

Holy Trinity CE (A)
Primary School



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Strategic Direction

1. Why may you be interested in our school, Holy Trinity CE Primary joining the HET?

Holy Trinity is a very good school with a strong sense of its own identity and ethos, which fits well with the Trust's vision for our schools. We believe that Holy Trinity will benefit from being part of the Trust and would contribute more broadly to the schools within the Trust. The nature of the Trust is to collaborate thoughtfully in a 'high trust', model which, we feel, would work extremely well for Holy Trinity.

2. What do you see as the benefits to your trust of our joining HET?

The Trust operates a highly collaborative model of school improvement. Trust Heads work closely with each other and the Director of Education sharing resources, and ideas which drive improvement. Each school brings its own strengths and areas for development. From our initial appraisal, Holy Trinity is a successful school with an experienced leadership team. We would hope that you would play an active role in the HET, helping us to further build our capability and capacity, sharing your best practice and helping to shape the strategy and quality of Educational provision across the HET schools. The visit to Holy Trinity by the SIP and Director of Education in 12th July, will help us develop a better understanding of where you might add most value.

3. What do you see as the risks to your trust of our joining HET?

Minimal. Holy Trinity is a good school with strong foundations and in tune with what we are seeking to do within the Trust. It is well-led and with a strong staff. Having carried out the first stage of our due diligence, we are satisfied that the risks to the Trust would be minimal if Holy Trinity joined. Of course, further due diligence will be undertaken throughout the process of transfer, including a focus in other areas such as finance, buildings, etc. However, initial conversations indicate that none of these areas are likely to be considered high risk.

4. What benefits are there for Holy Trinity joining the HET?

Through collaboration with the Trust and its existing schools, the Trust aims to provide schools with a range of benefits, summarised below:

- i. Increased access to a School Improvement provision which is both of high quality and tailored to meet the individual needs of the school. This provides an opportunity to add additional and free up current leadership capacity through collaboration with those within the Trust and other schools.
- ii. Access to a wide range of efficient and high-quality back office and administrative functions, e.g., HR, payroll, health and safety and other services which are provided within the membership fee.
- iii. In addition to the facilities available within Holy Trinity, pupils are able to access to facilities and arrangements provided by Hurstpierpoint College (e.g., sporting, and academic facilities, the pool, the Theatre and Chapel together with transport as needed.)

5. What will make HET a strong MAT?

Ensuring that schools who join the Trust are like minded (but not necessarily alike), share the Trust's vision, work well together and with the HET team.

6. What are HET's current priorities and how would you ensure these were a focus in all schools in the HET?

In alignment with our vision and values, ensure all schools deliver an excellent education and experience to every child in every school, making sure they are given every opportunity to be the best they can be.

In practice, this is achieved through several strands with a clear focus on learning and teaching, enabling leadership and the wider staff to direct more time at pupil-benefitting activities, taking a shared/collaborative approach across the Trust, developing all staff through effective use of CPD and, wherever possible, enabling pupils to engage with the broader aspects of extracurricular activities of sport, drama, music, etc.

7. Should we join HET, what would be the biggest change Holy Trinity would notice a) after the first week? b) after the first term? c) after the first year?

There is likely to be, by design, little change felt in the first week except by the SBM, who would be trained on the Trust's finance and HR systems. After the first term, the school would hopefully begin to feel the early benefit of increased collaborative work with the Trust, and other schools within the Trust, the benefits of which should certainly be felt after the first year, if not considerably before.

8. What is your 5 year vision for HET & what is the HET 5 year strategic plan for the MAT?

The Trust is keen to remain a geographically local Trust and for its primary schools to be within an approximate 20-minute/mile drive of the College. Whilst the national political appetite for academies may change over time, the intention is for the Trust to remain a small Trust with between 7 and 9 primary schools and, eventually, one or two secondary schools. The Trust's aim is that all schools continuously improve and innovate so as they offer an outstanding provision to both the current and future children.

