

To: all Parents/Carers

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Headteacher Dr Roger Harris

11 January 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

As you may be aware Taverham High School is a Stand-Alone Academy Trust (SAT). There are a number of challenges that come with this level of independence and, looking to the future, these challenges are only going to increase. As always, we want to ensure our students get the best possible experience within school and that all of the correct opportunities for Taverham High School pupils and families are taken to ensure this happens.

Since September, Trustees have been considering the options for joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and, as such, we have been doing our research and meeting with potential groups. We have been seeking to join an Academy trust which is locally based, is large enough to be financially secure, contains a sufficient number of secondary schools to provide support and professional development opportunities for staff, cater for age ranges from secondary to sixth form and has a proven track record of helping pupils achieve good results and success in their education. We were also seeking a Trust that would understand the many strengths of our school so that our staff and pupils can positively influence the ethos of the Trust itself.

We are pleased to report that we have found a suitable Academy trust and the Regional Schools Commissioner has acknowledged an application from Taverham High School to join Enrich Learning Trust.

Enrich Learning Trust currently contains seven schools: Dereham Neatherd High School, Long Stratton High School, North Walsham High School, Wymondham High Academy and Sixth Form as well as, Kenninghall Primary School, Millfield Primary School and Spooner Row Primary School.

The next step in the Merger, or joining process, is a 30-day period of consultation with families, staff and trade unions. We have attached a brief document which details the consultation.

Enrich Learning Trust will be available in school from 17:30 – 18:30 on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 where they will share a brief presentation and answer any questions you may have.

Yours faithfully



Dr Lauren Griffith  
Chair of Trustees



Dr Roger L Harris  
Headteacher



**Taverham High School**  
**Merger with the Enrich Learning Trust**  
**Briefing Paper for Families, Staff and Stakeholders**

## **Introduction**

Taverham High School is a large Stand-Alone Academy Trust (SAT) in the suburb of Taverham on the North edge of Norwich. We are one of only two remaining Secondary SATs in Norfolk. We predominantly serve the areas of Taverham, Drayton, Queenshill and Horsford. In the last year, the Trustees have been reviewing the strategic priorities and the long-term interests of the school.

This process was initially started by the release of the Educational White Paper in March 2022. Although the paper has since been rescinded, the intention for all schools in England to become part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is still there. However, we are taking these steps because we feel it is in the best interests of our students and our staff.

Over the last few years, the proportion of support and funding for schools which comes from the Local Authority has been reducing. And with this lack of support schools are not effectively challenged to improve nor do they have the necessary funding to do so in the current climate.

The Trustees have concluded that it will be in the best interests of current and future students at the school to join a MAT which shares the values, ethos and ambitions for children which make Taverham High a great school.

Since September, the Trustees have looked at a number of MATs, this has included a paper-based exercise, followed by meetings with prospective MATs. As such, the Trustees have decided that ~~the~~ Enrich Learning Trust offers the best combination of ethos, values, capacity, local knowledge, financial strength and leadership to ensure Taverham's continued success and allows the school to maintain its unique qualities that we value for our children and our staff.

This briefing is to give you information about the opportunity and to gather your views. A consultation period will run from Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January to Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February to share information and seek views from our community including families and staff. The views of the Trade Union are also being sought.

When the consultation period is complete the Trustees will consider any responses and act in the best interests of the school and students when making decisions about the academy joining a larger Multi Academy Trust

In addition to the meeting with senior staff from the Enrich Learning Trust to answer any further questions, any comments or questions you may have can be emailed to: [matconsultation@taverhamhigh.org](mailto:matconsultation@taverhamhigh.org) . Alternatively written comments in an envelope

marked "Academy Consultation" can be handed in at the school office or posted to the school.

### **Why are the Trustees considering a Merger with a larger Multi Academy Trust?**

The organisation of schools in England will change rapidly in the next few years. The expectation of the government is that all schools will work together and support one another within academy trusts. The Department for Education expects academy trusts and Teaching School Hubs to be the providers of school improvement and development support. Local Authority support for schools is diminishing as the government moves funding for education away from local council control. This shift in funding patterns reduces the scope for non-academy schools or single academy trusts to apply for additional funding and support to enhance the educational experience of the students. In the future, support for school improvement will come mainly from academy trusts.

There is a possibility, if we do nothing, that at some point the school may be in the position of having to join a multi academy trust which may not share our values. Therefore, we feel it is time to act to safeguard the ethos and strengths of our school, protect our students and staff from future isolation or loss of representation and to widen the support we can offer and receive from other schools.

### **What are the opportunities and benefits of this merger?**

The emerging structure of education in England is built around a large number of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs). A MAT is a charitable company which must operate as a not-for-profit organisation in the interests of the community it serves. The funding for education is allocated by the Department for Education (DfE) directly to the MATs and the MAT has control over the use of the funds.

Taverham has much to gain and offer as part of a wider community of schools and we believe that when we work with other schools in the MAT we have chosen, all the schools will benefit. We are planning to join a MAT which has demonstrated significant improvements in their secondary schools, where we will be able to share our knowledge and expertise.

We expect students to benefit from the school having access to a wider range of staff skills, resources and facilities. These are likely to enhance the curriculum that we offer, the range of activities for students and increase the potential learning experiences throughout the school. Access to greater capital funding in a MAT will allow the school to improve buildings and facilities on the school site and reduce the risk of school disruption due to building or heating failures.

