

Frequently Asked Questions

In our experience of academy conversions parents have a number of questions relating to the Trust, the process and the impact that conversion will have on their school and in their children's education.

We have included some potential questions you might have with responses below. This public meeting and future events will provide further clarification and reassurance. Please use the attached sheet to ask any additional questions or comments that you may have.

1. Who is CHET?

CHET is the short name for the Chilford Hundred Education Trust. The Multi Academy Trust (MAT) was established by Linton Village College in 2014 to sponsor The Meadow Primary School, a local partner primary school after it was placed into Special Measures by Ofsted. The Trust also includes Linton Heights Junior School and The Pines Primary School and Pine Cones Pre-school (which are opening in Red Lodge in September 2018). We are a small Trust with a community focus and high expectations on teaching and learning. We are proud of the achievements and progress that our children and schools achieve both in terms of academic and inspection outcomes and more holistic educational development. All of our schools perform above local and national averages in exam results and have achieved an Ofsted rating of Good or Outstanding.

2. How was CHET chosen as the preferred sponsor for Howard Community Primary School?

We were initially made aware of the issues at Howard in November 2016. We offered support and interest in helping the school but at the time it was deemed by the then Regional Schools Commissioner that an alternative solution should be considered. In September 2017 we were made aware the school had been visited by Ofsted and was awaiting the outcome of the report. Since then we have visited Howard and found out more about the local context and challenges that the school has faced. Having engaged with a due diligence process, and with the support of the Trust Board, we submitted an expression of interest to the Department for Education in December and completed an interview process conducted by the DfE in January, alongside other Trusts. The decision to select CHET as the preferred sponsor was confirmed last week by the Regional Schools Office.

3. What happens next? Has the sponsorship decision been confirmed yet?

The sponsorship decision will be formally approved by the Headteachers' Board for the Eastern Region on 22nd February 2018. Up until this date the school and Trust are engaged in a listening period with the Department for Education and the Howard community. This period of time allows for questions and concerns to be raised and for information about the proposed academisation of Howard to be shared with all relevant stakeholders.

4. Are you a business that will make money from HCPS?

All MATs are limited companies, as well as exempt charities. We have no shareholders, we pay no dividends. No one makes any personal gains or profit from CHET's business. The Education and Skills Funding Agency fund the Trust to run its schools. These monies are devolved to each institution to budget and spend in line with the school's needs and priorities. This includes the ability to carry forward moderate funds for the school's future investment. Minimal costs are spent on CHET personnel and processes to enable maximum resources for the learning of children in Trust schools and to achieve economies of scale where appropriate. The Trust is committed to community use of school facilities and would seek to ensure that local residents and families benefit from the school environment. These activities are not for profit but are key to CHET's community philosophy.

5. Who appointed the Directors/Trustees and who are they?

The Members of the Trust Board have appointed 9 Directors/Trustees (including the Executive Principal who has an ex-officio role on the Board). The Directors have been selected from a wide range of backgrounds who were able to bring relevant skills and experience to the Trust. The Board's functions are strategic in their focus; they provide an oversight of the Trust's performance, standards and financial health/risk. CHET's scheme of delegation expects local governance to challenge each partner school and hold them individually to account. The CHET Board is independent from its member schools and there is no direct representation of the schools on the Board. Biographies of CHET Directors are published on the Trust's website (www.chetrust.co.uk).

6. Do you intend to appoint additional Directors from the new school?

The Directors of the Trust are chosen on the basis of skills and expertise, not on a representational basis. We will be looking to recruit committed and capable governors to join the Local Governing Body (LGB) at Howard including parents/carers and community members. CHET's governance arrangements place a great deal of responsibility in schools' local governing bodies. It is the LGB that would ratify the school's policies, agree the budget and hold the school to account. In the first instance there will be additional support while the LGB grows in strength and skills to be able to operate effectively.

7. How big will the Trust get?

CHET is not motivated by size and scale. The Trust has grown organically with additional schools joining the Trust on the basis of CHET's relationships and capacity to maintain and raise standards. Our ethos values relationships and collaboration and therefore new CHET schools are local to others in order that staff may benefit from each other's expertise and support. We have had expressions of interest from other settings to join the Trust, including Pre-school, Post 16 and SEND. Each opportunity is assessed on the basis of the impact that growth will have on education at current and prospective partner organisations.

8. Are your schools close enough to provide a local focus?

Existing CHET schools are on the South Cambridgeshire/Suffolk border and around 30 minutes' drive away from Howard. Our new primary school The Pines, situated in Red Lodge, is just 12 miles away from the school. Our Teaching School Alliance, CASSA, has a great deal of experience in delivering training and supporting schools in West Suffolk. Our Specialist and Local Leaders in Education have been deployed in a number of primary schools around the Forest Heath/Breckland/Bury area. We have strong relationships with Suffolk Local Authority and other local schools.