9. Who will you not work with and why?

Any school wishing to join or partner with the Trust must embrace our vision, ethos and values. All schools must be willing to collaborate and work together so we become a family of like-minded (but not necessarily alike) schools who wish to provide an outstanding provision for both current and future pupils within the schools. Schools who do not buy into our vision or see no benefit of collaborative working and who do not share the desire to continuously improve may find they would be best served by a different Trust.

10. MATs can propose changes to contracts on areas like working hours, the place of work, holiday entitlement – Is HET planning to do that, or again is it written into the contract that this would never happen?

Staff are protected by the Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment regulations which means they transfer to the Trust's employment on their current pay and conditions of service. There are no plans to make any changes to places of work (unless by mutual agreement, for example, a promotional opportunity) or holiday entitlement.

As with any employer, staff restructuring could take place, if necessary, in the future, but this is no different to what the school or West Sussex is able to do.

The only 'measure' is the change in pay date from the 24th of the month (or the preceding working day) to the 23rd of the month.

11. How will a school retain their identity if they join HET?

Each school continues to maintain its own unique identity within its community, including links with local churches and other local organisations. For example, the name of the school or uniform does not change, and the school maintains its own vision, ethos and values. Practically, logos, websites and other marketing or other similar materials are school specific although the Trust does ask schools to acknowledge their partnership with the Trust.

12. Are you looking at any secondary schools joining the HET?

The Trust is keen to remain a geographically local Trust and for its primary schools to be within an approximate 20-minute/mile drive of the College. Whilst the national political appetite for academies may change over time, the intention is for the Trust to remain a small Trust with between 7 and 9 primary schools and, eventually, one or two secondary schools. Importantly, the Trust is under no financial or other pressure to grow and therefore no target date or timescale has been set.

13. What is the HET vision for EYFS provision? Will schools be able to apply their own approach?

The Trust sees the quality of EYFS provision to be the pivotal to the success of pupils as they journey through the school. Indeed, the reception year is arguably the most important school year in the life of the child. Each child should experience a rich environment in which, regardless of starting points, they can access a wealth of creative opportunities which are highly engaging and ignite their love of learning.

The Trust is interested in excellence and any practice which delivers this will not be changed, but, indeed, we will look to "magpie" outstanding practice across all schools. Currently, all schools follow their own approach, but the fundamentals of best practice remain the same across all schools. Our current schools, and Bolnore who are joining us in the autumn term, are making EYFS a focus, particularly the development of their continuous provision and providing early writing opportunities in the outside areas. The Trust has already successfully facilitated collaboration in the introduction of RWI starting in EYFS and this will continue next year with the wider focus on EYFS in general.

14. Will a school's priorities be personal to a school or shared across the trust?

Each school has its own priorities. There is usually commonality between schools, and these often feed into Trust-wide priorities.

15. Will the Trust decide the priorities for the School Development Plan, or will that remain a school decision?

Initially, the due diligence process, will identify the needs and priorities – which are not usually any surprise for a school and in line with the schools' own priorities as set out within the SDP. It is important to note that this process is conducted with the school, and not to it. The outcome of the due diligence, including agreeing priorities, should be as a result not just of data, but discussions with the Headteacher, senior leaders and governors. Priorities will be agreed with the Headteacher.

The relationship between the Director of Education, School Improvement Partner and senior leaders on an ongoing basis is key to enabling the continual assessment of needs, which will change over time, and ensure that these needs are appropriately prioritised in agreement with the school.

16. How long does Tim envisage he will stay as the HET CEO? What is HET's succession planning for this role?

Tim is committed for at least the next three to five years to ensure the sound development of the Trust. The Trustees have broad succession plans in place should any of the executive team leave the Trust, although none are planning to do so within the timeframe above. It is highly likely that the next CEO/CFO will come from within the HET.

17. In the event of CEO leaving & a new appointment (or Executive Heads) would schools be involved in the recruitment?

Yes, it would be anticipated that schools would be represented on any CEO appointment panel as it would be very important that stakeholders are involved in the appointment process for this crucial role.

