

# Huxley CofE Primary School

## Academy Conversion Engagement Questions & Answers

**Parents/Carers Drop-in Session, Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November – 2pm**

**Attendees:**

Neil Dixon, CEO, CDAT

Rachel Gourley, Headteacher, Huxley CofE Primary school

Louise Ryan, Project Manager, AMF UK (Ltd)

Parents x3

QUESTION: When will the conversion take place?

ANSWER: ND explained this is currently planned for 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024.

QUESTION: What changes will there be? Is the funding received by the school different to the current arrangement?

ANSWER: ND explained currently the government provides the Local Authority with the funding, who then provides this to the school. The only change will be that the government provides the funding to CDAT, who then provides this funding to the school.

QUESTION: Will the amount of funding given to the school be the same as currently?

ANSWER: ND stated each school continues to have its own budget. The funding also pays for the Central support in the Trust, for example, SEND and Early Years support. ND explained parents won't see a significant change regarding funding.

QUESTION: Will the school keep its uniqueness?

ANSWER: Yes – all of the schools within the trust are Primary schools and Church of England schools however each school is different and maintains its individuality.

QUESTION: Is extra funding provided for the school due to being under special measures?

ANSWER: ND explained there is additional funding and support, and the Trust will discuss with the Headteacher how best to utilise this.

QUESTION: The school has a Flexi policy, does the Trust have their own Flexi policy?

ANSWER: ND stated not currently, as this is not required.

QUESTION: Would the Trust approach other schools regarding the Flexi model?

ANSWER: ND stated this may be an option in the future whereby this model would work for some other schools in the Trust, however, this is a unique model with a level of specialism required.

QUESTION: Do all of the schools in the Trust work together, for example for training events?

ANSWER: Yes at times – ND explained collaboration and sharing best practice is key. If schools are doing something particularly well, they may share ideas with schools that need to

develop in a similar area. ND explained all of the headteachers across the schools meet half-termly, the school business managers meet termly, Early years and SENCo meet regularly as well as subject leader meetings.

QUESTION: How do other Headteachers feel about CDAT expanding?

ANSWER: ND explained the Trust has ensured their Central team of support has grown before taking on new schools, to ensure the same level of support can be offered. ND stated the Trust is currently advertising for a new role in the school improvement team to begin in January 2024. RG also explained the Local Authority is so vast that at times a small school can feel lost, whereas being part of CDAT is a smaller network of support.

QUESTION: How does governance work and who would be on the board of governors for CDAT schools?

ANSWER: ND stated generally a board of governors would consist of two parents, a staff governor, the Headteacher, and for voluntary controlled schools, two community governors and two foundation governors.

QUESTION: Does the local Vicar have to be on the board of governors?

ANSWER: This would be encouraged however is not essential.

QUESTION: Do the community governors need to be close geographically?

ANSWER: The skills of the governors are a priority over geographical location, due to the unique model of the school and the small number of potential local community governors available. There is currently an Interim Executive Board (IEB) in place, which will cease as soon as the conversion is finalised. A new interim governing body will then be put in place, whilst other more permanent governors are sought.

COMMENT: There may be very few people to approach for this role.

ANSWER: ND confirmed the board will need to be the right people for the particular model of the school.

QUESTION: Will the current catering arrangements continue?

ANSWER: The current contract has expired, and new arrangements will therefore need to be sought. There are other options to be explored which may be more beneficial for a smaller school.

QUESTION: Which other CDAT schools are local?

ANSWER: Utkinton St Paul's Primary School and Norley CofE Primary school.

## **Staff Drop-in Session, Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 - 1pm**

### **Attendees:**

Neil Dixon, CEO, CDAT

Rachel Gourley, Headteacher, Huxley CofE Primary School

Louise Ryan, Project Manager, AMF UK (Ltd)

Staff X6

**QUESTION:** Where do you see Huxley going moving forward?

**ANSWER:** ND stated Huxley has a positive model in place that is working well. It will be important for OFSTED to complete a further inspection and see the changes made to the delivery of the curriculum and how this is working. It may be that the Flexi approach can be considered for other schools, or a KS3 can be considered as ND is aware parents are keen on this. The Trust doesn't want to change what is currently in place.

**QUESTION:** What will the transition for admin staff look like as different processes will be used?

**ANSWER:** ND stated the Director of Finance from CDAT, Jane Evans, has previously visited schools to show the changes to finance systems and offer support for any admin staff as necessary.

