



Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to share some exciting news about the possible future of Hunslet Carr Primary School.

The Governors and I are always looking for opportunities to fulfil the school's vision: that the children of Hunslet Carr will have the best possible chance to grow up and be successful in their adult lives.

When Ofsted visited in November 2021, they could see how much hard work goes into this vision and wrote this as the opening section of their report:

This school lives out its motto that 'Impossible is Nothing'. Pupils are nurtured from the moment they step into this school. Leaders are passionate about raising aspirations for the pupils in their care. Parents spoke highly of the support they received. They told inspectors they would recommend this school to others. The Headteacher has a strong and clear vision of what pupils at Hunslet Carr need to be well prepared for life beyond the school gates. He has developed a strong team of staff who deliver this offer with credibility and compassion through their thoughtfully designed curriculum.

Ofsted Report Nov 2021

That vision has not changed, but our ability to influence the life chances of the children who attend here stops when they move on to Secondary School.

That is why the Governors and I are excited about the prospect of joining the Cockburn MAT (CMAT) in the summer term of 2025.

In March 2022, the government stated all schools were required to develop or join a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) by the end of 2030. Since 2022, Governors and School Leaders have been exploring options for our school's future.

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.

After much research and conversations with leaders from Cockburn MAT, the Governors and I felt we had found a group of educators who share our vision for the children and young adults of South Leeds and that joining Cockburn MAT could provide even more opportunities for our children and families to be successful when they grow up and leave education.

We reached this conclusion after discussing it with the Department for Education's Regional Director, the leaders from Cockburn MAT, and Leaders of Middleton Primary, Cockburn John Charles, and Cockburn School.

Throughout the process, it became clear that the Cockburn MAT was very different from the types of MATs you might read about in papers or see on TV.

Cockburn MAT has always been and will always be a MAT for schools supporting the children and families of South Leeds. The leaders of Cockburn MAT are as passionate about raising the aspirations of South Leeds children as we are about raising the aspirations of children who attend Hunslet Carr.

The leaders of Cockburn MAT want the schools in the trust to work together in areas where we can help each other, but they are also very clear that each school has its unique identity and characteristics that make it special.

For example, the school's name won't change; we will still be Hunslet Carr Primary School, but part of the Cockburn MAT will appear on signs, the school's letters, and emails. The school uniform also won't change; it has been blue for as long as anyone can remember, and that tradition is very important to us.

The governors and I are very proud of the curriculum we teach at Hunslet Carr. The way we teach reading, writing, maths, and the wider curriculum meets the needs of our children. If we join Cockburn MAT, there would be no plans to change our curriculum for the sake of it. We hope to help other primary schools in the trust by sharing some of the excellent things we do around teaching, learning, and the curriculum.

Our research has shown us that working in collaboration with other schools in the MAT can improve the experiences of our children and families through teaching and learning, staff development, and opportunities for progression. Simplified services, including finance, human resources, legal services, school improvement, and governance, will also benefit our children and families.

If we join Cockburn MAT on June 1st, 2025, you will notice little change to day-to-day school activities. There will be no change to the staffing. The school day will remain the same, and our planned holiday dates won't change.

For the Governors and I, the key question has been how we can best meet the school's vision for the long-term benefit of all children and staff. We believe the answer is to join Cockburn MAT, and we hope you will agree.

If we joined the Cockburn MAT, we could:

- Strengthen and keep our school visions and values.
- Keep our school name and uniform.
- Keep and develop our curriculum further.
- Continue to have a governing body, including representation from staff, parents, and the local community, as we do now.
- Be part of a group of primary and secondary schools based in South Leeds that share the same passion for raising children's aspirations.
- Work alongside a small group of primary schools with a primary advisor to improve educational outcomes for our children by the end of Year 6.
- Have long-term stability in an ever-changing educational landscape.

The benefits to children and staff could include:

- Children have more opportunities for joint activities with the other MAT primary schools.
- A focus on continuing to provide experiences for all children who attend Hunslet Carr.
- Stronger links between Yr6 and Yr7, where children attend Cockburn Secondary Schools.
- Stronger retention of talented staff, as they will have a clear career path within the MAT.
- Economies of scale through sharing resources between Cockburn MAT schools, with some financial savings ensuring we can put more resources into the classroom.
- Staff receiving outstanding training and development opportunities within Cockburn MAT.

Following the Governing Body's decision to proceed to consultation, we wanted to share this proposal with you and explain what it would mean for our school. We wanted to allow you to let us know your opinion on joining Cockburn MAT and invite you to ask any questions you have.

The following link takes you to a survey, which provides opportunities to ask any questions you have. This survey will remain open throughout the consultation period, ending on Friday, 6th March.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HSRBRWZ>

Three meetings will be held in school, each followed by a short presentation by the school's leaders, governors, and representatives from Cockburn MAT. This will provide parents and carers with an opportunity to hear about the proposal and ask questions of the school's leaders, Governors, and representatives from Cockburn MAT.

Two of these meetings will be on Wednesday, 12th February, at:

- 9.05 am
- 3.25 pm

The third meeting will be on Thursday, 13th February at:

- 5.30 pm

You can complete the survey even if you cannot attend the meeting.

Some answers to common questions are attached to this letter, and we will publish answers to all the questions raised during this process – including those raised at meetings – on the school website. We look forward to receiving your questions and to hearing what you think about this proposal.

Kind Regards

Mr Martin Lumb - Headteacher

Ms Sarah Gardner - Chair of Governors