18. If the HET expands to beyond 7 schools, do you plan to have any Executive Headteachers? If so would existing Headteachers be able to benefit from this potential opportunity?

Shared leadership may be considered for small schools where it may make sense and be practical to explore this option. Naturally, high-performing Headteachers with a track record of leading a school within the Trust would be welcome to consider these opportunities, and the Trust would be keen to appoint someone well-known and trusted.

19. Some trusts have top heavy Executives Headteachers etc at the top of the trusts. How will HET ensure that distributed leadership will demonstrate an equality of gender?

The Trust's executive leadership is currently made up of three individuals; two males (the CEO and CFO) and one female (the Director of Education.) However, the wider leadership team

consists of five females and three males (six females and three males from November.) including Headteachers from each of the schools, the Director of HR and the Finance Director.

The Trust is keen to ensure that gender equality is a key consideration for future employment opportunities within the Trust.

20. What reassurances can be given for when a new CEO joins the HET for schools? What safeguards are in place to prevent sudden & radical changes if a new CEO joins?

The Board of Trustees oversees the strategy of the Trust, the vision, values and ethos. Whilst accepting that any new CEO in the future is likely to come to the table with new ideas, it would be anticipated that any new CEO would need to buy into these values and the vision for the Trust with no need for radical change. It is not anticipated that a new CEO would be required for a number of years, during which time the Trust will fully embed its work with the schools and solidify the vision, ethos and values. As noted above, ideally the next CEO will come from within the HET.

21. How would you plan to utilise our strengths to support the HET if we decided to join?

The Trust identifies areas where each school can provide support through the due diligence process and would facilitate support between schools and encourage a peer-led approach. This could be around Curriculum, Teaching, Leadership or on the support side (finance, operations etc). Strengths that can support the Trust centre would also be considered, and there are examples of this working well already.

Finance

22. What assurances can HET give that financial viability will be in all schools in the HET? Many trusts are finding that they are having to bail out primary schools; how will that work in the current climate of underfunding of state schools, as many schools are likely to set a deficit budget in 2-3 years?

Given the national funding challenges within the education sector, it is quite impossible to give full assurance for all and any school that may join the Trust in the future. However, the Trust (and those that work within it) have an excellent track record of managing challenging financial situations within school environments. All Trust schools have set a balanced budget for the 2023-24 period and the Trust will be carrying forward reserves into 2023-24 that will be added to in year. Academy Trusts may not set deficit budgets.

During the due diligence exercise, a medium to longer-term plan for any school is considered to ensure that it can remain viable and not create unacceptable risk for the other schools already within the Trust.

23. How will HET propose to manage if they are compelled to take in smaller rural schools in the area, which are more financially unstable? Would that have financial implications in the future for larger schools like Holy Trinity – Or will they potentially be shut down and other trust schools asked to absorb them / or may two small schools amalgamate?

The Trust cannot be compelled to take any school, due to safeguards put in place at the time of setting up the Trust. A full due diligence exercise takes place with each school to ensure that any risk is mitigated (short, medium or longer term.) Any schools that pose an unnecessary risk would require risk mitigations to be put into place and agreed formally either with the school, the Diocese or the Department for Education (as appropriate.) However, the Trust would look at possible solutions of amalgamation or shared Executive Headship if appropriate to do so.

24. Will schools still have autonomy to raise their own funds and retain them in full. E.g. from community events, PTA?

Yes.

25. How will the quotes process work for large projects – will Governors still need to approve or will the Trust have to?

Please see the Trust's Finance Policy (on our website – www.hurst.education) which details the delegated limits for transactions, payments and tender processes.

26. Is there a preferred list of suppliers we will be mandated to use?

No. Schools are free to choose their own suppliers, but Trust-wide purchasing will be encouraged in order to seek value for money and economies of scale.

