

# Great Budworth CofE Primary School

## Academy Conversion Engagement Questions & Answers

Parents/ Carers Meeting, Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023, 5.00pm

### Attendees:

Rachel Corradine, Headteacher, Great Budworth CofE Primary School  
Lisa Rigby, Chair of Governors, Great Budworth CofE Primary School and Antrobus St Mark's CofE Primary School  
Governors X2  
Jane Evans, CFO, Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT)  
Hardip Hayer, Project Manager, AMF (UK) Ltd  
David Edwards, Project Support Officer, AMF (UK) Ltd  
Parents X3

**QUESTION:** School numbers are currently decreasing. Will there be pressure from CDAT to increase numbers to maintain funding?

**ANSWER:** CDAT supports all its schools regardless of size. The current smallest school has 18 pupils and it receives the same support as much larger schools. CDAT can provide support and marketing advice to the school to try and increase pupil numbers. Increasing numbers isn't just about funding – it is also far easier to sequence the curriculum in a slightly larger school (e.g. one with 4 classes) and there are often more chances for children to take part in events with other schools.

**QUESTION:** Will the curriculum change?

**ANSWER:** The school makes the decision on the curriculum. Although academies don't have to teach the national curriculum, in reality in CDAT schools almost all of what is taught is the national curriculum – but with the chance for the school to adapt those parts of the curriculum that aren't really relevant or engaging. We encourage each school to have its own unique curriculum matched to the school's context and children's needs – we don't impose a curriculum from the centre.

**QUESTION:** How does collaboration within CDAT and its schools look like?

**ANSWER:** CDAT holds various workshops and training sessions to help share information and best practises. There is also its Lead Teacher scheme where schools can tap into expertise for specific subjects. There are six Headteacher conferences held each year and SBM meetings are held on a termly basis.

**QUESTION:** Has the Governing Body picked up on any negatives?

**ANSWER:** The CDAT Board of Trustees are in charge of the 'heavy' decisions with the local governing body (LGB) leading on the day to day running of the school. The CDAT Board provides support to the LGB.

**QUESTION:** Are staff excited?

**ANSWER:** Staff feel motivated with the opportunities that may present themselves at CDAT.

**QUESTION:** What happens if parents/ carers do not want to go ahead with the conversion?

**ANSWER:** The Governors will take all the feedback received during the consultation period into account. The Governing Body make the decision about whether to convert.

**QUESTION:** Are you staying in your position (question addressed to Headteacher)?

**ANSWER:** At the moment this is obviously a question for governors; all but 1 CDAT school has its own Headteacher, and the other (very small) school has its own Head of School who is supported by an Executive Headteacher. Whether it is a Headteacher or Head of School, there is always someone who staff and parents know is 'in charge' on a day-to-day basis.

**QUESTION:** Will there still be a Chair of Governors?

**ANSWER:** Yes: all CDAT schools still have their own Local Governing Body who continue to provide the Headteacher/Head of School with support and challenge – just as now. We think it's important to still have governance at a local level, because those governors know the school and its community so well.

QUESTION: What is the current largest school in CDAT?

ANSWER: The largest school currently has 360 pupils.

QUESTION: Will there be opportunities for inter-schools sports competitions?

ANSWER: This is something that CDAT are currently looking into as the Trust are keen to get pupils from different CDAT schools mixing. This year we've already had football tournaments and a dance event – organised in local clusters of CDAT schools.

QUESTION: Will PTA still continue?

ANSWER: Yes – most of our schools have PTAs and we'd love the PTA to continue.

### **Parent Feedback Received Through Feedback Form or Email:**

QUESTION: What financial impact will this have?

ANSWER: No schools have been worse-off after joining the trust, and most have made savings because of the 'buying power' of being part of a group of schools rather than one school acting alone.

QUESTION: Will the staffing structure remain the same?

ANSWER: Joining the trust won't impact on the school's planned structure.

QUESTION: Will there be any extra support, resources or training opportunities for staff?

ANSWER: Yes – a broad range of CPD opportunities with trust-wide training and training within local clusters – e.g. this year staff benefiting from subject networks, dedicated SENCO training, EYFS training and NPQs for middle/senior leaders among other things.

QUESTION: Will Ofsted still be doing inspections?

ANSWER: Yes

QUESTION: What is the plan for a headteacher moving forward?

ANSWER: At the moment this is obviously a question for governors; all but 1 CDAT school has its own Headteacher, and the other (very small) school has its own Head of School.

### **Joint Staff Meeting (Great Budworth and Antrobus St Mark's), Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023, 4.00pm**

#### **Attendees:**

Rachel Corradine, Headteacher, Great Budworth CofE Primary School

Lisa Rigby, Chair of Governors, Great Budworth CofE Primary School and Antrobus St Mark's CofE Primary School

Rhian Perry, Acting Headteacher, Antrobus St Mark's CofE Primary School  
Governors X2

Jane Evans, CFO, Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT)

Hardip Hayer, Project Manager, AMF (UK) Ltd

David Edwards, Project Support Officer, AMF (UK) Ltd

QUESTION: What specific support and training to teachers and staff will be provided by CDAT?

Answer: There is a broad range of CPD opportunities with trust-wide training and training within local clusters – e.g. this year staff have benefited from subject networks, dedicated SEND training, an EYFS training programme and NPQs for middle/senior leaders. We have also held a CDAT writing conference (with 2 excellent external speakers) and some training shared between neighbouring schools in the trust. We have also started having some shared staff meetings – for example, staff in a group of 5 Cheshire East schools have started visiting each other's schools once a term to share ideas and resources.

QUESTION: What support is available for the admin side?

ANSWER: There is the CFO and School Business Support Officers at CDAT who would support the finance team.

QUESTION: Can you give examples of what CDAT have done with other schools to help increase pupil numbers?

ANSWER: CDAT have introduced nurseries and pre-schools to schools that did not previously have them and did not have the capacity to set them up. This has had a very positive impact on pupil numbers – e.g. at Astbury numbers have risen from around 50 to 80+. We also have supported schools with other forms of marketing with some success.

QUESTION: Is this something that the school still wants to go through considering the Schools Bill has been paused?

ANSWER: The LA have no infrastructure in place to provide the support the school requires and therefore moving to academy status is the better option.

QUESTION: What would the LGB look like as part of CDAT in terms of numbers?

ANSWER: It is usual on conversion for the current governing body to transfer over as they are and become the LGB. Our LGBs still all have parent and staff representatives, foundation governors and the headteacher – and have the possibility of having community/co-opted governors brought on to the LGB as well.

QUESTION: Is there a pot of money for continued professional development (CPD)?

ANSWER: Yes – as part of CDAT, schools have full, free access to all of the CPD that the trust runs.

QUESTION: Who owns the buildings?

ANSWER: For a VA school the buildings are usually owned by the Diocese and the playing fields are usually owned by the LA. At the beginning of the conversion process, the legal advisors would confirm ownership of the land and buildings. The buildings remain owned by the Diocese but with a statutory agreement that CDAT uses them to provide education – and the Academy Trust takes on all maintenance and building improvement. The LA usually grant a 125-year lease on the playing fields.

QUESTION: How long will current staff T&Cs be protected for?

ANSWER: Current teachers and staff employed by the Governing Body will be TUPE'd across under their existing T&Cs. As a trust, we always follow the STPCD (teachers' pay and conditions) and NJC (support staff pay and conditions) and have no plans to stop doing so.

QUESTION: What happens with pensions?

ANSWER: The pensions remain as they are for teachers (TPS) and support staff (LGPS).