



Determination

Ambition

Equality

Monday 3rd February 2025

Consultation to join a local multi-academy trust

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware, we are currently a local authority maintained school, and are proud of our values of determination, ambition and equality. We are proud to serve you, and our local community.

Building a strong and experienced partnership to improve the education we offer

We want to be able to further improve the education we currently offer, build on the positive impact our school has had on local neighbourhoods in the south of Manchester and protect the distinctive identity and ethos of our school.

We believe that joining with other like-minded primary schools as part of a multi-academy trust is the best way to achieve this.

As a local authority-maintained school, we are funded via the local authority. A multi-academy trust is a group of state-funded schools that have a trust board, as well as a school governing board and are funded directly by the Department for Education. As a local multi-academy trust, we would have greater financial resilience and full financial autonomy over our schools' funding. Our school leaders would continue to decide how to spend our funding so that it serves our children's best interests.

We are proposing to be part of a newly amalgamated local multi-academy trust family of five primary schools from this September. The other schools within the trust would include;

- Beaver Road Primary School, which is an Ofsted outstanding five-form entry primary school in Didsbury. They are currently part of the [M20 Learning Trust](#) and also have a long term partnership with Martenscroft Nursery School and Children's Centres in Hulme, which is Ofsted outstanding.
- Brookburn Community Primary, which is an Ofsted good two-form entry primary school and Barlow Hall Primary School, which is an Ofsted good one-form entry primary school. Both of these schools are in Chorlton and are currently part of [the LINK Learning Trust](#).
- [Cavendish Primary School](#), which is an Ofsted good three-form entry primary school in West Didsbury and is currently a local authority maintained school in Manchester.

This proposed new trust – an amalgamation of the M20 Learning Trust, the LINK Learning Trust, Northenden and Cavendish primary schools – would raise education standards and build on our strengths, while still providing families with a choice of school. The trust would have a new name, the Connect Alliance Trust, and Manchester City Council is fully supportive of our proposals.

If this change goes ahead, none of the schools would change their names, identities or uniforms.

A trust with shared values and leaders, trustees and governors who focus on excellence, collaboration and respect

The leadership of [the LINK Learning Trust](#) already have a strong working relationship with the leadership of the [M20 Learning Trust](#) and they have worked collaboratively for many years. In addition, since the end of October, the leaders of the M20 Learning Trust and staff at Beaver Road Primary School have been supporting us with leading and managing our school. Joining this amalgamated trust would build on the strong relationships we have already formed and would bring significant strength and stability to our whole school community in the longer term.

All five schools in the proposed new trust are committed to excellent educational outcomes of their pupils, have well managed finances, high quality leadership and governance teams together with shared vision and values.

By coming together, we would have greater specialist knowledge across the curriculum and would be able to provide more opportunities for all our children. We would also be able to improve the training and development of our staff, which would help in the recruitment and retention of experienced teachers and support staff.

Continuing to succeed

We are very proud of the strong identity of our school and believe the quality of education would improve because of joining this amalgamated multi-academy trust. In terms of day-to-day practicalities, there would be very little difference to the lives of our children, their families and the staff in our school. The move to be part of this local multi-academy trust of five primary schools would only add to our educational offering.

Next steps

All five schools have submitted a proposal to the Department for Education and we are waiting for this to be approved. Your views are an important part of shaping our future within the proposed multi-academy trust, and we will now be consulting with parents and carers, staff, trade unions and our community partners.

We will be holding a consultation between 10th March and 4th April in which you can find out more information and submit your views through an online form. A link to this information and form will be sent out on 10th March. While our consultation is open, we will be providing open evening opportunities for parents and carers to speak with school and trust leaders/governors and to ask questions. The open evening for parents and carers will take place on;

- **Wednesday 19th March between 5.00pm and 6.00pm at Northenden Community School**

A question and answer (Q&A) document can be found at the end of this letter and we endeavour to answer any other questions you have during this open evening.

Thank you for your ongoing support and your contribution to our school community.

Yours sincerely,



Ruth Byrne
Interim Headteacher



Caroline Lord
Chair of Governor

Joining Connect Alliance Trust - FAQs

1. What is an Academy?

Academy schools are state funded schools in England, which are directly funded by central government (specifically, the Department for Education) and independent of direct funding and control by the Local Authority. Education is still provided free to students.

2. Why are we converting to an academy now?

This is something we have considered for a long time and we've been looking for a local primary school Multi-Academy Trust. Converting to an academy allows us to have increased autonomy, gives us funding opportunities - benefiting from economies of scale and reduce costs and ensures more sustainable financial stability. Being part of a Multi-Academy Trust allows for greater collaboration with other schools, sharing resources and expertise to enhance teaching, learning and outcomes for all pupils.

3. How are academies funded?

In maintained schools, all revenue funding goes directly to the Local Authority. As a school in a multi-academy trust, funding comes from the DfE directly to the school via the Multi-Academy Trust. In addition there would be opportunities to apply for capital grants, which are not accessible to LA maintained schools. The current academy schools have benefited significantly from access to these grants.