27. Does the Trust have a designated H&S officer?

Yes. Mark Adams, who is a very experienced and fully qualified Health and Safety Manager with nearly twenty years of experience in schools and educational settings. Mark is supported by a consultancy firm as required.

28. How will the HET manage to support schools if a large capital spend is needed e.g. new boiler etc?

Large-scale expenditure would be funded by bids to the Condition Improvement Fund and, once the Trust reaches a certain size, by an allocation from the Schools' Condition Allocation (SCA) funding. Schools continue to receive their Devolved Formula Capital Funding.

29. What would the CFO's role be with SBOM?

The SBM and CFO (or Deputy CFO) will work closely together on a day-to-day basis, with the CFO providing support as needed. The CFO does not line manage the SBM (this management relationship remains directly with the Headteacher), but there is a line of accountability between the SBM and CFO.

30. Are there opportunities for our SBOM to have professional development & opportunities?

Yes. This will be discussed with the SBM after a suitable period of embedding within the Trust.

31. A few of our staff are on funded professional development pathways, Could we continue to fund these?

Yes, there is no need for these to be changed.

32. How are EHCPs funded? Is the same level of top up funding available as is possible from the LA?

There is no change to EHCP funding upon conversion.

33. Will control over our devolved budget be written into the contract and is there a guarantee that will always happen?

The delegation of the budget to the school is contained within the Trust's Scheme of Delegation, available on the Trust's website. The Trust would seek to provide support, advice and guidance as much (or as little) as is needed and would only have a greater involvement should the school be unable or unwilling to set a balanced budget or work towards doing so.

34. Would there be any further financial obligations from schools to the HET other than the 3%?

It is possible that the Trust may provide optional services in the future that are charged in addition to the 3% membership fee. However, these services will be optional by nature and will not be a requirement, so the choice to opt into these services remains with the school.

35. Will the 3% contribution to the HET include things like SLAs for finance? We currently procure additional things like insurance through this service – will we still do this with your preferred suppliers or will need to source all our own insurances?

The 3% covers a number of services that schools would ordinarily procure from the Local Authority and, in some cases, private providers. The full list can be discussed with the School Business Manager, as each school buys into different services from the Local Authority.

Insurance is provided by the DfE's Risk Protection Assurance (RPA) scheme and is funded separately, at a current rate of £19 per pupil per year. The DfE expects all academies to utilise the RPA scheme unless it can provide a substantial reason for procuring insurance from a commercial provider.

36. Would we still be able to retain our current catering provider (Harrisons) & would we have autonomy to change if we needed to?

Yes, although the Trust will develop a Trust-wide catering option that schools may opt to join at a later date (within the next 3 to 5 years.)

This, however, remains a decision for each school to make individually.

Systems

37. Will the data management system be maintained (Bromcom) or will we need to adopt another new system?

The Trust uses Bromcom for the pupil MIS (although does not use Bromcom for financial/accounting systems.)

The process to move onto the Trust system from the current LA licence is seamless.

38. Will we be able to retain existing IT solutions for things like SCR and Parent / carer consultations?

Primarily, yes, although further conversation would be useful to understand the systems in place. (For example, the Trust uses HR software which generates the SCR and therefore a dual system would create significant additional work for the person responsible for the SCR.)

39. We have an ICT company we have used for many years, will we still be able to use them, or do you have an alternative?

The Trust is beginning to embed an IT support provision, provided out of the College, in conjunction with Class Technology Limited (CTS). CTS have provided IT to the College for many years and are very experienced in providing IT support to schools, both within the maintained and independent sector. Whilst it will not be compulsory for schools to change providers to the Trust's IT solution, it is hoped that schools will recognise the increased level of service and value for money and will choose to join at a time appropriate for them.

40. We have plans for two prospective projects if we could secure approval from the C of E committee – would these be supported by HET, if approval was granted? Would the HET object to these potential projects?

The Trust would need to understand the details of these projects before this can be answered in full. However, provided the school was operating in accordance with its vision, values and the delegated budget, the Trust is unlikely to provide any objection.