9. Is there a danger that the school will cease to be a community-focused school?

Absolutely not. Our other Trust schools all have a strong community focus. We believe in the importance of parental and community engagement and this is reflected in the adult education classes, sports facilities and events hosted by CHET schools. Strong Parent Teacher Associations and community volunteering opportunities also characterise our approach. We are keen for Howard to harness local support and share this ethos.

10. Why is this public meeting so late in the process?

This is the culmination of an extended and careful process which has only recently been concluded. As we have been keen to present proposals that are fully formed, agreed and workable, this meeting has been arranged at the earliest opportunity.

11. How will you ensure that standards improve and that leadership is effective?

CHET will support the school through our school leaders and experienced teachers working alongside Howard's staff. Training and development, in addition to the implementation of successful policies, practices and systems will help the school to raise standards and achieve sustainable improvements. Growing leadership capacity and skills at the school through the staff and governors will be integral to this.

12. Who will be the Headteacher at Howard?

We will run a recruitment process to appoint the best possible candidate to lead the school. In order to secure a suitably experienced headteacher who is well-matched to the needs of Howard, we will conduct the appointment process in readiness for them to be in post by September. We appreciate that the school community has experienced a large number of interim leadership arrangements and are keen to avoid further unnecessary change. We plan to maintain the current Interim Headteacher, Stephen Fanthorpe, for the transitional period as he has already established a strong understanding of the school's context and is well-placed to work with CHET colleagues to ensure a smooth and effective academisation process.

13. How will this affect my child's class, curriculum and day to day experience of the school?

As with any school, teachers will be deployed to best meet the needs of the children and classes. We are conscious of the significant number of changes that have already taken place in respect of children's learning and are keen to stabilise and create continuity and quality of learning experiences. There will need to be a review of current staffing arrangements and expertise to ensure that resources are utilised to best effect. CHET is committed to a holistic, inspiring and enriching curriculum offer and as such will be encouraging the development of a broad, balanced and exciting learning experience that will enhance children's education. There is no set curriculum model at CHET schools, although we share effective practice and resources. Teachers are encouraged to plan an inspiring curriculum that is relevant and engaging for their learners. While there is no obligation for academies to follow the National Curriculum, we consider it important to ensure that all children have access to the knowledge and skills that will best prepare them for external examinations and future education.

14. Will staff be interchangeable between the schools in the Trust?

It is not the MAT's working practice or strategic intention to deploy teachers or support staff across the Trust. Staff contracts have a principal place of work cited on them and we believe in the importance of local knowledge and relationships. There may be staff development opportunities across CHET schools that would benefit colleagues and children but wholesale centralised movement of staff is not a characteristic of CHET.

15. Is the Trust committed to Teaching Assistants and Qualified Teachers?

Yes. All CHET employees are appointed on the basis of their relevant skills and qualifications for the role. Through our Teaching School, CASSA, we are heavily involved in teacher training, including placements through Cambridge University Faculty of Education and the Cambridge, Suffolk and Norfolk School-centred training. We also deliver training programmes for teachers and teaching assistants. We value the importance of professional knowledge and experience and have a deep passion and care for education and children's development.

16. How will you work with the Local Authority and with local schools?

As an academy, partnerships with other schools in the area will continue after conversion. Howard Community Primary School will continue to function as a member of Bury School Partnership and as a 4-11 primary school, in line with Suffolk's two tier education system. CHET will work closely with Suffolk Local Authority to enable an effective transition to academy status and to ensure high standards for the school. CHET is keen to grow relationships with local schools to support reciprocal opportunities for sharing best practice for the benefit of all of our children. Existing catchment and feeder arrangements will remain in place, in line with Suffolk Local Authority admissions code.

17. How will staff terms and conditions be affected by the academy sponsorship?

Once sponsorship has been confirmed, a staff consultation process and transfer will be completed under TUPE regulations. This will include union representation and will address all matters such as pay and pensions entitlements. Existing commercial contracts will be reviewed. Where good value and good quality service is in place there will be no intention to make changes for changes sake.

18. How will the character of the school change?

CHET is committed to maintaining the core principles of Howard Community Primary School and to making sure that we support its staff to foster a love of learning. The sponsorship process provides an ideal opportunity to refresh and redefine the school's vision and values with children, parents/carers and the wider community. We are keen for Howard to be at the heart of its local area and to flourish as a successful school. All CHET schools have their own unique ethos and character but share the following common values: inclusive, ambitious, inspiring, enriching, holistic and relational.