**QUESTION:** Will staff members' job roles change? For example, one member of staff from the school may be responsible for a role across all of the schools in the Trust.

**ANSWER:** ND stated this is not necessary, there is a central team who can provide centralised support.

**QUESTION:** If a member of staff, a Teaching Assistant (TA) for example, is off unwell, would a TA from another school in the Trust be sent to cover this role?

**ANSWER:** ND stated they may ask a local school if they can offer support however this would not be an expectation. ND explained there are some secondments across the Trust and shared roles e.g. SENDCo.

**QUESTION:** How would this be paid?

**ANSWER:** ND stated the recharge would be completed centrally.

**QUESTION:** Which is the largest school in CDAT?

**ANSWER:** Christ Church Moreton CofE Primary School with around 400 pupils, this has now extended to a Nursery provision also. ND explained there are around 5 smaller schools currently as part of CDAT, and another 3 smaller schools joining. CDAT have advertised a role in the School Improvement Team and part of their role will be to develop a small schools network for the smaller schools to link together.

**QUESTION:** Are any of the other schools Flexi?

**ANSWER:** ND stated not.

QUESTION: How would training for support staff be developed as there has been a lack of budget for this previously? Would this be decided by the local governing board for Huxley or by CDAT?

ANSWER: ND explained there are 4 training sessions currently being run for TA's across the Spring and Summer term. The session subjects have been chosen based on discussions with current TA's and what the current training needs are. If there is anything specifically identified by a school then this can be raised as a training need by the Headteacher. If there is no capacity within the Trust to complete the training required then training can potentially be bought in, however, the Trust centrally has a SEND lead, Early years lead and a 'Team Teach' trainer.

QUESTION: Is the training within school hours?

ANSWER: Yes – the Trust understands it can be difficult to find staff cover however work-life balance is also important and therefore all training/meetings etc. are within the school day.

QUESTION: Can there be a parent-teacher association (PTA) after the school academises?

ANSWER: Yes – most of the schools in the Trust have a PTA.

QUESTION: Do the schools do things together as an Academy?

ANSWER: Yes – this is increasing as the Trust expands. For certain awards and activities local clusters of schools will often do these together, for example, sporting and singing events. In 2019 there were only 6 schools as part of the Trust, all spread far geographically, therefore it was very challenging to bring the schools together. There are now however local clusters of schools as the Trust has grown. ND explained if there are two local schools close together, with small pupil numbers, it may make sense for certain activities to be done together.

COMMENT: Parents of the Flexi model children are partners in their children's education due to the nature of the model and this will therefore need to be considered.

QUESTION: How does governance work and who would be on the board of governors for CDAT schools?

ANSWER: ND stated generally a board of governors would consist of two parents, a staff governor, the Headteacher, and for voluntary controlled schools, two community governors and two foundation governors.

QUESTION: How long is this likely to take?

ANSWER: ND stated around 6-12 months for a full governing board to be in place.

QUESTION: If a job is advertised in one of the other schools in the Trust, would you be more favoured if you already worked for a school part of the Trust.

ANSWER: ND stated the Headteachers may be able to share who would be good for a certain role. ND gave an example of a previous school needing to reduce teaching staff and offering redundancies, and a different school within the trust needing a teacher and therefore they were able to share this job opportunity for teachers to consider applying.

QUESTION: Will Flexi arrangements remain the same?

ANSWER: ND stated they would, the model works and therefore doesn't need to change.

QUESTION: Is the financial year still the end of March?

ANSWER: No – this runs from September to August. Finances will be managed centrally by the Trust. A full financial audit is completed each year and the Finance Director for CDAT will be able to help with the transition of finances.

QUESTION: Regarding insurance, the school is aware it will join the risk protection arrangement (RPA) when the school academises however will there be a gap moving over from the previous insurance provider?

ANSWER: ND stated schools can sign up to the RPA as a school, not only academies, and therefore this can be done to avoid any gaps.

COMMENT: The current catering contract ends at the end of this year and new arrangements will need to be made.

ANSWER: ND stated all options need to be considered, some of the other smaller schools within the Trust have chosen to take on their own catering and it may be worth considering whether this would work for the school.

COMMENT: The school minibus also needs to be considered as this has been leased for over 10 years.

ANSWER: ND stated this will be looked into. The minibus is needed for trips to Church and other events.