41. How would our Governing Body change if we joined HET?

The Trust has Members, who are made up of representatives of both the Diocese of Chichester (60%) and the College (40%). Members meet annually to receive the annual report and accounts, appoint the Trust's auditors, and critically appoint the Board of Directors (Trustees).

Trustees have a similar role to that of a Governing Body – except their remit is strategic direction and performance of the whole Trust – and, like a Governing body, are appointed based on their experience and skills that they can bring to the Board.

All schools within the HET have a Local Governing Body to whom much of the day-to-day and school specific strategy is delegated through the Trust's Scheme of Delegation. The Scheme

of Delegation (which can be found on the Trust's website) details specifically the responsibilities of the Members, Board and Local Governors.

There is little practical change for an individual Governing Body. The Trust insist upon parent and staff representation and strongly recommend representation from the local Church.

42. The autonomy of our school is our greatest concern, especially if the Trust becomes larger & our fear is that it will end up more corporate & everyone having to do the same thing. Currently, St Wilfrid's is the only two form entry primary & one of the other two having a new Headteacher. We have heard they are a main driving force of the curriculum in HET currently & whilst they may use Power maths successfully, we prefer to use the provision we currently have e.g. White Rose, NRICH etc – for us this would be a non-negotiable & may be other things too we do not wish to pursue. What would the HET line be, if after all collaboration a school would disagree if they already have something in place which works for their children?

The Trust understands that there is not a 'one-size fits all' model for schools, and whilst the preference is towards a level of collaboratively agreed and shared curriculum, modified as required for each school, there is no absolute requirement for this should an individual school have a sound and evidenced-based rationale for maintaining a different curriculum or model.

Whilst St Wilfrid's is currently the only two-form primary school, the Trust is in the process of transferring a further two two-form schools into the Trust and is in detailed conversation with one other.

Each school has been asked to lead exploratory piece of work on each school and therefore whilst they have taken a lead within Maths, for example, it would not be fair to say they are the driving force behind the HET's curriculum research as this is shared across the four schools, including Bolnore Village Primary School.

43. If there is disagreement about direction, how will this be handled?

Whilst it is hoped unlikely, any significant disagreement about the direction of the HET would be escalated to the Board of Trustees and, if necessary, the Members. As a Church Majority Multi-Academy Trust, 60% of the Members are appointed by the Diocese of Chichester and therefore any final say on the direction would, in essence, be in the hands of the Diocese in this circumstance.

44. How would the HET listen to and respond to our school voice e.g., pupils, parents, staff & our local community stakeholders?

The Trust requires each Local Governing Body to have appropriate parental representation and strongly supports parental engagement through both this medium and less formal groups such as engagement with PTAs or class representatives (where applicable.)

The Trust will, during the coming academic year, introduce stakeholder engagement with staff, parents and, where appropriate, pupils via online questionnaires.

The Trust is also developing a Staff Forum.

45. How could the HET support us with recruitment and retention of staff?

Each school would have access to Access Recruitment which streamlines the recruitment of staff and is being introduced following feedback from recent joiners about the process of applying for roles within schools.

Staff development opportunities are shared across the Trust and provide opportunities to retain staff within the school or wider Trust.

Recent informal feedback has suggested that schools being part of the Hurst Education Trust was a key element in the decision for the staff member to apply to work at the school.

46. What HR work would be under HET's remit?

The Trust's HR team provide advice and support to each individual school on an 'as-needs' basis. We recognise that some schools have a greater capacity and understanding of HR processes and would prefer to do much of the work at school level. However, for those schools who require greater involvement, the Trust will support the school through any appropriate HR processes, including attending meetings with staff if needed.

A wide range of policies and model letters, contracts and other HR paperwork has been developed by the Trust and these will be made available for the school to use.

The Trust works closely with the main education unions and meets with them termly.

