

FOUR HILLS EDUCATION TRUST

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PARENTS/CARERS

4TH APRIL 2025

Questions from Parents/Carers

Questions from Parents/Carers, Children, and Our Community About Joining a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)

The questions and answers below have been gathered as part of the ongoing consultation process regarding our school's proposal to join Four Hills Education Trust. These questions were submitted by parents and carers through each individual school's questionnaire, and collated here for all. We are grateful for the thoughtful and constructive feedback, which has helped shape this document and will continue to inform the process as we move forward together.

QUESTION 01

It states that the school will still follow the national curriculum – if this intention changes, what is the governance process for this? Are parents and/or teachers consulted with, or does the trust have full control on decision(s) to deviate away from the national curriculum?

Four Hills Education Trust is fully committed to delivering a broad, balanced, and high-quality curriculum aligned with national expectations. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, introduced in December 2024, proposes that all state-funded schools, including academies, must follow the national curriculum. This will become a legal requirement once the Curriculum and Assessment Review concludes, with findings expected in autumn 2025. In line with this, the MAT will continue to follow the national curriculum both now and in the future. Should enhancements to the curriculum be proposed, these would be developed in collaboration with school leaders and shared with parents. We value transparency, and the voices of teachers, parents, and governors remain central to decision-making.

QUESTION 02

What happens if the transition is unsuccessful for whatever reason? Can the school revert back to its previous status?

Once a school becomes part of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), it does not return to local authority control. However, MATs are held accountable by Ofsted and the Department for Education. At Four Hills, we believe that by founding this Trust together, schools can shape it in a way that suits their individual needs while gaining the benefits of shared leadership, improved funding opportunities, and greater school-level support.

QUESTION 03

Will Albrighton school retain its existing policies and procedures? Or will it adopt a “trust-wide” set of policies across the aforementioned schools?

As founder schools, Albrighton and others will help shape the policies and approaches of Four Hills Education Trust. Some core policies (e.g. safeguarding, finance, and health & safety) will be developed Trust-wide to ensure consistency and compliance. However, many operational and day-to-day policies will remain locally tailored to reflect the needs of the Albrighton school community.

QUESTION 04

What is your vision/roadmap for the changes you may want to make/introduce to Albrighton and timeline if known?

As a newly forming trust, we are still in the early stages of shaping our development planning. While we will not be sharing a full roadmap during the consultation phase, all stakeholders will be kept fully informed as the MAT forms, and as our direction and priorities are developed collaboratively. The schools joining as founder members – including Albrighton, will help shape the Trust’s identity and future focus areas, ensuring decisions are built from the ground up, not imposed from the top.

QUESTION 05

Are the other schools already in the Academy structure? If so, have you taken reference site visits/deep dive into how it’s operated on an objective basis (data/metrics)? If this isn’t applicable, how do we know what the track record is for the proposed trust and their ability to lead/deliver in the right way for our children?

None of the schools are currently academies – this is a newly forming trust, and all schools involved are founding members, working together to shape the creation of the Trust, its structures, and its policies. The schools are united by shared values and a commitment to providing the best outcomes for children.

Research consistently shows that strong academies – particularly those with a well-led central team and clear educational focus – can outperform individual local authority schools, especially when it comes to sustained school improvement, access to resources, and raising outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Four Hills Education Trust aims to embody the best of that model while maintaining strong local identity and accountability.

QUESTION 06

What will happen to the money the school gets for service-level children when they join the trust?

The funding the school receives for service-level children—such as the Service Pupil Premium—will continue to be allocated directly to the school, just as it is now. This funding is provided specifically to support the pastoral, social, and emotional wellbeing of children whose parents are serving in the armed forces, and it will remain ring-fenced for that purpose. Joining Four Hills Education Trust will not affect the amount or intended use of this funding. Each school will retain responsibility for how it uses its Service Pupil Premium in line with the needs of its pupils, and the Trust will support schools in making sure that this funding continues to have the greatest possible impact for service families.

QUESTION 07

Will the community feel we have for our school set in a countryside location be impacted by joining the trust?

Absolutely not. One of the core principles of Four Hills Education Trust is that each school retains its unique identity, culture, and connection to its community. We fully recognise and value the close-knit, rural character of your school and the vital role it plays in the local area. Joining the Trust is not about changing what makes your school special—it's about protecting and strengthening it. Decisions will continue to be made with your community's needs in mind, and the school's location, values, and ethos will remain central to everything it does. The Trust structure provides additional support and opportunities, but the heart of the school—its relationships, traditions, and community feel—will stay firmly in place.

QUESTION 08

How will changing to a MAT financially impact Meadows Primary School in terms of top-slicing?

There will be a small top-slice taken from each school's funding to support a central team, which is common practice across Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs). However, this top-slice is used not only to deliver essential shared services (such as HR, finance, and school improvement), but also to generate new inward revenue through funding bids, grants, partnerships, and other strategic opportunities. The aim is to increase the total amount of funding available to schools, while delivering better value through collaborative investment and resource sharing. It's important to note that school budgets are already top-sliced by the local authority under the current maintained school system. This is typically a fixed percentage that schools have no control over, and which pays for centralised services that not all schools use equally or benefit from. By joining a MAT, schools like Meadows will have greater transparency and influence over how top-sliced funds are used. The Trust's central budget will be directly accountable to the schools within it, with funding decisions aligned to local needs and priorities. In short, the top-slice will be leaner, more strategic, and far more tailored than the predetermined deductions currently made by the local authority.

