

BROMET SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mrs M Pace, M.Ed

Excellence, Enjoyment and Achievement for All



Frequently Asked Questions

This information sheet has been produced to answer some of the immediate questions you may have about the proposal for Bromet School to convert to academy status.

What is an Academy?

Academies are charitable companies limited by guarantee. Rather than being directly funded and accountable to the local authority, they are funded and accountable to the Secretary of State. Academies are still part of the community but are free from local authority (LA) control. Academies have a number of freedoms and flexibilities that LA run schools do not have. These can be used to better meet the needs of their pupils and communities.

What is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)?

All academies within a MAT are governed by one trust and a single board of Trustees. This is the organisation that runs a number of academies under a single charitable company. The Trustees are responsible for decisions relating to how each academy is run, however, each individual academy retains its own governing body and the trust delegates some of its functions to the governing body. Schools who see the benefit of working together with other schools, in a more formal arrangement, choose to work as a MAT. This is now the preferred Government model with all academy conversions being directed to adopt this route.

To whom are the Trustees accountable?

Ultimately, the academy will be accountable to the Secretary of State for Education through the terms of its Funding Agreement. The Academy would still be subject to Ofsted Inspections. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) would monitor school finances, which would be subject to an annual audit by external independent accountants. Results would be published as at present and annual accounts for the MAT submitted to Companies House. As is currently the case, the Governors are accountable to the parents and the children of the school in the first instance.

What is the process of converting to an Academy?

Bromet School was judged as "Good" at its last Ofsted inspection, which is one of the criteria for conversion. This means that our school can join an existing MAT or set up a MAT of our own. The governing body believe that partnering with other schools as part of a MAT is the best way forward for Bromet



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Weren't academies all about improving failing schools?

Under the Labour Government, failing schools were forced to become academies and partner with stronger schools. This structure was expanded under the Coalition Government with all good and outstanding schools being offered the opportunity to convert. Currently, under the sponsored-academy model, failing schools are taken over and run by an academy trust.

What are the growth plans of the HfL Multi Academy Trust?

The MAT received approval to be a sponsor on 21st December 2016. They anticipate taking in the first wave of schools ready for September 2017, with further waves following in the next two academic years. There are currently over 30 schools expressing an interest in being included in wave 1 and many more for later waves. Many of these schools are good and outstanding and are financially stable. The MAT have built a model that is designed to be able to expand using a cluster model and the scheme of delegation takes that into account.

Why are the Governors considering Academy Status?

The Governors have considered the benefits of converting to academy status and identified the following reasons:

1. Autonomy

Becoming an academy will allow us greater freedom to innovate. For example, as we would be free from the requirement to follow the National Curriculum, the school could choose to develop a specific curriculum to meet the specific needs of its own pupils, recognising the local context of the school, or can choose to follow the best curriculum for the pupils. This way the ethos that underpins everything we do at Bromet can be maintained on our terms.

2. Funding

Currently funding is de-delegated to schools, which means our school does not receive all of the funding in its budget. The LA keeps an element of funding for central services. When a school is an academy, all funding goes directly to it. Of course, the school will still need to purchase a number of services but it will be free to do so in the open market to secure best value for the school. It can then choose whether or not to purchase services from the LA, depending upon the quality and value for money offered, rather than having funding decisions imposed on it. The funding previously passed to local authorities to support schools, the Education Services Grant has been stopped from September 2017 which will reduce the support available from Herts County Council. We have already seen a reduction in some support and services available to schools.



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3. Maintaining Control

The majority of secondary schools in Hertfordshire have already converted to academies. Many primary schools have chosen to stay as part of the LA. Early conversion means we will have more choice to decide the way forward for our school.

Why are the Governors considering joining the Inclusive Multi Academy Trust?

The Governors have considered the benefits of joining the HfL Multi Academy Trust and identified the following reasons:

1. Influence

By being part of Wave 1, we believe that we can be involved in setting the direction, expectations, and standards of the MAT and ensure that it delivers the best for our children.

As the MAT is not led by a single school we feel that every school will be involved and decisions made in a fair and transparent manner.

2. Collaboration

The main benefit of joining a MAT is to work in partnership with other schools. The schools will be able to share resources, staff and expertise. A programme of school improvement between all trust schools will ensure that skilful professionals who know the school, community and area well can bring about positive change. Opportunities for staff professional development will increase across schools. Access to a wider variety of experts across the large trust will offer opportunities for the staff and children.

3. Financial efficiencies

The purchasing power of a group of schools through the trust is stronger than as individual schools. Specialist staff and services can be jointly financed across the trust and shared, and organisational, back office operations can be streamlined.

4. A different relationship with the Local Authority and other schools

Although independent from the Local Authority, the Multi Academy Trust would continue to work in partnership with the LA and other local schools. This changing relationship would mean that these relationships would be maintained to achieve the best for our pupils. Herts for Learning have been supporting local schools for many years and are already the largest schools company in the UK.



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Will the admissions policy of the School change?

Academy Trusts are their own admissions authority. The Trustees may adopt the current admissions policy of the LA or alter them slightly to meet the needs of all pupils and staff in the local community. Currently the LA can force schools to go over the recommended number of thirty in a class. As an academy we would have full control over class sizes.

Will the school day and term dates stay the same?

The decision to change these would be controlled by the Trust. Any changes would be as a result of a full consultation with parents and pupils, and be changed to add educational value and meet the needs of the community.

Will the name of the school change?

No. The school will still be called Bromet School although it would name the link trust as the HfL Multi Academy Trust.

Will the uniform change?

No. The uniform will remain the same.

My child has a special educational need and receives additional support.

Will that still be the case if Bromet becomes an Academy?

Yes. Bromet School is committed to ensuring all pupils receive the support they need to achieve their best. Where students receive additional support this will continue. The School will continue to work with the Local Authority, parents and other services to ensure pupils with additional needs are supported effectively. One of the benefits of working as part of a trust is that specialist staff/expertise can be employed at a shared cost between the schools.

Have the Governing Body looked at other options?

Yes. The Headteacher, Senior Leadership team and governors have been working on this for over 12 months, reviewing other MATs, and analysing the benefits for Bromet.

Will the curriculum change?

At the moment there are no plans to change the curriculum at the school. With HfL we have strong systems in place to support the curriculum which we expect to continue.



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Will the schools be spread across Hertfordshire?

Some schools will be across the county, however the model is to cluster schools together in smaller, local groups meaning that Bromet will be able to build stronger relationships with similar schools locally and work together to drive improvement.



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