

Multi-Academy Trusts: Frequently Asked Questions (post-consultation, June 2017)

Was Campion instructed to join a MAT by the Department for Education?

No

Why EE4A?

EE4A was chosen because the values, vision and intention of the Trust best capture the heart of what Campion is about – the best care and the best teaching for local children of all ages and abilities. EE4A plan to grow the MAT to include a range of mainstream and special schools, thus forming a true partnership for all local children. Campion will become a key lead partner as the Trust grows.

EE4A has access to a very wide range of people and organisations, including outstanding school improvement expertise outside Northamptonshire. The Directors of EE4A have been chosen according to their skills and expertise.

Were other MAT options considered?

A range of local and national MAT options were considered at length as part of the Governing Body's decision making process.

Is EE4A really a local MAT when the two other schools are in Northampton and Daventry?

Daventry Hill School is less than 11 miles from Campion and Delapre within 6 miles of the school. These are very local partnerships and therefore very much rooted in our local community.

Does EE4A have the skills and capacity to support Campion?

EE4A will be held to account for the performance of all academies by the Department for Education. Joining the EE4A Trust provides us with access to highly experienced education practitioners, school improvement advisers, as well as a wealth of education project management and business expertise. EE4A will use a range of brokered support, internal support and work with existing networks to provide support and challenge. EE4A provide a wide range of school improvement services; further detail is available on the website in the 'what we do' section.

EE4A is a registered charity. Does this impact on school finances?

No

What are the benefits of working with other schools?

At this time EE4A is responsible for Daventry Hill School. However, the Department for Education accepted EE4A as the Trust group to lead Daventry Hill on the understanding that it would not remain a stand-alone academy. Instead, it was always the intention of the Department for Education and EE4A to grow a multi-academy group and therefore the number of schools within the group will grow. As a result, all staff are likely to benefit from opportunities to work with staff from other schools. As well as opportunities for joint training, staff are likely to have increased internal career progression opportunities within the MAT as it grows. EE4A is also keen to support local networks.

What is a Multi-Academy Trust? (MAT)

A MAT is a collection of schools (not necessarily in the same phase) who work together in a single Trust. The MAT is responsible for each of the academies/schools within the Trust.

A MAT is directly funded by and accountable to the Department for Education; as a stand-alone academy, this is true of Champion at present.

What will becoming a MAT mean for Champion?

Champion will remain part of the community and serve our children and families as we do now. The Governing Body of Champion will remain in place and operate in a similar manner to how it does now. The Trust is accountable for all the schools that are part of it, and through Schemes of Delegation decide which powers are retained by the Trust and which are delegated to individual schools. As part of the EE4A Multi-Academy Trust, the Governors would report to the MAT Trust Directors, who in turn report to the MAT Trust Members. The MAT Trust Directors could include Governors from Champion as well as representatives of the other schools involved. Other schools joining the MAT would also retain their local Governing Body, but would be required to report to the MAT Trust Directors as well.

What are the benefits of being in a MAT?

The government recognises the value of a self-improving school system in which groups of schools work closely together to continuously improve. There are numerous benefits of being in a MAT including:

- A shared vision for the EE4A MAT schools whilst retaining the individual characteristics, ethos and values of each school
- Joining a MAT that is rooted in our local community
- Capacity to support school improvement and exchange of good practice and ideas between the schools in the Trust. Shared expertise, facilities and resources from specialist teachers across the MAT can benefit all. Collaboration is the most important benefit to this 'self-improving' school system.
- Greater protection for individual schools in a rapidly changing political, financial and educational climate
- Improved use of individual school's finances through economies of scale offered by bulk acquisition of services and resources. With the constant reductions in school funding, the cost-savings of schools maximising economies of scale together is significant.

Are there any disadvantages to joining a MAT?

Although the Trust will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety and property maintenance, Champion is already an Academy and therefore Champion Governors already have responsibility for these matters and therefore have expertise in these areas.

What else will change?

We do not intend to change anything else about the day to day operation of the school as a result of converting to a MAT, except in ways which we think will improve the school even more to ensure the 'best care, best teaching' for each one of our students. For students it is unlikely they will see much, if any, change in their day to day school lives. All staff currently employed by the school will automatically transfer to the Trust on their current pay and conditions. Staff would not notice significant changes in their everyday working lives. Champion staff already experience and champion the benefits of partnership work and that would not only continue but grow.

Would the admissions arrangements change?

The school's admission arrangements are set by the Local Authority and the LA also decided which students should be offered places at our schools. We remain committed to these principles and the current admission arrangements would remain in place.

Would other schools join us and who would make the decision if additional schools join EE4A?

Any decision on additional schools joining our group would be made by the Board of Trustees. We do expect other schools to join as time goes on and any school that joins would be expected to share the same vision and ethos, the same governance structure and to fully contribute to and learn from the other schools.

EE4A's vision is to grow the MAT to around 12 schools.

Would the schools change their names?

No, schools would retain their names.

Will our uniform change? No. Campion will retain its unique identity. There is no intention to change the individual character of Campion or the other schools in the Trust.

How can I find out more?

There is more information about EE4A at <http://www.ee4a.org.uk/>.