



## **Frequently Asked Questions document**

### **What is an academy?**

Academies are state-funded, independent schools held accountable by the Department for Education (DfE) by a legally binding Funding Agreement. They are independent of the local authority and receive their funding directly from the central government.

Previously, academies have tended to replace schools with poor results that needed improvement. Under the Academies Act 2010, all schools can become academies, including Good schools that want to join with other like-minded schools to raise standards even further.

Academies are still part of the community and serve children and families in a particular area. They retain the same responsibilities as any maintained school as part of the learning community.

### **What is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)?**

A MAT is a group of academy schools that agree to work together. The purpose of a MAT is to advance the education of all the children who attend schools in the MAT.

### **Who runs a Multi-Academy Trust?**

A Board of Trustees is ultimately accountable for the Trust. If you would like to know more about the current composition of Cockburn MAT's Board of Trustees, please click the link below. If the school joined the MAT, a member of our school's Governing Board would become part of the Board.

We would continue to have a Hunslet Carr Governing Board that includes representation from staff, parents, and the local community, as we do now.

### **What is Cockburn MAT?**

Cockburn MAT is an established and successful group of schools located in the South of Leeds, including Primary, Secondary, and Alternative Provision Schools. For more info about Cockburn MAT, please click the link below:

<https://www.cockburnmat.org/>

### **What does the national educational landscape look like?**

Academies began in 2002, and the last Government expanded the process. Roughly 80% of secondary, 40% of primary and 44% of special schools are academies and this figure is growing.

While the new government withdrew the immediate need to academise, many schools are moving towards academisation, with the Local Authority having less capacity to support the maintained schools in Leeds.

### **Why are we considering joining Cockburn MAT?**

The school's Governors and leaders are passionate about raising aspirations and providing the children with the best possible start in life. Working with Cockburn MAT, where 75% of our Year 6 children attend Secondary School, will help us ensure that all the children who attend Hunslet Carr Primary School fulfil their potential.

Hunslet Carr Primary School is a successful school, and there are things we want to do even better for the benefit of our children. For example, we would like to improve our children's results at the end of Year 6, and working with Year 7 teachers or other primary schools in the MAT will help.



We want to improve the attendance of our school children. Working with attendance officers in the Cockburn MAT, we can help struggling families with children who attend our school and one of their secondary schools.

A school is only as good as its teachers, and joining the MAT will help us keep our best teachers for longer. Cockburn MAT has an excellent professional development programme for staff. Many Headteachers and leaders in Cockburn schools were promoted from within the MAT so that they understood its vision and values. We believe joining the MAT will encourage staff to develop here.

This is the opportunity to shape and future-proof our school. Within a group of schools, we would have greater control of our budget and the ability to negotiate better rates, thereby achieving savings for our schools.

The Department for Education Regional School's Commissioner and the Local Authority fully support our decision to join Cockburn MAT.

### **Why now?**

We want to shape and secure the best possible future for the children in our school. Joining Cockburn MAT, which would make us the fourth Primary School to join, means we can help shape the future of Primary Education in the MAT.

### **Do staff have a say?**

We have written to school staff to explain why we are consulting on joining Cockburn MAT. Staff will be kept updated throughout the process and will continue to have the opportunity to ask questions and share views.

### **Would the school change?**

We want to continue to be a great school where every child is welcomed and believes Impossible is Nothing. We do not intend to change except in ways that will improve the school even further. It is unlikely that the children will see much, if any, change in their day-to-day school lives.

Whilst the schools in Cockburn MAT are united behind a core vision and ethos: Transformation to Excellence, the schools in the MAT are all unique, and we want to continue to preserve and celebrate this in the future.

### **Would the school have to change its name?**

No, the school would still be called Hunslet Carr Primary School, but on signs, the school's letters, and emails, it will say part of the Cockburn MAT. The school uniform won't change; it has been blue for as long as anyone can remember, and that tradition is very important to us.

### **Would changes be made to the length of the school day and to term dates?**

No, we would not seek to change the length of the school day or term or holiday dates. If we felt that this could benefit the children in the future, we would consult with staff, parents/carers, and the children themselves.

### **What would the changes mean for staff?**

Staff would not notice significant changes in their everyday working lives. The terms and conditions for existing staff will remain the same, and Cockburn MAT will become the new employer.



**What process has the Governing Board gone through in deciding to consult on joining Cockburn MAT?**

The school's Governing Board met with leaders from Cockburn MAT and then met twice in the summer term to confirm that they would proceed with an application to join Cockburn MAT and to consult with stakeholders to decide whether it would be beneficial to join. Due to the General Election in the summer, the approval process from the DfE took longer than expected, which is why our consultation process is starting now.

The Governing Board did not arrive at this decision quickly; we have already undertaken due diligence, and this consultation process is part of that.

**What is the planned date for Hunslet Carr to join Cockburn MAT?**

The proposed date for the school to join is 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025.

**Who makes the final decision on joining Cockburn MAT?**

The school's Governing Body.