

**North Cornwall Learning Trust**

**A multi-academy partnership**

***Creating the future by doing things differently***

**A possible way forward for local schools**

Camelford Primary School

Otterham Primary School

St Breward Primary School

Sir James Smith's Community School

St Teath Primary School

## **1.0 Background**

The government has made clear that all schools will become academies. School leaders need to acknowledge there is no viable long-term alternative to converting to academy status and becoming part of a multi-academy trust. Even current stand-alone academies will be expected to join MATs. In the face of this radically different educational landscape set against the backdrop of severe financial risk posed by constrained budgets for the foreseeable future, the inescapable task facing school leadership teams is the need for change, to 'do things differently.'

The traditional model of school leadership and governance must also come under scrutiny as schools look to do things differently. Schools cannot function as they have previously done if the environment in which they sit is not as it used to be. Alternative models of school leadership and governance can provide solutions for our future working: schools collaborating through formal 'improvement partnerships' to establish economies of scale and develop capacity to support all students to fulfil their potential.

By how much or how little we change is solely dependent on the willingness of individual schools to embrace change. Schools' relationship with local authorities has changed and will continue to change as LAs' capacity to support schools withers and services are withdrawn. Against this background it is imperative that the ownership of the shape and direction of new relationships be with schools. Now is the time to seize the initiative and work with partners to create a common future.

With this end in mind, in response to the challenges ahead, great leaders...

1. Wisely manage the present, anchoring in purpose and vision
2. Selectively forget the past, letting go of old values, beliefs and behaviours that no longer serve them or their organisations
3. Purposefully create the future by adopting new aspirations, values, beliefs and behaviours that enable a step change in their leadership

## **2.0 Purposefully creating the future by doing things differently**

The North Cornwall Learning Trust is a group of schools clustered in a coastal-moorland region in beautiful North Cornwall. The Trust has decided to work within a discrete geographical area to ensure that the Directors of the Trust understand the context of each school within the Trust and that staff from those schools are close enough to work together collaboratively within schools and across schools. The aim of the Trust is to improve the life chances of all children in our area by schools working together for the common good. We want to optimise their feeling of self-worth, to develop their resilience and in turn their capacity to embrace the challenges that lie ahead. Above all else, we will encourage pupils to be ambitious for themselves, their families and their communities.

The Trust has three simple objectives:

1. To make the most effective use of the resources available to provide the best possible school experience for all children in the area. By employing experts in buildings, finance, compliance, personnel, IT and health and safety, we seek to remove the bureaucratic and

compliance related duties away from our school leaders and teaching staff, freeing them to focus on teaching and improving opportunities for pupils.

2. Improve every school to become outstanding through sharing school improvement activity, challenging each other to do even better and offering support – raising standards for all by ensuring effective teaching which accelerates progress, delivers outcomes and inspires a passion for learning
3. Help overcome constraints of rurality by raising aspiration and ensuring that all pupils have equality of opportunity and provision. Success is the birth-right of every individual, and schools must be relentless in their drive to ensure that this is delivered. We are determined to show that education can help break the cycle of deprivation – of low aspirations and resultant low outcomes. We want to eradicate the poverty of expectation and instil in every member of our school communities a personal resolve and drive to succeed – a ‘Yes We Can’ mentality.

The Trust recognises and values each school’s long and varied history. We want each school to carry on being unique in its own way. All of our schools are an integral part of their local communities and have a real sense of identity. We value the contribution each of our communities make and the distinctive opportunities and diversity it offers to the Trust. Each of our schools will have different uniforms, different signage, different ideas about approaches to teaching and learning, different leadership and management structures but there is one united purpose; to be better by working together.

However, if each school is to successfully overcome the constraints of rurality, deprivation, demographics, funding constraints, recruitment and so on, they will need to work closely with neighbouring schools but in a very different way to how any partnership has operated in the past. On their own, each school is too small to face the future with certainty. Competition between schools has to be replaced with collaboration and a re-alignment of authority. Headteachers and governors need to cede some of their traditional autonomy to allow a new type of school leadership and management to emerge; that new structure is the multi-school North Cornwall Learning Trust.