4. What impact will joining a trust have on school funding?

The trust is expected to bring efficiencies and greater financial stability for all schools involved. By combining resources, the new trust will be better positioned to access funding opportunities, negotiate better terms with suppliers, and share costs across schools. This will allow for more effective financial planning and greater investment in key areas such as teaching and learning, school infrastructure, and staff development. All individual school self-generated income and funds, such as the PTA and school clubs, will be retained by each school.

5. How will joining a Multi-Academy Trust affect pupils and their education?

The focus of the Multi-Academy Trust is to maintain and improve the quality of education for all pupils. The day-to-day learning environment for pupils in each will largely remain the same. Being part of a Multi-Academy Trust will allow us to share best practices, resources and staff expertise, enhancing the educational experience for pupils across all schools in the trust.

6. Who will lead the Connect Alliance Trust?

The CEO/Executive Headteacher will be Elizabeth Hardy (currently at M20 Learning Trust)

The Chief Finance and Operations Officer will be Christina Smith (currently at M20 Learning Trust)

The Director of Education will be Jayne Kennedy (currently at Link Learning Trust)

The Director of HR, Governance and Compliance will be Joan Pennington (currently at Link Learning Trust)

Together they will form the trust's Central Executive Team.

7. What day to day changes will take place at the schools as a result of becoming an academy?

There will be no day to day changes (as these will remain with the leadership of the school) including no changes to the uniform, school hours, or overall operations of the school.

8. Will Connect Alliance Trust be committed to promoting the UNICEF Rights Respecting Agenda?

Yes. The trust is committed to a child's rights approach based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Creating safe and inspiring places to learn where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive.

9. Will there be any changes to the curriculum?

The core aim of joining the trust is to strengthen educational provision across all schools in the trust. The curriculum in each school will remain broad and balanced, but the trust may offer new opportunities for sharing best practices, developing resources, and providing pupils with more diverse learning experiences.

10. What will be the impact on our children with Special Educational Needs as a result of becoming an academy?

There will be no change to the level of support provided by the school. The school will continue to recognise that every child has the right to be included as a valued, respected and equal member of the school community.

11. Will pupils' education be disrupted by a transition to academy status?

No. If the academy trust is given the go ahead, there will be minimal disruption to staff and pupils with most changes taking place behind the scenes with support from the trust executive team, who have previous experience of this process with other schools.

12. What changes will there be in governance?

There will continue to be a local school governing board and the current governors will continue in their roles. The composition and powers of the school governing board is set out in a formal 'Scheme of Delegation' which allows the trust board to delegate responsibilities to each local school governing board. There will continue to be representation of Parent and Staff Governors on the School Governing Board.

13. Will the school's name change after joining the trust?

No. The trust has no plans to change the school name as each school in the trust will keep its own name and its own unique identity that already aligns with the newly amalgamated academy trusts vision and values. The newly amalgamated multi academy trust will be renamed Connect Alliance Trust.

14. How will parents and communities be kept informed during the academy conversion process?

We recognise that effective communication is key during any transition. We will provide updates through our regular channels of school communications, and keep everyone informed throughout the process. Additionally, there will be opportunities for parents and carers to ask questions and provide feedback during the consultation period. Please ensure you direct these questions and feedback through the consultation process rather than directly to staff within school.

15. How will the academy conversion process affect the school's relationship with the local authority?

The local authority is hugely supportive of this conversion and have supported our application to the DFE. The new trust will continue to engage with MCC and other stakeholders to ensure that we meet the needs of our pupils. Manchester City Council will still manage admissions for children from Reception to Year 6.

16. How long will the conversion process take?

We aim for the new amalgamated Connect Alliance Trust to commence on the 1st September 2025. We will keep all stakeholders informed of progress and key dates throughout the process.

17. What support will be available for staff during the conversion process?

Throughout the process there will be dedicated support for staff to ensure they are informed, involved and supported. This will include the consultation meeting, access to regular updates and opportunities for staff to ask questions and provide feedback.

18. What will happen to the staff team in our school?

Our staff will continue to work at our school in the way that they do now and all their roles are secure. Their contracts will transfer into the new Connect Alliance Trust through a process known as TUPE (Transfer Undertaking Protection of Employment). The staff will also be involved in the consultation process. Mr Marks has been kept fully informed and is supportive of the amalgamation

19. What happens next after the conversion is completed?

Once the conversion is completed, the new trust will continue to focus on improving educational outcomes for pupils, supporting staff, and engaging with local communities. The

priority will be to build on the strengths of the individual schools, creating a unified and strong organisation that is well-positioned for future growth and success.

20. Who can I contact for more information?

We are holding consultation open evenings at each school to answer any questions or concerns, alternatively your feedback may be recorded via the online consultation form launched on March 10th 2025.

We are committed to providing clear and transparent communication throughout the process.