19. How will admissions and transport be managed?

We will continue to use Suffolk Local Authority to oversee the admissions process for Howard and will engage with the school community in regards to any future proposed changes to admissions as the local demographic grows. School transport remains the responsibility of the County Council.

20. Will the school name change?

There are no current plans to change the school name. However, we will engage with parents and the local community to review this if there is a desire to rebrand and refresh the school's identity. There is no requirement to use the word 'academy' in the school's name – none of the other CHET schools, nor the Trust itself, use this term in their titles.

21. Will the school uniform change?

There are no immediate plans to make any changes to the school uniform. We recognise that this is a significant investment for parents and would seek their views and opinions before embarking on any changes if it was felt to be beneficial for the school and its children. There are other more pressing priorities for the school.

22. Will you change the timing of the school day?

Again, there is no plan to do so. This would be a decision for the school's leadership team and governing body in the future if there was appetite to review arrangements such as this.

23. How soon will the next OFSTED inspection be?

Currently guidelines indicate that Howard is likely to be re-inspected by Ofsted in three years' time, a long enough period to allow us to embed changes. With the change in school status, Howard officially becomes a new school. However, there will be interim monitoring visits from the Local Authority and HMI and support to ensure that improvements are on track and having a positive impact on standards.

24. What provision will there be for school clubs?

All CHET schools offer rich extra-curricular opportunities, as visible on their websites and twitter feeds. We are keen to make sure that children at the Howard benefit from access to sports, arts and STEM activities, amongst other curriculum enrichment. Working with staff, we will support the school to develop an enhanced provision during and outside of timetabled lessons.

25. How will school systems change once the school has been academised?

CHET will support the school's staff to ensure that there are effective systems and processes in place. Where these are already working effectively there will be no need for wholesale changes. Given current financial challenges, it will be important to make sure that financial systems are providing best value and ease of use for staff and parents/carers. CHET primary schools use Target Tracker as their key assessment platform and we are keen to support colleagues at Howard to make successful use of this system to support children's progress.

26. How can we be involved in ensuring Howard's success?

In addition to voluntary roles available through membership of the school's governing body and PTA, we will also be encouraging parents and carers to play an active part in their children's education. We will support staff to develop opportunities for parents/carers to engage with learning activities and understand how to best support their children in their progress. We are also keen to secure support from the community and tap into local knowledge and expertise to develop the school environment, facilities and educational opportunities. We are keen to work with parents/carers and the local community and encourage you to share your comments, views and suggestions for the future success of Howard.

27. How can we find out more about CHET and CHET schools?

The CHET leaflet attached provides an overview of current CHET schools and their profiles. You can explore the schools in more detail by looking at their websites and get a flavour of recent news and activities by looking at their twitter accounts, linked to www.twitter/cheteducation.

28. Who are the key people that will be supporting Howard?

The CHET leadership team will be supported by a number of our Teaching School's National, Local and Specialist Leaders in Education in the school improvement project at Howard.

29. What happens next?

29 th January-19 th February 2018	Listening period	Community communication and gathering of views regarding sponsorship.
22 nd February	Headteachers' Board meeting	Sponsorship decision approved by the Regional Schools Commissioner.
23 rd February- 31 st March 2018	Headteacher recruitment process	Advert to be released once sponsor is confirmed.
	Staff, parent and community engagement	Process to include unions and various stakeholders and representatives to shape the future of Howard.
	School improvement support	CHET/CASSA leadership team to provide bespoke support in line with improvement priorities.
1 st April 2018	Academy conversion	The target date for conversion – legal transfers may take longer to be completed.
April-July 2018	Building refurbishment	Environment improvement to include play areas and social spaces.
	School improvement projects	Continued targeted support from CHET/CASSA leaders.

30. How can I respond and share my views, comments and suggestions?

Please do complete the attached form to express your opinions or questions about Howard's future and hand into Reception in the envelope provided. You are also welcome to attend one of the drop in sessions that Toby Slater-Robins will be offering. CHET will be conducting parent/carers/community forum events during and after the academisation consultation process.

Listening period response

Howard Community Primary School

Please complete the box below with any questions, comments or suggestions that you have about Howard Community Primary School's sponsorship. We will respond to these in a paper once we have compiled them. Please add your contact details at the bottom if you are happy to be involved further. Please continue on the reverse if required.

The deadline for responding to the school on paper is Friday 9 February – please hand in to school reception. From 10 – 19 February please submit responses directly to the Department for Education by email RSC.EASTNELONDON@education.gov.uk.

Thank you for responding.

Please tick one or more of the following boxes to indicate your relationship to the school:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Howard parent/carer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Howard employee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local resident | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employee at a local school | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of the wider community | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name (optional):

Email address/phone number (optional):