All the schools in the Trust have chosen to join because they can see the advantages in collaborative working for the benefit of all pupils in the area. There is no one school which is dominant. It is a primary-secondary partnership in which primary partners work amongst themselves to raise standards and with secondary colleagues to provide a seamless transition through the key stages to ensure no child is left behind. The approach to leadership and management of the Trust can be described as ‘loose versus tight’. Loose enough for each school leader to feel they have independence and autonomy but tight enough that under-performance does not go unchallenged and working together is regarded as normal practice.

Getting the right people doing the right things, pooling resources, sharing ideas and accepting that as key professionals in our communities we are acting for the common good, and not just our own school, has to be the way forward for education in North Cornwall. Local collaboration raises standards for all children, enables staff to grow as professionals and creates a strong and vibrant educational community making all schools less vulnerable.

Finally, there is a growing recruitment challenge. If we are to secure the future success of our schools the need to develop a new generation of school leaders from within our present teachers is something which cannot be left to chance and needs to be an integral part of any emerging model. Capacity building and succession planning at individual school, partnership and Trust level is pivotal to the drive for sustainable continuous improvement.

The Trust believes in addressing inequality; believing that all schools and in turn their outcomes can improve incrementally, continually building on the improvements of the previous year. We believe:

- Strong collaboration with shared accountability can lead to better progress and attainment for pupils, and help schools meet rising expectations – closing the gap by raising standards for all especially the most disadvantaged children
- Working together will make it easier to provide the best for all children in the area and result in greater opportunities – spreading best practice across the Trust
- In the importance of creating a MAT that focuses on progress and attainment from an early age with the emphasis on ‘keeping up’ avoiding the need to ‘catch-up’ – making sure no child is left behind
- Building an entitlement to ensure the more able /talented children, especially those that are also disadvantaged, are successfully prepared for transition to Post 16 and beyond – keeping open all educational and career pathways
- School leaders and teachers can share thinking and planning, to spread expertise and tackle challenges together – working SMARTER and more effectively
- Outstanding governance and leadership - trustees and governors can come together to share strategic thinking, combine skills and to support each other – high-quality governance at all levels
- School leaders, teachers and other staff can be shared across more than one school, enabling schools to find different solutions to recruitment challenges, retain staff by providing new opportunities within the group, and plan succession more effectively - smart deployment of personnel
- It will be possible to provide greater opportunities for shared professional development for all staff within the Trust and across the schools – drawing on talent that exists within our schools and in so doing empowering staff
- Groups of schools can find it easier to find and fund specialist expertise (specialist teachers, but also specialists in data analysis, finance, health and safety) and to provide richer curricular and extra-curricular activities - getting the right staff in the right places
- The strategic financial planning, economies of scale and collective purchasing made possible within larger groups help schools cope better with shrinking budgets – making the £ go further for the benefit of our pupils
- The MAT will help us meet the challenge of rurality and sparsity by keeping an educational footprint at the heart of our communities – thinking strategically to safeguard futures

**3.0 Our Mission:** establish and sustain universal high expectations throughout the MAT so that local context and lack of opportunity do not limit achievement and progress for our young people

