

Dear parent/carer,

Proposal for William Brookes School to enter a partnership with a Multi Academy Trust

First of all, we'd like to thank you for your support during the pandemic. We're aware that this is a very challenging time for everyone and for our young people in particular. And, of course, that means it's a very challenging time to be a parent or carer or, indeed, a teacher.

Even before the pandemic, William Brookes was working in a difficult educational landscape. The role of the Local Authority has been reduced and we have had to operate with increasing financial pressures on our budget. The Department for Education is supporting and encouraging schools to become Academies and for Academies like ours to become part of multi-academy trusts (MATs) to continue to improve student outcomes and meet the further challenges we know are ahead. The reality is that stand-alone secondary schools and academies are becoming very rare.

Over the last two years, we have therefore been looking to join a MAT. Our absolute priority as a governing body was that any partnership should protect the ethos of the school whilst improving the provision for our students. We were looking for a MAT that would allow us to maintain some autonomy but had a culture of collaboration that would result in the best outcomes for our children; a MAT that would build on the strengths of its individual schools; a MAT that would be big enough to allow us to take advantage of some economies of scale and small enough that we would be able to influence future direction. A tall order!

As the result of extensive research, Governors recently narrowed their focus on The 3-18 Education Trust with a view to William Brookes School becoming part of their MAT.

We have had many meetings with the leadership of the MAT and we are confident that the ethos and vision of this Trust strongly align with those of our School. There are presently four schools in the Trust: The Priory School (11-16, Shrewsbury), St Martins School (3-16, St Martins, nr Oswestry), Thomas Adams School (11-18, Wem) and Coleham School (4-11, Shrewsbury). The Priory School is an outstanding school in Shrewsbury and leads a Teaching School Alliance, providing training and development work for educational staff that many of our staff have benefited from. The range of schools within the Trust provides exciting prospects for us to develop further links and improve opportunities for all.

As part of our due diligence process we have also spoken to schools already in the MAT, and the consistent message is that they are benefitting from improved resources and learning opportunities without impacting on their own school's identity.

You may wonder what this change will actually mean to the students, and to you. In reality, you may not initially notice much of a change. Our uniform and name will remain the same, there will be no change to the staff. Over time, we hope you will see an ongoing improvement in our education as we work with the Trust to improve what we do.

We are confident that our proposals will mean we will be part of a Trust that will be in the best interests of William Brookes School. An application will be submitted to the Department for Education in December, and we are now in a position to begin the formal consultation process, when we will actively seek the views of all stakeholders. We would dearly like to be able to meet you face to face to share more about this proposal but of course, we won't be able to do that at this time. Instead, we will invite you to attend a virtual meeting where you

can find out more about The 3-18 Education Trust and how William Brookes School and your children will benefit from this alliance.

In the meantime, if you have any questions please do get in touch with us at the following dedicated email address: MAT@williambrookes.com

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Connery". The script is cursive and fluid, with a small flourish at the end.

Catherine Connery
Chair of Governors