

WORCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS

MAT WORKSHOP NOTES

17th NOVEMBER 2015

Overview

- The landscape is changing rapidly.
- In line with the Government/DfE aspiration that all schools are academies by 2020, many of our larger clients (diocese for example) are planning for this eventuality
- As at September 2015, roughly 15 per cent of primary schools and more than 60 per cent of secondaries are academies
- Austerity and the Comprehensive Spending Review continues to change and diminish the role of local authorities - levels of support and activity will continue to shrink
- Schools are increasingly providing this support for each other through formal and informal partnership and collaboration. More than half of academies are now part of a MAT
- To oil the wheels, if you're a Sixth Form College, Chancellor Osborne has just delivered an early Christmas present – you can save VAT by becoming an academy
- And to help make it entirely clear which way the wind is blowing, Chancellor Osborne has also promised to “help” all remaining secondary schools become academies
- In our view, the future will be all about ‘*collaboration, collaboration, collaboration*’ – first MATs, then collaborations between MATs

The benefits of collaborating

- There is emerging evidence that collaboration between schools delivers a number of benefits, including:
 - enhanced progress and attainment for pupils and resilience for schools
 - opportunities to share strategic and operational planning and expertise and to deal with challenges together
 - enabling schools to better meet recruitment challenges across the group, to retain staff by providing new and wider opportunities, plan succession more effectively and share professional development

- enhanced ability to source and fund specialist expertise (specialist teachers and specialists in areas such as finance and health and safety) and provide richer curricular and extra-curricular activities
- achieve economies of scale savings through group purchasing, thereby protecting valuable funds in an environment of shrinking budgets

Some things don't change when you enter a MAT

- Schools remain as separate entities, with separate names and DfE numbers
- Schools still receive separate Ofsted judgements (though Ofsted are expected to increasingly 'co-schedule' inspections of schools in some groups and undertake preliminary inspections of MATs)
- performance tables are still based on individual schools
- individual schools retain their existing religious (or non-religious) character

Collaborating with the school next door?

- There is no legal requirement to collaborate with a school simply because it's up the road
- There are some examples of successful MATs formed with schools many miles apart
- That said, evidence is emerging that MATs formed with schools in closer proximity deliver greater benefits
- Lord Nash, the minister for academies, has expressed the DfE preference for collaboration between schools within 'half a lunch break' travel from each other

Vision, Values and Ethos

- Before joining or establishing a MAT, carry out open and rigorous due diligence to ensure there is sufficient synergy of vision and values
- Consider how successfully the group can create a shared ethos
- Cultural synergy is essential if the collaboration is to be successful
- Your vision – a combination of:
 - Your mission/purpose
 - Your timeless, unchanging core values
 - Your aspirations for the future
- A shared ethos - how you put your values into practice
- The alignment of values and actions = integrity and a powerful force for growth

Preparing for the Journey

- Some key questions to help clarify your reasons for joining or establishing a MAT
 - What are your specific requirements?
 - Are there any restrictions on your school (important for a Church School)?
 - What would be the most attractive options for your school?
 - What challenges do you anticipate your school is likely to face over the next few years?
 - How would being part of a particular MAT help you to meet those challenges?

Setting off

- Discuss the idea of collaborating with one or more other schools at a full governing body meeting or suitable planning session - or call a one-off meeting to discuss this

- Form a small working party of interested governors to explore the opportunities and key questions
- Hold a full governing body meeting for the working party to report back on its work
- Share your proposals with key stakeholders to inform them and invite their comments

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact:



Chris Whittington

Head of Education

T: 0121 214 3661

E: chris.whittington@anthonymcollins.com