**Our Vision:** The multi-school trust will do this by:

<p><b>Improving overall achievement</b></p> <p><i>Creating the conditions for pupils to do well</i></p> <p><i>Getting them ready for life in a diverse society</i></p>	Attainment of pupils will be as good as or better than national comparators
	Progress of all sub-groups will be better than national comparators
	Pupils prepared for the next stage of their education ready for transition across critical points in school career
	Ensuring an all-round experience entitlement for all pupils equipping them for life in a 'globalised' world
<p><b>Better teaching and learning</b></p> <p><i>High quality learning experiences to engage and enthuse pupils</i></p> <p><i>Teachers committed to getting better</i></p> <p><i>Accelerate the pace of improvement</i></p> <p><i>The best possible transition</i></p>	Excellent first-wave teaching and learning – getting it right the first time
	Classroom culture of scholarship underpinned by continuous improvement
	Effective intervention monitored for impact and cost
	Identifying excellence from within and sharing best practice
	Commitment to learning from research
	Cross-phase subject specific support for curriculum development
<p><b>Valuing emotional well-being and promoting the best behaviour</b></p> <p><i>Creating a climate in which every pupil is valued and feels safe</i></p> <p><i>Emotionally intelligent schools</i></p> <p><i>A culture which meets the needs of all pupils</i></p>	High expectations for all pupils in line with high aspirations
	Positive values and beliefs for self, others, the environment and the future
	Self-motivating resilient, lifelong learners
	Proactive approaches to positive emotional wellbeing and mental health for pupils and staff with each school committed to mindfulness
	Positive behaviour for learning
<p><b>Insisting on the best possible values-driven leadership and management</b></p> <p><i>Getting the right people in the right place with the right resources to be the best they can be</i></p> <p><i>Staff as moral compass</i></p> <p><i>Growing our own talent</i></p>	High quality leadership at all levels including outstanding governance at local and Trust level
	Effective management of resources to gain best possible outcomes
	Trust wide culture of reflective practice, coaching and support
	Successful recruitment, effective deployment and high quality development of staff
	Increased opportunities for professional progression within the Trust

#### 4.0 Our Principles

The model adopted by NCLT is purposely hierarchical, structured and formal in order to guarantee collaborative working, shared aims and objectives. At the same time, central to our strategy is recognition of the uniqueness of partner schools and therefore their individual identities are fiercely protected. Diversity is viewed as a major strength of the partnership and there is no desire to adopt a cloning approach to school improvement.

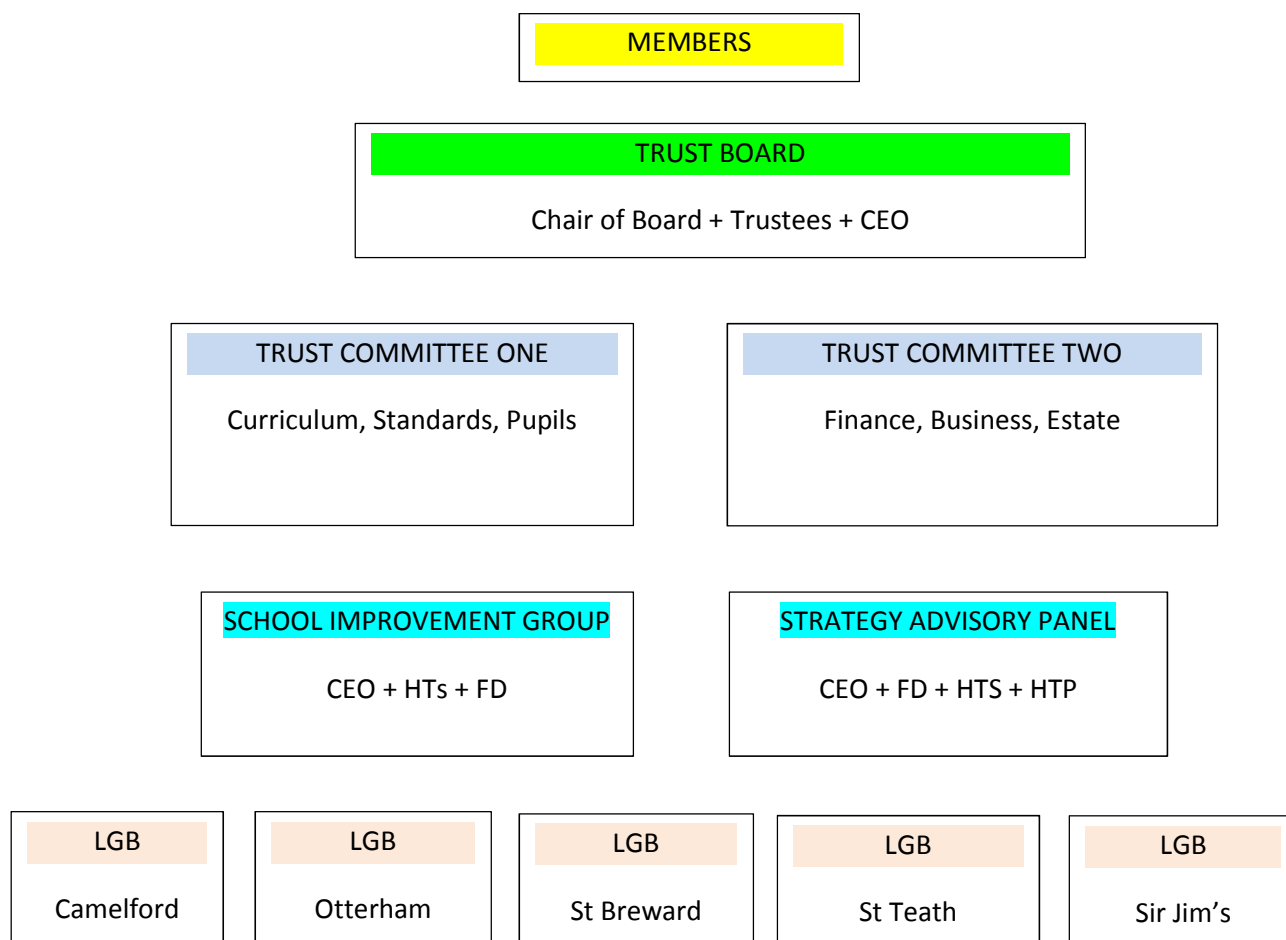
By working closely together, schools within North Cornwall Learning Trust (NCLT) are able to create a sustainable model of education for all students. This is the result of collaborative development, idea sharing, continuous support and the flexible deployment of teachers, leaders and support staff for the collective benefit of all schools and all pupils.