Staff at Taverham will benefit from wider access to professional development with a larger group of colleagues. The school will have greater access to subject specific expertise and relevant training. Links to other secondary schools in a trust will help staff to share great practice, not just in a department but across several departments, so that everyone benefits. As part of a larger group of schools our staff should have access to a wider range of

specialist expertise including Leadership, Safeguarding and SEND to name a few. Many MATs also see improved recruitment and retention of staff due to the wider variety of jobs and career opportunities available within the trust.

As part of a group of schools in a MAT there are financial opportunities including improved contracts for services (maintenance, catering, supplies etc). These economies of scale also extend to the provision of back-office systems and services such as accounting and management information. In general, a larger group of schools will be more resilient than a single school and better able to manage the sort of risks and uncertainties we have seen in the last few years.

### **Who are the Enrich Learning Trust?**

The Enrich Learning Trust currently contains seven schools: Dereham Neatherd High School, Long Stratton High School, North Walsham High School, Wymondham High Academy and Sixth Form as well as, Kenninghall Primary School, Millfield Primary School and Spooner Row Primary School. All the Secondary schools are in the top half of academic progress (with two in the top 5) for Norfolk and Wymondham High has an Outstanding Sixth Form provision.

The Trust recognises the individuality of each community and supports a high degree of delegation to academies. The academies are led by Headteachers/Principals with clear accountabilities reporting to the Chief Executive of the Trust. There is a local governing board for each academy which oversees teaching, learning, behaviour and the school budget.

### **How long will it take?**

This is always a difficult question to answer as there can sometimes be legal “stumbling blocks” linked to various, leases, deeds and contracts. However, the approximate timeline would look a little like this:

January/February 2023: consultation period and due diligence of both parties.

February 2023: views from the consultation will be considered by Trustees.

March to July 2023: The school and trust will undertake the legal process for Taverham High School Trust to merge into Enrich Learning Trust. The legal process can take several months.

September 2023 (provisionally): Taverham High School will become part of the Enrich Learning Trust. The exact date of conversion will depend upon completion of the legal process, however, are intention is to be part of the Trust by January 2024.

Students’ education will not be affected during this period of change. The school will continue to operate as normal.

### **Will there be changes to how Taverham High is governed?**

The MAT board sets out the strategic vision for the trust and oversees the governance structures within which the schools work.

The Enrich Learning Trust has a scheme of delegation which assigns considerable responsibility to the local governing body. Taverham's Trustees will form the basis of the school's local governing board if we join the Trust. The local governing board of each school is accountable to the MAT board. The MAT board is accountable to the DfE for the overall performance of the Trust.

The MAT Board is made of Directors (also known as Trustees) with the necessary collective skills to oversee the strategic management of the Trust including Education, Finance, HR, Legal etc. The Board has appointed a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to be responsible for School Improvement and Attainment.

Each school is seen as central to its own community and on its own journey of improvement which will be supported by the MAT, with the skills of each school being used in a supportive way for all the others. The Enrich Learning Trust is clear that the individual ethos, character and good practices of each school are retained and that all the schools operate as equals supporting each other.

#### **How will staff contract terms and conditions be affected?**

We currently employ all staff under the standard terms and conditions. If the school joins the MAT all staff will transfer to be employed by the MAT on their existing terms and conditions (under TUPE regulations). The MAT also uses all standard terms and conditions including things such for Teaching and Support staff.

#### **What will happen to the school site?**

The land would be transferred to the MAT however, as the buildings are PFI (private finance initiative) they will still be owned by Kajima for the remainder of the lease (approximately 10 years) at which point they would transfer to the MAT. When the PFI lease agreement ends there can be greater flexibility over the use of the schools' buildings and site. The buildings and land are effectively leased to the Trust by Norfolk County Council and returned to them after 125 years. There is no possibility of the land being used for anything other than the education of children.

#### **Will there be changes to the Admissions Policy?**

No, our admission policy would remain the same.

#### **Will the school's responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs change?**

No, responsibilities as an Academy in relation to Special Educational Needs will be just the same. The Local Authority will continue to be the Admissions Authority for the MAT as it retains responsibility for Special Education Needs.

#### **Can a child with an Education Health and Care Plan nominate an academy as their school of choice?**

Yes, these arrangements and related processes must at all times comply with the School Admissions Code. The responsibilities of an Academy in relation to Special Educational Needs will be just the same as they are now as a maintained school.

**Does joining the MAT change the way in which exclusions are dealt with?**

No, we are still required by our Funding Agreement to follow the law and guidance on exclusions. We may have more opportunities to support the transfer of students between the schools within the MAT.

**Will the school change its name and uniform as some Academies have done?**

Apart from continuing to roll through the new uniform, no, there is no plan for the school to change its name or uniform.

**Are Academies subject to the same Ofsted inspection regime?**

Yes, schools converting to become academies will continue to be inspected in the normal way.

**Conclusion**

The trustees of Taverham High School believe that this merger is in the best interest of our students and staff for the continued success of the school. We welcome any comments or questions you may have which can be emailed to: [matconsultation@taverhamhigh.org](mailto:matconsultation@taverhamhigh.org) Alternatively written comments in an envelope marked "Academy Consultation" can be handed in at the school office or posted to the school at:

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