47. Will Inset days always be joint days, or can schools decide their own dates and focus for these?

It is anticipated that one INSET Day per year would be jointly held, and in agreement with the Headteachers. Schools are otherwise free to decide their own dates that suit them.

48. Does HET have a designated HR and payroll team or will some / all of those functions come back in to schools to manage?

The Trust has a HR and payroll team, headed by the Trust's Director of HR, Sue Atkinson.

Curriculum

49. How would you ensure that our curriculum remains accessible to all pupils e.g., SEND?

Inclusion within the HET based on John 10:10, that all children within our schools are equally respected, valued and should flourish and, with appropriate adaptations and support, regardless of their background and starting points, have access to the full curriculum both academic, pastoral and the wider co-curriculum.

This requires all HET schools to have a detailed knowledge of their children and have a robust SEND policy and procedures which identify individual needs and puts in place research-based interventions and provision which facilitate children's access to the full curriculum and activities within the school. This should be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Inclusion also requires the school to create a learning environment where all differences are respected and celebrated, and all children are treated of equal value. This should be strongly reflected in whole school values and seen, for example, in the rich diversity of book choices in the library and texts choices in lessons; displays around the school; daily worship and assemblies.

50. Teachers in our school have autonomy over their pedagogical approach; typically, dependent on who is being taught, what is being taught, and what happened in the previous sequence of lessons. Will teachers retain this autonomy e.g., Power of Reading?

Again, the primary aim of the Trust is to ensure the very best standards of Teaching and Learning across all its schools. Naturally, this will be bespoke to the needs of your children and your context. We would positively encourage adaptive practice and teachers using their experience and knowledge to build their lessons on previous learning. So, in principle, yes, teachers do have autonomy over their approach, if it is seen to be effective and have positive impact on pupil outcomes. The detail of this would need to be clearly understood before a full answer could be provided. The Trust would need to be satisfied that the curriculum is appropriately sequenced and the school's monitoring policy is robust such that quick intervention could be made if needed. However, it would be hoped that all teachers would be open to new ideas and practices, particularly those that are effective in the other HET Schools.

51. Would we continue to offer the pupils the same curriculum as now? If it were to differ, then how?

During the current academic year, the schools within the Trust have been reviewing the curriculum in each of the core subject areas. Working parties had been tasked to look at current practice and research, including that of the DfE and the EEF into best practice. Ideally, there will be an alignment around what is taught with local bespoke adaptation as appropriate for school context or pupil profile. The key aim is for HET schools to adopt the best available curriculum and through some degree of alignment to enable staff and schools to work closely together for the benefit of pupils. As evidenced by the recently introduced phonics scheme, staff have really embraced the opportunity to work and develop together though always ensuring that such programmes work within their own context.

52. What primary school experience & knowledge of the primary curriculum do your HET School Effectiveness Partners have?

Justin Smith, the School Improvement Partner, is a very experienced Primary Headteacher and Executive Headteacher. Prior to his current role, he was Chief Executive of the Primary First Trust where he was responsible for several rapid improvements, including Special Measures to Outstanding and in 2010, received the accolade of being the Headteacher for the most improved school in the Country. Justin is an advisor to the DfE and has an expert knowledge of leadership and management within the education sector and is a published author in this sector.

Michelle Zeidler, the Trust's Director of Education spent most of her career in the secondary maintained sector, working closely with partner primary schools. At Hurst, her role has been as Deputy Head Academic, which is a role encompassing both the Prep Schools (ages 4 – 12) and the Senior School (ages 13 – 18). Michelle has worked closely with our Trust Headteachers over the past 18 months and during this time, was appointed Interim Headteacher at Ditchling whilst the substantive Headteacher was recruited.

The Board of Trustees include several current and recent Headteachers, including a former Ofsted inspector and the current Director of Education and Deputy Director of Education for the Diocese of Chichester.