All schools within the NCLT commit to:

- signing up to the local Strategy for Inclusion – serving all children from the local community
- following the National Code for Admissions and comply with local co-ordinated admission arrangements
- fully engaging, where appropriate, with Cornwall Council and its policies and principles including subscribing to ‘One Vision’ Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly Children’s Education, Health and Social Care Plan (see below)
- being fully involved in the local educational vision and to play a full part in further developing school improvement partnerships
- driving up standards, improving achievement and progression across all key stages for all children and using their capacity to support other schools
- fully engaging with external agencies, working in partnership with the integrated locality based teams
- collaborating with the LA and their schools; sharing resources with others schools especially in the context of curriculum development, moderation and providing pathways for KS4 students
- ensuring all staff benefit from the same terms and conditions they already enjoy in addition to further opportunities arising from innovative staffing structures

<b>One Vision Cornwall &amp; the Isles of Scilly Children’s Education, Health and Social Care Plan</b>	
1	Strengthening families and communities
2	Promoting and protecting children’s physical, emotional and mental health
3	Helping and protecting children from the risk of harm
4	Raising the aspiration and achievement of children and young people towards economic wellbeing
5	Making a positive contribution to the community

## 5.0 Governance structure



NCLT governance is at two levels:

1. Local Governing Boards (LGB) - they make the 'weather' in their schools
2. Multi Academy Trust Board – creates the 'climate' across the system

### Role of Local Governing Boards – standards, safeguarding, stakeholders

LGB are primarily concerned with the child's experience of school and ensuring that a particular school is successful. They set the ethos, character and are responsible for the overall success of the school. LGB governors concern themselves with the curriculum, standards and pupils

Standards: to hold the headteacher and staff to account for the progress and attainment of children in that school.

- Review progress regularly
- Ensure performance management is carried out effectively
- Review teaching and learning strategies
- Monitor CPD activity
- Review curriculum goals
- Ensure SMSC is part of the overall offer

- Monitor the progress of disadvantaged children and any other vulnerable group not covered under safeguarding.

Safeguarding: to ensure that the school is safe and that children’s welfare remains a priority for every adult.

- Review compulsory aspects of child protection in schools
- Ensure the school site is safe and welcoming
- Monitor the progress of disadvantaged children, Looked After Children, children with SEND and those on CP plans
- Review arrangements for ensuring the health and wellbeing of children
- Ensure that there are adequate plans and arrangements for transition of children to the next stage, including IAG
- Setting attendance targets and monitoring attendance

Stakeholders: to develop and maintain a relationship between the school and its parents, its immediate community and wider stakeholders.

