

Frequently Asked Questions about MATs for Parents and Carers

What is a MAT?

A MAT is a Multi-Academy Trust. It is a legal entity that governs a group of schools through a single set of directors.

What is the MAT Valley End C of E Infant School is joining called?

The Good Shepherd Trust <https://www.goodshepherdtrust.org.uk/>

Who is in it?

The current member academies are set out below. We will be joining the Northern Hub.

Northern Hub

[Ashley C of E Primary School, Walton-on-Thames](#)

[Ottershaw Christ Church C of E Infant and Junior Schools](#)

[St Paul's C of E Primary School, Addlestone](#)

Eastern Hub

[St John's C of E Primary and Nursery School Surrey Hills](#)

[Surrey Hills All Saints C of E Primary School](#)

[The Weald C of E Primary School, Beare Green](#)

[Scott Broadwood C of E Infant School](#)

Western Hub

[Farnborough Grange Nursery and Infant Community School](#)

[Potters Gate C of E Primary School St Andrew's C of E Infant School](#)

[The Holme Church of England Primary School](#)

[Waverley Abbey C of E Junior School, Tilford](#)

Central Hub

[Christ's College, Guildford](#)

[Queen Eleanor's C of E Junior School](#)

[St Mark and All Saints C of E Primary School](#)

[St Mary's C of E Primary School, Chiddingfold](#)

Why are schools joining MATs both locally and nationally?

Across the country Local Authorities are being eroded in terms of size and power. Both Conservative and Labour Parties have indicated that their preferred educational structure is academies that are part of MATs. Schools can use the strong collaboration and accountability afforded by the MAT to drive up standards and share best practice and services across the trust, replacing aspects of former local authority support.

What are the benefits?

Improve overall academic standards;

Ensure that decisions about the school are influenced at a local level;

Secure the long-term future of the school;

- Share common teaching and learning practices across schools; Efficiencies in administrative functions and joint procurement; this will help in these more financially challenging times to advantage our pupils;
- Improved and different ways of governance with a clear focus on strategic development, teaching and learning, and accountability;
- Enhanced reputation for excellence, due to collaboration with other schools in the Trust; Improved leadership, management and governance that impacts directly upon the students;
- Recruitment, retention and growth of excellent staff.

Do we need to get permission to convert to a MAT?

Yes. The school has had to obtain the permission of the Secretary of State for Education via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). It also needed the approval of the Diocese of Guildford.

What changes will students and parents see?

There will be very little visible change as a direct result of joining the MAT. The Headteacher, staff, uniform, premises and curriculum will all continue to be very much the same. The changes that we hope you'll see will be a general continued improvement in the performance and running of the school and hopefully some new and improved resources and options for our pupils to benefit from.

Will you be changing the school's name?

No – We will still be Valley End C of E Infant School

Will you be changing the uniform?

No – The uniform and logo will remain the same as now.

Will you be changing the holidays or length of the school day?

No – These will remain the same. When does the school join the MAT? The scheduled start date is 1st March 2023.

How will joining a MAT improve standards for our children?

This will enable us to utilise the expertise of staff from the other schools in our MAT to accelerate progress for our children. We will benefit from a wider pool of specialists or 'lead practitioners,' releasing staff to focus on developing wider opportunities and exciting experiences in a new and broad curriculum. This could be in middle and senior leadership, as well as with support staff. The talents of schools together become greater than the sum of their parts.

What will happen to our land and buildings?

All land and buildings will continue to be owned by the Church land trustees for the benefit of the school and will be leased to the MAT in a special agreement called a Church Supplemental Agreement. The school will remain on the Capel site and work closely with the pre-school.

How is funding organised within the MAT?

Funding for schools within a MAT is allocated on an individual academy basis. It is governed through a master funding agreement between the Secretary of State and the MAT.

Will the school lose its financial independence and its ability to manage its own finances? There will be a common financial procedures manual to be shared between schools, but each school will be expected to maintain their own accounts. However, there is likely to be some centralisation of finances where these make sense and result in possible economies of scale.

MAT Structures

MATs are governed by one set of Members and a Board of Directors who delegate certain responsibilities to individual Local Committees.

What is the new structure?

As a voluntary aided maintained school, the governors are currently responsible for all aspects of governance. When the school converts to a MAT, the governing body ceases to exist and will be replaced by three tiers of governance. These three tiers will be:

- Members of the MAT - responsible for fundamental decisions such as constitution of the academy trust – most strategic decisions are delegated to the Directors.
- Board of Trustees of the MAT ('the Board'). The Board comprises the directors of the Trust who are the individuals who run the MAT on a day-to-day basis and will decide on what and where support is offered. They will also potentially offer centralised services such as HR, IT, Finance etc. The directors will be ultimately responsible for all the academies in the Trust.
- Local Committees (LCs) for each academy school. In multi academy trusts, each academy will usually have its own LC. These have some, but not all, of the responsibilities of the old governing body, and the powers they have are those that are delegated to them by the board.

Will working with other schools mean lowering our own standards or possibly detracting resources from our own school?

We have chosen to work together with our local schools to ensure that the vision, values and culture of our schools is central to everything that we do. Collaboration and sharing ideas and expertise can only help us improve.

Will teachers work at different schools?

Our staff will remain in our school. Being part of a MAT will provide many professional development opportunities. Staff from schools who are part of a MAT will attend joint training, skills will be shared, and good practice will spread between the schools. There will be some exchange of staff for training and professional development purposes, but our staff will remain Valley End C of E staff.

How does the admissions process work for academies?

Academies within a MAT are required to comply with the Admissions and Admission Appeals Codes of Practice as if they were maintained schools. They are also required to participate in Local Authority co-ordination of admissions processes and the Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol. Any change to our current admissions protocols will always be communicated to parents and carers.

What inspection regimes and assessment data information do academies have to provide?

All academies are inspected by Ofsted using the same framework and timescales as for maintained schools. As a MAT, all schools will continue to be inspected as separate schools.

Do MAT schools have to follow the National Curriculum?

Academies within MATs are not required to teach the National Curriculum but rather a broad and balanced one that includes English, Mathematics, Science and Religious Education and promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. Schools within the Good Shepherd Trust continue broadly to follow the National Curriculum with little deviation.

Who is in charge?

The school leadership team will remain in charge of their school. However, the MAT board and members will take on the Local Authority role via the CEO and COO and will oversee activities and standards across all schools in the MAT.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact our Headteacher, Mrs Harper-Cole, our Local Committee Co-Chairs (Tom Pembrey and Felipe Manzatucci) or email the school on info@valleyend.surrey.sch.co.uk