

## **The Fulham Boys School**

### **MAT Consultation Report**

#### **Overview**

The Fulham Boys School (FBS) is proposing to convert from a Single Academy Trust to a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) which will allow the Trust to open and operate new schools and support existing schools by driving improvements in standards.

As part of the process of conversion to a MAT, FBS undertook a consultation with stakeholders to obtain their views and seek feedback on the proposal. Although consultation is not a statutory part of the process, FBS is committed to listening to the views of friends and neighbours and responding accordingly.

#### **The Consultation Process**

The Trustees published a consultation document outlining the rationale for the conversion to a MAT, as well as the risks and opportunities of doing so.

The consultation ran from 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019 to 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

It was published on the FBS website as a “pop up” which automatically appeared on the home page when a user logged on to the website.

All FBS parents and staff received a message from the Headmaster advising them of the consultation and providing a link to the consultation documents on the website.

The consultation document was also sent to all primary and secondary schools in the London boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea, the London Diocesan Board for Schools and the Directors of Children’s Services for both local authorities.

We received six responses in total, four from FBS parents (some of whom are also Trustees of FBS) and two responses from other stakeholders.

**The following comments/questions/observations were received and our response to each point is given:**

*Two responders noted the potential for MAT expansion to impact upon the focus of Senior Leadership staff and governors at FBS to the detriment of FBS pupils.*

**Response:** FBS is currently reviewing roles and responsibilities of all members of the leadership team to ensure there is sufficient leadership capacity to drive FBS’s continuous improvement whilst developing MAT activities

The Chairman of Governors is actively working to review skills gaps in the Trustees and reaching out to potential candidates in the local community and beyond.

*One responder noted that geographically dispersed schools may limit the ability of the MAT to share physical resources.*

**Response:** FBS recognises that it will not be practical for staff to travel regularly between sites more than 30-40 minutes apart – although collaboration for training and INSET days in a wider area is achievable and usual in other trusts.

*Two responders emphasised the importance of protecting FBS through robust due diligence on any prospective MAT applicant schools*

**Response:** The Multi Academy Trust's Deed will include the original Founder's vision for The Fulham Boys School, edited to allow for supporting co-educational as well as single sex schools. It will be a legal obligation of the MAT's Trustees and Members to ensure any applicant school is consistent with this vision and operates within it.

*One responder queried how a 'feeder' primary school might impact FBS's inclusiveness*

**Response:** There are no current plans to identify any named 'feeder' primary schools into the FBS Admissions Policy. A strength is the breadth of different schools who feed into FBS, underlying the basis that all are welcome to FBS who value its ethos, with priority to local families.

*Three responders noted that The Fulham Boys School ethos and the pillars of Boys, Enterprise and Faith were integral to the success of the school to date and were keen to ensure that this ethos was maintained going forward within FBS, protected against sectional interests taking hold, reflected in the name and ambitions of the MAT, and queried how it would be cascaded to other schools within the MAT – particularly in cases where schools were co-educational.*

**Response:** The Founders' vision for FBS is vital to the ongoing success of FBS. A recent visit from an external inspector undertaking a review for governors concluded that Enterprise was a key differentiating factor of FBS from other schools. We will therefore maintain and enhance this offering across all schools in the MAT.

Although the Founders of FBS believed that single sex boys' education was right for the area in which FBS operates, other schools in other areas may require a co-educational or a girls' only approach. The ultimate objective of the FBS MAT is to provide distinctive, high quality education in all of our schools and serve the specific needs of the communities in which we operate. Our knowledge of how different groups of young people learn successfully will be key to ensuring the right approach in the right locations.

Not all schools within the FBS MAT will be faith designation schools as there may not be both demand and need in some locations for this type of education. Any new school applications must satisfy both a demand and need for school places criteria. However, there are core values in the Christian faith and the way in which it is taught at FBS which can be applied across all of our schools regardless of faith designation or none. In any event, all schools must undertake forms of collective worship and demonstrate a commitment to British Values and the FBS MAT will ensure these requirements are met in full.

*One responder commented that our work with a University Technical College (UTC) in a neighbouring London borough may impact on a similar provision in Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F).*

**Response:** We believe that there is both demand and need for specialist secondary provision in H&F and other London boroughs and the UTC model is unique in its offering to students.

*One responder commented on the proposed structure of the MAT and, specifically, the appointment of Chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB) for each school in the MAT.*

**Response:** We understand the importance of strong leadership in each school as well as centrally in the MAT. The MAT will recruit and appoint suitable individuals to Chair LGBs.

### **Conclusion**

The expansion of the FBS model has long been discussed in the FBS community and it is therefore not a new concept for our staff and parents. We believe this accounts for a low response rate to our consultation.

We are reassured that the responses received are overwhelming positive towards the creation of the Multi Academy Trust.

The Trust will now complete its formal application to the Department for Education to convert from a Single Academy Trust to a Multi Academy Trust.

**Alexander Wade**

Chairman of Trustees

January 2020