- Strategy for parental engagement
- Managing complaints
- Using the website and other web enabled methods to communicate effectively.
- Ensuring the school can be used by the wider community.
- Developing links with other community groups and democratically elected representatives.
- To proactively manage the reputation of the school within the community.

### **Role of Multi-Academy Trust Board – people, purpose, resources**

The Trust Board is primarily concerned with ensuring the Trust is run properly and is planning strategically for the overall success of every child in the trust and ensuring all schools are successful. It controls financial and risk management functions for the trust as a whole. The Trust Board is informed by two practitioner panels: 1) the Trust Strategy Advisory Group; and 2) the School Improvement Group.

#### Strategic Purpose (Pu)

- Overall accountability for the progress and attainment of all children in the Trust, including standards of teaching and learning
- Overall accountability for the safeguarding and welfare of all children in the Trust
- Strategic direction and purpose of the Trust, including growth, entrance and exit
- The reputation of the Trust and its relationship with the wider community
- Risk management and audit
- Accountable for admissions policy

#### Strategic People (Pe)

- Hold the CEO to account for the overall success of schools in the trust and for the way that central MAT staff look after the people (including children), the sites and the infrastructure.



- Ensuring there is a coherent HR strategy that makes best use of the people employed in the Trust.
- Ensuring that performance management across the Trust is effective at improving outcomes and increasing effectiveness of the people employed by the Trust.

#### Strategic Resources (R)

- Hold the CFO to account for the financial and risk management of the Trust
- Financial probity and stability
- Overall effectiveness and efficiency of the use of all Trust resources
- Ensuring there is a coherent property strategy for the Trust
- Ensuring there is a coherent IT strategy for the Trust

The Trust Board will have at least two standing committees with delegated authority. The first will concern itself with 'education' matters, namely: curriculum, standards and pupils. This committee will have headteacher representation and LGB representation at Chair or Vice-Chair level. The second will concentrate on the 'business' of the Trust namely: finance, business, estate and resources. This will have LGB representation at Chair or Vice-Chair level and one secondary HT and one primary HT.

#### **Trust Strategy Advisory Panel – thinking about the future**

This is a practitioner panel reporting to the Trust Board. The focus is on the changing educational landscape. The group provides an intelligence gathering role keeping abreast of education developments such as changes to education legislation, performance tables, new curriculum demands, changes to DfE guidance that could impact on any aspect of educational provision for students or professional standards for staff. This advisory panel will ensure the Trust Board keeps in the vanguard of educational change and remains a step ahead when it comes to strategic decision making.

Membership: CEO + FD + HT (Sec) + HT (Pri)

#### **School Improvement Group -**

This is a practitioner panel reporting to the trust committees. The SIG primary role is to deliver the annual Schools' Improvement Programme and quality assesses standards within and across the Trust. The group controls the improvement budget and will use the intelligence gathered via monitoring activities to prioritise the fair and equitable distribution across the Trust. They will measure and account for the impact of all improvement activities and determine CPD priorities, use of training days, engagement of external partners and so on.

Membership: CEO and Head Teachers + FD

### **6.0 How does this governance model work in practice**

Decision making is sometimes very complicated especially when there are major financial implications such as staffing or IT procurement. There will be instances where a decision could have

curriculum, teaching and learning and finance implications. The appointment of staff is clearly important to the individual school, the LGB and HT will want to take a lead. But employing staff is also a major spending decision with the potential to have an impact across the Trust both in the short term and long term. Staff are appointed to the Trust not just individual schools. It seems clear therefore that the Trust Finance Committee would want to have strategic input and the CEO will retain the right of veto if the appointment is not in the best interest of the Trust.

Another example could be IT upgrades where the cost would constitute a major spending decision and could impact on current and future budgets. For example, a decision whether to deploy iPads or some other tablet device one to one within one school straddles several areas. The LGB will want to be involved in making the decision but the financial implications will mean the Trust Finance Committee will need to have a strategic input into the decision as well. But if the purchase of a few iPads was within delegated financial limits and within existing budget plans, the decision would rest with the headteacher.

The 'Scheme of Delegated Authority', sometimes referred to as the SoDA, is the framework which ensures there is clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of the various levels of governance.