53. How often is a school to be monitored by Justin & Michelle? (We have heard some trusts are in schools weekly.)

The Trust's School Improvement Partner (SIP) and Director of Education work closely in tandem with the Headteacher and other members of SLT to identify strengths and areas of development for the school. Weekly visits by the Director of Education and up to twice termly visits by the SIP, mean that leadership has regular and readily available coaching and advice for improvement, closely aligned to the SDP. The CEO is also a regular visitor to the schools to discuss issues surrounding the strategic vision.

As the Trust and the School develop the relationship, it is likely that the frequency of the visits will be reduced as necessary and by mutual agreement.

54. What monitoring will take place on a termly/ yearly basis?

Trust monitoring is primarily qualitative through regular visits and quantitative using termly assessment data, currently by utilising Puma and PiRA testing.

Staffing

55. Both I & my AHTs are well paid & at the top of our scale & we are concerned that HET would either change our terms and conditions over time, reducing our salaries or put us into capability to gain a cheaper HT & AHTs. How would you reassure us on that point?

As with all staff, the Leadership team are protected by TUPE regulations upon transfer to the Trust. There are no plans to make any changes to the Leadership structure.

56. Would you intend to keep the senior leadership team in its current form if we joined HET? If not, what changes would you make?

The appointment of the Leadership team is delegated to the school and therefore the Trust would not introduce changes. If changes were suggested by the school (e.g., upon any change to individuals in these positions) the Trust would hope to be part of the interview process by invite from the school given the importance of these positions.

57. What career opportunities can you offer AHTs & HTs / teachers in the Trust?

As the Trust grows, we envisage that all staff will have the opportunity for professional growth and career development taking on cross HET responsibilities and leading initiatives. For Leadership staff, this is likely to be opportunities to lead whole-Trust initiatives, support leaders in other schools or provide promotional opportunities to leadership positions in other schools, including Executive Headship should an opportunity arise.

58. We hear that back-office functions are more “centralised” in a multi academy trust. What are the implications for all our administrative and site-management staff, especially SBOM’s salary?

Whilst common in some Trusts, the Hurst Education Trust does not centralise the SBMs role unless it is asked to assist in some functions (e.g., both Albourne and Ditchling now have Operations Managers with the Trust providing additional support. This was at the request of the schools.) Trust-wide working does provide for some efficiencies, and short-term absences can be well managed by the Trust if needed. The SBM (or equivalent) is a key role within the School and the Trust ensures that these roles are remunerated properly. For existing staff, no downward change would be proposed.

59. Our teachers too are expensive, but we have a skilful teaching team – we have heard of a few years down the line MATS getting rid of expensive staff & replacing them with much cheaper, more malleable teachers (quality of teaching & learning declines) what guarantee do you have for our staff that this would not happen?

The recruitment of teachers is delegated to each school and in accordance with any agreed budget. Therefore, the decision to employ experienced or less experienced teachers is down to the senior leadership for each school to manage, supported by the Trust as requested.

60. Would support staff be maintained at the current levels?

The recruitment of support staff is delegated to each school and in accordance with any agreed budget. Therefore, the decision to maintain support staff levels is down to the senior leadership for each school, supported by the Trust as requested.

61. Schools are struggling in terms of arranging visits of Educational Psychologists, Speech Therapists, attendance etc – is that an aim for the HET to employ staff such as these?

Yes, although first the Trust needs to ensure that it understands the collective need and nuances required of these services prior to facilitating these services. This exercise would involve the Headteachers of the schools to ensure the Trust is appropriately responding to the requirements of the schools.

62. Who carries out teacher / Headteacher appraisal?

The Headteacher appraisal involves the CEO, Director of Education and the School Improvement Partner (Justin Smith) together with representatives from the schools' governing body; this is often, but not exclusively, the Chair of Governors.

63. Will we be expected to change our current staff appraisal process to align with one already in place with the trust?

No, with the exception of the Headteacher as detailed above.

64. How extensive is your knowledge & provision for children with SEND?

The Trust is developing a strong provision for SEND across the existing schools coupled with healthy links with the Local Authority SEND team as evidenced by our work at the three schools within the Trust. The Trust both at the Centre and within the schools can offer advice and support to schools for SEND pupils.