QUESTION 09

Will the school lose money to pay for the CEO and other trust staff wages?

The CEO and central team will be funded through the Trust's top-slice, but their role is not simply operational – it's strategic. The CEO's key focus includes generating additional income for the Trust, allowing schools to benefit from enhanced resources, professional development, and long-term financial sustainability. A strong central team is crucial to the success of any Trust, providing expertise, support, and vision that enables schools to thrive.

QUESTION 10

How will local oversight and responsiveness to community needs be maintained?

Each school retains its Local Governing Board, including parent and community members. Additionally, a Trustee will attend termly meetings with each Local Governing Board to ensure that the Trustee Board has a full understanding of the strengths, needs, and challenges at individual school level. This structure helps maintain a strong link between the Trust's strategic leadership and the school's local context.

QUESTION 11

Will admissions policies change?

There are no plans to change admissions policies. The schools will continue to follow the same admissions procedures currently in place, and if any changes were ever considered in the future, they would require a full public consultation. Parental voice and fairness remain a central priority.

QUESTION 12

How will you ensure inclusion and prevent discrimination?

Inclusion is a key focus of Four Hills Education Trust and sits at the heart of our values. We are committed to ensuring that every child – regardless of their background, faith, ability, or identity – feels welcome, supported, and celebrated. This commitment will be embedded in Trust policies, staff development, and school culture. Children's wellbeing, individuality, and right to thrive are essential to how we approach education.

QUESTION 13

Will uniform policies become stricter or more expensive?

No – we want to be very clear that we are not planning to change uniform policies or make them stricter. We also have no intention of making uniforms more expensive for families. Schools will retain their current uniforms, and there are no rebranding or name changes planned. Should anything change in the future, we would ensure financial support is in place and families are consulted well in advance.

QUESTION 14

How will you combat staff turnover and underqualified appointments?

We will be investing in high-quality recruitment, training, and career development. A strong central team means schools can focus on retaining staff and attracting the right people. Our aim is to build stable, highly qualified teams, not to cut corners.

QUESTION 15

Will there be data to show how the MAT has benefitted children over time?

Yes. The Trust will provide regular updates on pupil outcomes, progress, and wider school improvement. We believe in transparency and will publish clear data that shows the impact of the Trust over time. Parent voice and feedback will also be included in evaluating our success.

QUESTION 16

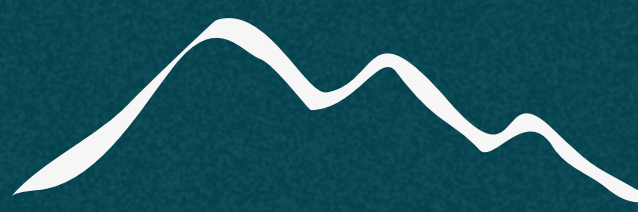
What changes will our children face during their time at Meadows?

Children will still attend the same school with the same staff, friends, routines, and values. Over time, they may benefit from access to improved resources, wider curriculum offers, and opportunities made possible through the Trust. But fundamentally, the heart of the school will remain unchanged – warm, nurturing, and focused on each child's success.

QUESTION 17

Will the familiar friendly faces in the office, including the business manager, remain within school?

Yes, absolutely. There are no planned changes to your existing office team. The people who know the school community best will remain, including your business manager. Continuity and relationships are key to a successful transition, and we are committed to keeping that consistency in place.





QUESTION 18

Is there something missing with the current setup that makes this appealing?

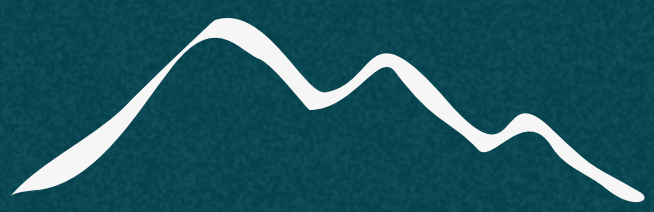
There is nothing “wrong” with the current setup of the school. The move to form a MAT is about being proactive, not reactive. It’s about futureproofing our schools – gaining the flexibility to direct resources where they are most needed, developing tailored school improvement support, and accessing additional funding through a central team focused on generating new income streams. It’s a strategic move designed to protect and strengthen what we already do well.

QUESTION 19

How will SEND funding be managed and spent once the school joins the Trust?

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) funding will continue to be managed and spent at individual school level, based on the needs of each child. None of the schools forming the Four Hills Education Trust currently pool their SEND funding, and there are no plans to do so.

For children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), costed provision is allocated according to their funding band, ensuring that the support outlined in their plan is fully met. For children on the SEND register who do not have an EHCP, schools follow an Assess, Plan, Do, Review (ADPR) process to identify and deliver appropriate support. Additional provision is tailored to meet their individual needs, and regularly reviewed for effectiveness. The Trust is committed to protecting and enhancing SEND provision across all its schools. Any future proposal to change how funding is managed would involve full consultation with parents and carers. Inclusion, equity, and personalised support remain at the heart of our approach.





Thank you for your continued engagement:

We would like to thank all parents and carers for taking the time to read through this information and for your thoughtful questions so far. Your feedback is incredibly important and helps to shape this process. If you have further questions, please do continue to submit them using the QR code provided on the school website. We will be updating and sharing answers regularly throughout the consultation period, which runs until Friday 2nd May. We look forward to hearing from you and working together as we explore this important opportunity for our schools.

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*'Together, we climb: overcoming challenges
and reaching extraordinary heights.'*