## **7.0 The Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA)**

The framework can be found in Appendix A. The key constituents are:

- Trust Board (TB)
- Trust Committees (TC)
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- Finance Director (FD)
- Local Governing Body (LGB)
- Head Teacher (HT)

Authority, responsibility and accountability are distributed through the organisation. There has to be clarity regarding decision making and associated accountability.

Key functions are delegated to various levels, these are indicated in the framework.

## **8.0 School Improvement**

The primary purpose of the MAT must be to raise standards by making more efficient use of resources. This means school self-improvement should be at the heart of what we do. We believe sustainable school improvement has to come, predominantly but not exclusively, from within. This can be achieved by empowering existing staff to become reflective practitioners through regular, relevant and focussed CPD. Teachers across Trust schools are expected to become co-architects of annual teaching and learning development priorities, this is to be achieved through practitioner led self-review activity within schools and across the Trust.

We know our schools strengths and weaknesses and prior to a school joining North Cornwall Learning Trust we make sure that we have understood what support is required and what support

they can offer our other schools. To us school improvement is always a reciprocal arrangement and even the schools with the greatest challenges have skills and expertise that need to be recognized and harnessed for the greater good.

Getting to know our schools involves a thorough data analysis, looking at all documentation including RAISE online and Ofsted reports and undertaking an in-school audit of provision. Talking to pupils and parents will also provide a valuable insight into how schools are perceived.

Our schools will have access to shared school improvement services provided by the Trust. Where schools are not already “good” or “outstanding” North Cornwall Learning Trust will facilitate a high quality, bespoke package of support. Whilst much of this support will come from within the Trust, there will be opportunities for external help and support.

### **9.0 Developing and Growing the North Cornwall Learning Trust**

The Trust is open to any suitable proposals that may arise via direct approaches by individual schools, the Regional Schools Commissioner or Local Authorities subject to Directors approval. The preferred geographical location of prospective partner schools is North Cornwall.

Where we differ from many Trusts is that we seek to help support an individual school to grow and develop their own good practice – this will avoid the ‘clone’ effect and help keep schools unique. A key feature of our work will be the mentoring and development of leadership teams to enable them to focus and act upon things effectively and at the right time. We aim to develop existing teams of teachers and support staff through high quality professional development. The organisation values the individual and recognises that competence is often relative to the effectiveness of leadership and governance as well as the level of high quality professional development received and acted upon.

We will offer:

- Support and challenge meetings
- Learning and teaching review
- Accelerated and sustained school improvement programmes
- In-school and Trust wide training

Our Intended Outcomes:

- Proven track record of improved results within a school
- Rapidly improved quality of teaching
- Better and more resilient learners
- Improved and sustained leadership capacity and expertise
- A clear vision and strategic approach for the future
- Effective governance
- Appropriate curriculum and assessment systems in place
- Improved Ofsted outcomes

Our Approach:

- We will work alongside colleagues and aim to work in partnership with schools ensuring we match support to their needs
- We aim to lead by example, using up to date and current methods
- We do not subscribe to particular approaches as every school is different
- We aim to be open, honest and professional ensuring mutual trust and respect
- We recognise that every school has areas of expertise and it is our goal to help grow these further as well as improve

## **10. Development Priorities 2017-2020**

### Phase One

North Cornwall Learning Trust has the following seven development priorities for the next twelve months:

1. To develop a working infrastructure that supports the work of schools and is cost effective.
2. To ensure that all Trust provision is rated at least Good by Ofsted.
3. To develop leadership capacity across our schools.
4. To develop the use of ICT as a tool to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
5. To further develop leadership and governance structures to ensure effective accountability
6. To encourage other local SJS partner primaries to join NCLT – this includes Boscastle, Delabole, Port Isaac and Tintagel
7. To prioritise high quality communication of Trust aim and mission across Trust schools and the wider community

At the end of Phase One it is envisaged the NCLT will comprise 9 schools with approximately 1100 students. One of the schools will be sponsored.

### Phase two

After a period of establishment, consolidation and limited growth, the NCTL will plan for growth beyond the traditional catchment area. Initially this will focus on primary partner schools in the North Cornwall area stretching from Port Isaac to Bude-Stratton. This growth will increase capacity for school improvement at primary level.

