

## **Trust status: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Why does Bottisham Village College wish to consider becoming a Trust school at this time?**

The DCSF is currently encouraging schools to consider becoming Trust schools in order to consolidate their existing partnerships and to extend them to the benefit of their current and future students. Our intention is to be in the vanguard of all beneficial developments and to build a firm foundation for the future development of our school.

We also value highly our existing partnerships. We wish to cement and enhance those partnerships for the future to benefit all of us to continue to raise standards, to care for our students and to maximise the opportunities we are able to offer them in and beyond school. We also wish to underline our commitment to our communities within the Trust.

### **2. Does the school have to become a Trust school?**

No. This is a decision to be taken by the current governing body following a thorough process of consultation with parents and other interested stakeholders. Beyond that, formal proposals must be published and further consultation must take place.

### **3. Will it change what children and young people learn?**

Like all maintained schools, Trust schools will teach the National Curriculum and still be subject to inspection by Ofsted. The only change would be an expansion of opportunity, depending on the partners chosen by the Trust.

### **4. What would change if our school became a Trust school?**

First of all Bottisham Village College would have to become a Foundation School. This status gives a school a greater degree of autonomy. For example, they can appoint their own staff and be responsible for their own admissions; even so, they are still bound by the National Admissions Code. In addition, a charitable trust would be established, with its own charitable objectives. The governing body retains day-to-day control over the school's land and assets, although formal ownership would be vested in the Trust.

In real terms, becoming a Trust school would have very little impact on the day to day running of the school. The Trust would focus solely on its charitable objects; through the trust, the school would seek to consolidate, develop and strengthen its relationship with partners; their energy and expertise would support the school in helping to achieve the Every Child matters agenda, and benefit all of the students in the school.

### **5. How is a Trust school different from a maintained school?**

It isn't; Trust schools are part of the family of local authority maintained schools. Trust schools are funded by the local authority on the same basis as other schools; they have to act in accordance with the Admissions Code, are entitled to be represented on the local admissions forum and to take part in co-ordinated admissions arrangements; the local authority would be able to intervene should a Trust school be failing or underperforming, as it would in any other school. The Local Authority is fully supportive of the move towards Trust status for schools.

## **6. What does this mean for students?**

In truth, there will be very little change in the day-to-day operation of the school other than a continuing expansion of opportunity. Working closely with other colleges, agencies and business partners will build our capacity to enhance the learning experience for our young people in a wide range of ways.

## **7. What does this mean for parents?**

Again, parents will experience very little change in the running of the school. The emerging Trust would sit separately from the governing body and simply oversee the partnership-working dimensions of the involved members and associate members.

The school will set its own admissions arrangements, managed, by the Local Authority and bound by the School Admissions Code like all other schools.

## **8. What does this mean for staff?**

As a Foundation school, all staff will be employed by the governing body, rather than by Cambridgeshire County Council. Staff pay and conditions will be fully protected at transfer and the governing body have made a commitment to abide by any national agreements for both teaching and support staff.

The governing body, not the Trust, will continue to run the school and to be responsible and accountable for its performance. The school budget will continue to be delegated to the governing body.

The governing body will still include at least three members of staff.

The schools will remain part of the local authority's family of maintained schools – this means that they will still teach the National Curriculum, and will be bound by the School Admissions Code – schools will continue to play their full part in taking hard to place pupils, and will not introduce selection by ability. Although the school will set its own admissions arrangements, we expect to keep very similar arrangements and criteria to those we have now as a Community school.

## **9. Can a Trust school continue to be a specialist school?**

Yes. Having a Trust linked to the school can support specialist status and help to spread the impact of the specialism across the local community.

## **10. Can trust schools work with schools that are not part of the Trust?**

Trust schools can continue to work with other schools in the same way as they did before creating a Trust.

We are particularly keen to continue to work with all of the schools in the Bottisham cluster and our intention is to extend to them the invitation to join the Trust in the future.

## **11. How will having a trust affect the Governance of the School?**

There are two sorts of Trust; a "Majority Trust" and a "Minority Trust". In both cases there is a direct relationship between the Trust and the Governing Body because the Trust will appoint a number of Governors, called Foundation Governors. How many Governors the Trust can appoint depends on the sort of Trust. In a "Majority Trust" the majority of the Governing Body will be appointed by the Trust as Foundation Governors. In a "Minority Trust" the Trust can appoint a minimum of 2 governors and a maximum of 45% of the Governing Body. It is up to the existing Governing Body to decide whether a majority or Minority Trust model is best for the school and to consult and publish statutory proposals on that basis.

We think that a Minority Trust model, with the Trust appointing 2 governors, is the best model for Bottisham Village College. This model would allow us to maintain the existing constitution of our Governing Body, as far as possible, whilst also benefitting from having two Trust appointed governors. Other schools in Cambridgeshire that have established Trusts have also decided that the minority model is best for them.

The Trust and the Governing Body will be two separate corporate bodies. The Trust will hold the land and assets that make up the school, for the purposes of the Trust and will appoint the specified number of governors to the Governing Body. The Governing Body will have the same role and responsibilities as the Governing Body of a Foundation School that doesn't have a Trust. This will include being the employer of the staff and acting as the Admissions Authority for the school.

## **12. How will the school be funded?**

Trust schools will be funded on the same basis as other maintained schools, according to the local authority's funding formula. They will be allocated their own capital money on the same basis as other schools.

## **13. How much money is the Trust going to invest?**

Working with a Trust is not about generating income for the school – there is no requirement or expectation that the trust will contribute financially. The Trust's value is in how it supports the school's leadership and governance. The Trust could, of course, contribute financially to the school if it chose to do so. It could also give us a platform from which to bid into funding streams that are not available to non-trust schools.

## **14. Will the Trust partners make a profit out of the school?**

No. The school budget will continue to go directly to the governing body, not to the Trust. Trusts must be constituted as not-for-profit charities – any income must be used to support their charitable aims, which must focus on the advancement of education and community cohesion.

### **15. What if something goes wrong?**

Creating a Trust is intended to be a permanent relationship. But there will be a process to remove the Trust if the school fails, or if there is real dissatisfaction at the trust's performance. The school would then revert to becoming a foundation school and publicly-funded land and assets held by the Trust would automatically transfer to the school's governing body.

The Charity Commission will be able to intervene if there are problems with the conduct or management of a Trust.

### **16. Who holds the land and buildings in a trust school?**

The school's land and buildings transfer to the Trust to be held on trust for the duration of its relationship with the school. The Trust does not have to pay for the land or buildings. This situation is similar to the one where the Governing Body of a Foundation school owns the land and buildings that make up the school.

### **17. What does 'hold on trust' mean?**

The Trust has the legal title to the land but it holds it on trust for the purposes or benefit of the school and subject to the provisions of the trust's governing documents. If its rôle ends then publicly funded land would revert to the governing body of the school or to the Local Authority.

### **18. Does this make the Trust responsible for the day-to-day control of the school's land and buildings?**

No. The school governing body has day-to-day control over the premises in the same way that all governing bodies do. Local authorities are responsible for maintaining school buildings although this is usually delegated to governing bodies. Governing bodies will be able to manage their buildings and services themselves, or to enter into agreements with their local authority or commercial organisations for the facilities management of their premises, if they wish.

### **19. Who is responsible if there is a problem with one of the buildings at a Trust school?**

As a general rule the governing body is only responsible for those things for which they have received funding delegated from the local authority – but the Trust must ensure that the governing body has taken out proper insurance. Where there is an emergency, local authority support would be available as for all other maintained schools.