contract to state which school they will be working at within the MAT. However, if the MAT is established then any internal or external adverts will dictate which school(s) staff will work at. It is then up to staff to decide if they wish to apply for the post.

**Question 50**

Will the two executive headteachers get a pay rise as their job titles are changing from 'headteacher' to 'executive headteacher'?

**Answer 50**

No.

**Question 51**

Is it likely to be a rationalisation of staff leading to possible redundancies as a result of resource sharing and budgetary savings?

**Answer 51**

No but I am sure you would understand that when staff leave we would look hard at whether we needed to replace them. The main issue facing our budget at the moment is that of unfunded staff pay increases (for teaching and support staff).

**Question 52**

What is the vision for the sixth form at King Charles?

**Answer 52**

In a nutshell, we intend to keep it and grow it. See FAQ 47.

**Question 53**

If King Charles I School accepts students on a level 4, and Haybridge High School on a 6, will this mean that there may evolve a settled structure to A level groups with the higher-achieving students studying at Haybridge-making us a "secondary modern" to Haybridge's "grammar"?

**Answer 53**

No-definitely not.

**Question 54**

There was some resentment at the last minute aspect to the consultation process. It was felt that this was poor timing as this is an extremely busy time for staff, and there is only a short time to consider the ramifications of the move. It was felt that this was being presented as a consultation, whereas in fact it is just a paper exercise to allow staff to ask questions about a decision which has already been made. If this has been in planning for 3 years or more, why are staff only being consulted at the final moment?

**Answer 54**

We felt it was not appropriate to start a consultation until we had completed the necessary due diligence. Therefore that determined the timing of the consultation. Personally, I believe that all times of the year are busy for staff. I'm sure you are also aware that there is no legal requirement to consult but we felt it was very appropriate to do so.

**Question 55**

Will the Accounting Officer be paid separately and/or extra for that role?

**Answer 55**

No.

**Question 56**

Will the two executive headteachers be remunerated separately for the time you spend working on a MAT level?

**Answer 56**

No

**Question 57**

Where will the 5 members overseeing the MAT come from?

**Answer 57**

See FAQ 20. Two members will be put forward by King Charles I School and two by Haybridge High School. One will be independent of both schools and this will be discussed and agreed upon by the two chairs of the local governing bodies.

**Question 58**

Who will the 7 Trustees be/where will they come from?

**Answer 58**

See FAQ 20. Three trustees will be put forward by King Charles I School from our local governing body and three by Haybridge High School from their local governing body. One will be independent of both schools and this will be discussed and agreed upon by the two chairs of the local governing bodies.

**Question 59**

Would the pay policies be separately agreed by each governing body?

**Answer 59**

The plan (at the moment) is to have a pay policy for both schools which would be tailored for the individual circumstances of the two schools. Each headteacher will take this to their governors and staff would be consulted with as they would normally do. The due diligence process has highlighted very few differences in the pay policies of the two schools.

**Question 60**

Would there be any extra cost to the school budgets at leadership level in order to effect the running of the MAT?

**Answer 60**

No.

**Question 61**

Would there be any salaried positions on the Trust Board?

**Answer 62**

No

**Question 63**

Would pay portability be respected within the MAT?

**Answer 64**

Yes

**Question 65**

If one or other of the current headteachers leaves will the MAT board then set up a head of school (to replace the departing headteacher) and a CEO?

**Answer 65**

This has not been discussed and so there are no plans. However, we are not keen on structures involving CEOs.

**Question 66**

In a class, taught solely by teachers at say KC1 in which there are or will be a mix of students from Haybridge and KC1, who will be responsible for the results of the Haybridge students?

**Answer 66**

Haybridge.

**Question 67**

Will there ever be a situation in which teaching for one A level subject will be shared across the schools?

**Answer 67**

I would imagine this would be the case. It has already happened within some ContinU schools for about 10-12 years-eg it may be that we teach 5 lessons at King Charles I School and 5 lessons at Haybridge High School (per fortnight). I see this as being a good thing for some minority subjects (eg drama, dance, music, MFL etc) as it means they should run on a more regular basis.

**Question 68**

Have Haybridge consulted in the same way with unions?

**Answer 68**

Yes they consulted on forming a MAT last year.

**Question 69**

When was the Haybridge consultation?

**Answer 69**

See above

**Question 70**

- (a) Why not join the Stourport Severn Academies Trust? Baxter College and Stourport High are already members, alongside many primaries.
- (b) If you're wanting to establish a new MAT, why not join with The Bewdley School? Haybridge is outside of the Wyre Forest and similar to Haybridge, Bewdley has a track record of high attainment. Bewdley is not a member of any MAT as of yet I don't think.

**Answer 70**

The governors and I have gone through a process of due diligence and there are a number of reasons why we are proposing a MAT with Haybridge rather than the schools mentioned.

1. Existing links: we are already collaborating successfully with Haybridge on the provision for the students in the two sixth forms.
2. Travel: it is far easier for the students (especially sixth formers) from Haybridge and King Charles to move from one school to another as they can use the train service. The bus services across Kidderminster and to/from Bewdley and Stourport are not as straightforward and can be very time consuming.
3. Ethos, culture and vision: we feel that we have a lot more in common with Haybridge than with Stourport, Baxter and Bewdley.

4. Bewdley High School is a local authority maintained school and at the moment it could not form a MAT as it is not an academy.
5. Exam performance: the attainment and achievement of the students at King Charles I School has increased year on year in recent times and is much more similar to that at Haybridge than at Stourport, Baxter and Bewdley. In 2017 our 'Progress 8' score was the best in the Wyre Forest and the fourth best of all the secondary schools in Worcestershire. Haybridge came third. Exam performance is one of many reasons and we believe that joining with a school such as Haybridge will help us make even better progress. I can reassure you that at the heart of the decision making process is a determination to improve the educational provision of both schools and not get side tracked by business and financial matters. We are keen to be aspirational and join a MAT with schools that are not just 'outstanding' according to Ofsted but also have a track record of educational excellence.