65. What staff CPD will you need to provide for your schools in the future?

This year with the introduction of RWI, all schools have had fully funded training to enable the successful introduction of the scheme. Further Storybook training is also being provided. The Trust is currently funding training for the introduction of a new Writing approach. Next year HET schools are introducing the new White Rose Science scheme. Training for this will be facilitated by the Trust. At the start of the new academic year, the HET will be providing safeguarding training for all staff. There will be a joint HET INSET day at the start of the Spring term, which will provide CPD for all staff- the Headteachers will collaborate with the Director of Education to decide on the needs of the staff and the shape of the training to be provided on this day.

Six sessions have been planned across next academic year when staff from the schools will join together to share best practice in writing moderation and subject network groups. Staff are also encouraged to, and do, visit their counterparts in the other schools.

The Trust is currently working with the HET Heads to shape the CPD offering for next year. We hope to provide CPD opportunities for training at all levels.

66. How will staff absence be managed? Will there be triggers & what is the expectation of managing absence of staff?

There should be no change. Triggers remain the same, and schools should use these to initiate conversations with staff who meet these triggers as now.

The Trust's HR team can provide support and advice or can be directly involved in more challenging cases, as required.

67. Would HET want to be involved in recruitment, or is it delegated to the schools?

With the exception of the Headteacher post, the Trust delegates employment at school level to each individual school. The Trust would hope to be involved in senior or critical appointments or can assist, where necessary, in other appointments at the invitation of the school.

68. Do you provide staff insurances eg long term absence / maternity, or do we continue to use current providers?

Schools are free to decide whether to buy in a staff insurance plan or self-insure.

The Local Authority model is not available to academies, but there are significant numbers of providers in this marketplace and details can be discussed with the SBM.

Achievement

69. What assessment and tracking systems are in place for schools in the HET? Is it an expectation a specific system will be used, or can a school use what has worked well for them?

The Trust currently uses Insight Data Tracking, but this can be discussed in more detail with Senior Leaders at the school. The Trust does require information to be shared by the schools, and an online system such as Insight lessens the workload in sharing this information in the format required. However, it would be possible for a school to utilise a different data tracking system provided there was a sound reason for doing so and the school understood that additional work to share data with the Trust may be necessary.

70. What will happen if a school within the trust is under-performing – how will this be tackled and what sanctions lie at the end?

The focus of the Trust is to improve and develop good schools to a position where the pupil experience can be described as outstanding, whether utilising the Ofsted descriptor or otherwise. Where there is underperformance, the school improvement led by Justin Smith and Michelle Zeidler will support and guide as appropriate. Clearly, it is expected that the leadership team will be actively involved in the design and implementation of any strategy to deal with any underperformance. In the unlikely event that such intervention does not yield the right result, the Trust may look outside of the Trust to provide external resource to assist.

71. Will schools be able to carry out own data analysis?

Yes. The Trust currently uses Insight Data Tracking, but this can be discussed in more detail with Senior Leaders at the school. The Trust does require information to be shared by the schools, and an online system such as Insight lessens the workload in sharing this information in the format required. However, it would be possible for a school to utilise a different data tracking system provided there was a sound reason for doing so and the school understood that additional work to share data with the Trust may be necessary.

72. Will HET want to be involved in pupil progress meetings or can senior leadership continue to carry these out without any direction / reporting to HET?

The Trust is not involved in pupil progress meetings, although broad outcomes of these meetings should be discussed with the Director of Education as part of her visits to the schools.

73. How will accountability for pupils' achievement and progress be arranged in the HET?

The Trust team is held to account by the Board of Trustees and the Department for Education. Staff within schools are held to account through the line manager, up to the Headteacher. The Headteacher is held to account both by the School's Governing Body and is responsible to the Trust. This is broadly the same relationship as now, with the Headteacher responsible to the Local Authority in addition to the Governors.