



G A Y T O N P R I M A R Y S C H O O L
G A Y T O N R O A D • H E S W A L L • W I R R A L • C H 6 0 8 P Z

6th October 2021

Dear Parent/Carers,

Academy Consultation

We are writing to inform you that the governing board of Gayton Primary School is exploring the possibility of converting to become an academy under the Academies Act 2010 and of joining Cheshire Academies Trust.

The decision to undertake a consultation has been taken following extensive and thorough work by the governing board looking into many different aspects of what it would mean to be an academy and of joining a multi-academy trust (MAT). The governing board wishes to engage in consultation with a broad group of stakeholders through public consultation. The final decision will be made by the governing board post consultation.

Frequently asked questions:

What is an academy and what is a multi-academy trust (MAT)?

Academies are publicly funded schools, independent of the local authority, held accountable through a legally binding funding agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). Staff are employed by the academy trust. Multi-academy trusts (MATs) are groups of academies that have come together to form a charitable company, with a single group of members and a single board of trustees. As part of a MAT, individual schools remain as separate entities and with separate names. Individual schools still receive separate Ofsted judgements and performance tables are still based on individual schools. MATs are accountable directly to the Secretary of State through the regional schools' commissioners.

What are the key advantages of joining a MAT?

- increased opportunities for improving quality of teaching and learning
- sharing of best practice
- economic benefits of sharing services to enable better purchasing power
- flexible staffing resources and retention
- headteacher autonomy in day-to-day running of the school.

What are the disadvantages of MATs?

- Geographical issues

It can be difficult to establish effective, collaborative governance if the schools within a MAT are a considerable distance from each other.

- Potential disruption to MAT structure

As a MAT can accept new members at any time who may want representation on a MAT board, it is possible the dynamics that attracted you to a specific MAT may shift as time passes.

- Reputation

If a school within a MAT struggles to maintain standards, you could find that your school's reputation suffers as a result.

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What is the Cheshire Academies Trust?

Cheshire Academies Trust is a multi-academy trust comprising Kelsall Primary, Boughton Heath Academy, Mill View Primary School, Bexton Primary School and Manor Park Primary. Gayton Primary School currently works closely with the schools in the trust and becoming part of Cheshire Academies Trust would be the natural next step to formalise the collaborative partnership. The current governing board of Gayton Primary School will remain in place as its local governing board.

Will the admissions arrangements change?

As a maintained school, Gayton's admissions arrangements are set by the local authority, and the local authority also decides which pupils should be offered places at the school. As an academy, the Cheshire Academies Trust will put in place admission arrangements, and decide which pupils should be offered places in accordance with those arrangements. The academy will still be bound by the national Admissions Code, and Admissions Appeals Code.

The current admission arrangements will remain in place for the time being. If the academy trust wanted to change its admission arrangements, consultation would be required.

How can I find out more and make my views known?

The purpose of this letter is to inform you about the consultation and anticipate some of the major questions that you may have. We would very much welcome your participation in the consultation and also to raise any concerns that you may have. There are lots of ways to do this including:

- Email consultation@gayton.wirral.sch.uk
- Attend the parent discussion session with Gayton Primary governors and the CEO of Cheshire Academies Trust on 12th October 2021 at 7pm.
- Look out for the update letters throughout the consultation process

There is also more information about academies on the DfE website: <http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

If you can't find the answer to your question through consultation, or on the DfE website, please email consultation@gayton.wirral.sch.uk

The Gayton Primary School consultation will remain open until **Wednesday 16th November 2021** and the governing board will meet soon after to determine the outcome.

All views and comments will be made available to the governors. The governors will base their decision exclusively on the interests of pupils and their education. Our decision is whether, on balance, this is best done under local authority control or by being part of a MAT.

Yours faithfully,
Lindsay Cowan & Lisa Mann

Co-Chairs of Governors
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