During this phase there will be approaches to Wadebridge and Budehaven schools (or other secondary school providers) with the aim of increasing capacity at secondary level.

## **11. External support**

There will be times when the Trust does not have the required expertise within its staff. Where this is the case, the NCLT will access support from a variety of external providers/sources:

- Teaching Schools
- other MATs

- NLEs
- NLG
- FE/HE partners
- and any other appropriate provider

At all times the Trust will remain an outward-looking school. This means it will learn from others, establish partnerships with other educational providers and external partners including local business. It will ensure regular and robust external validation of its policies and practices and look to gain national accreditation for its activities. Equally it will share its successes by working beyond North Cornwall.

## Appendix B: Going down the academy route. What are the risks?

Prior to changing long established structures it is a useful exercise to anticipate some of the ‘risks’ that change may imply. Any change to the ‘usual way of doing things’ can cause anxiety and concern amongst key stakeholders this includes staff, parents and governors. Good leaders will anticipate many of the concerns and seek to alleviate them during the consultation process.

The possible risk	However...
There is no requirement for academies to have a qualified member of the teaching staff in every classroom	We want the best for our pupils and so will continue to recruit the best teachers possible to ensure standards continue to rise across all our schools.
Each primary school could lose its identity and just become part of a bigger amorphous ‘blob’.	The Trust is predicated on each school keeping its own Headteacher, identity, uniform, governing body and so on. A thriving school should be at the heart of every village community – bland uniformity does not engender great outcomes.
A MAT is just a ‘take-over’ by the secondary school	The NCLT comprises primary and secondary partners but will be under the directional leadership of the Trust Board which operates for the benefit of all schools. There is no one dominant school. Each school will retain its own unique identity.
Local governors feel threatened by loss of influence and control – loss of local voice	Each school will retain its own local governing body responsible for standards, safeguarding, and stakeholders. Under this system they will be able to spend more time on ‘education of children’ and less on business bureaucracy and compliance related duties.
Academies can choose their own curriculum which means that the offer could narrow or become skewed .	Our schools are committed to a broad and balanced curriculum this includes the arts, humanities and technology. In reality, all schools are restricted by performance tables, this is especially the case at secondary level.
Academies are able to change term dates and can change the timings of the school day. This could cause serious issues for working parents with children in more than one school.	Differences exist between schools already. Governors of maintained schools can change school times – they have to consult. There will be an advantage in harmonising start and finish times for each primary school and term dates for all schools.
Some academies have a bad record of changing admissions policies and excluding some local children from enrolling.	As Foundation Trust schools we can already alter our admissions policies and have chosen not to use this ‘freedom’. The Trust is committed to serving all pupils in the community.
Some academies have a poor record, and a negative impact, on the provision of special	As noted above, the Trust schools serve the local community and would continue to be inclusive.

education needs support an advice.	The Trust will continue to argue for more resources to ensure it can remain inclusive.
Teachers could be asked to work across schools.	The Trust is likely to create opportunities for some staff to work in more than one school. There will be support for this to happen.
The Trust could choose to redirect funding away from schools to their detriment.	The Trust does have strategic oversight of funding and there may be times when one school needs help – this could be financial. But it is important to remember the success of the Trust is dependent on all schools doing well. All decisions go through the Trust Finance Committee which has representation from all schools.
Current leaders and Trustees will move on – how can we ensure the Trust doesn't lurch in a different direction.	The Articles of Association for the MAT put safeguards in place re the recruitment and elections of future leaders and Trustees. The Members are also responsible for the maintenance of the ethos. However, with time there will inevitably be some changes but these will be evolutionary not revolutionary.
The Trust will still be a small trust in terms of pupil numbers. Will it be vulnerable to take-over?	The main reason for any take-over is a school not performing well. Making sure each school does well is our best guarantee against predators. It is likely the Trust will grow as other schools want to join.
Pupils in the primary schools not in the MAT may lose out on opportunities	All local primary schools will be encouraged to join the MAT. It will be possible for schools not in the MAT to enter into service level agreements. The MAT will be outward facing which means it values working with external partners for the benefit of all children.