

MAT Offer

Join our growing MAT

The OAK TREES Multi Academy Trust is currently a group of 6 Wirral Primary Schools. The Trust was formed as the schools, who had been working together for a number of years, decided to formalise their collaborative work and become united under one body. Oak Trees is currently looking to expand and would welcome applications to join from local primary and special schools.

CEO Welcome

The Central Schools Trust (OAK TREES MAT) is driven by an unrelenting belief in excellence in all aspects of school life. Our aim is to bring together schools with similar values so that we can offer a world class education that meets the needs of all learners and is based on our MAT CARE values. We understand that every school is different and that every school is at a different point on their journey to excellence. Every school that joins the Trust will play an active part in shaping our ethos and our strategic priorities at Trust level. Academies working together formally in this way are able to offer shared professional development, high quality school-to-school support and a range of efficiencies across the organisation.

- Converter Academies: we are seeking good or outstanding schools with similar values and principles to join us as strong partners as we believe they would reap many benefits from the collaboration as well as enhancing the capacity of the Trust.
- Sponsored Academies: we have a proven school improvement offer designed to support schools who require it the most. The OAK TREES MAT promotes the principle of autonomy with support and our school improvement model reflects the level of support required by each academy.

We would welcome a discussion with any school who might be interested in joining us at this early but exciting stage, as we shape and develop the OAK TREES MAT. For schools who are not yet in a position to join the Trust formally, there is the option to access support from the OAK TREES MAT on a commercial/traded basis and join in with some of the excellent training and projects we organise annually. I look forward to hearing from you.

Tony Lacey - Chief Executive

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Why Are We Doing This?

Everything we do at Oak Trees is based on the following agreed values:

Co-operate and collaborate

Achieve excellence for all

Raise aspirations and inspire imaginations

Explore new interests and new ideas

All schools who join our Trust must believe in these values and understand how they underpin what we do. Each school in the MAT, as long as they are performing well, have the freedom to innovate and improve and have their own approaches to teaching and learning and share good practice with colleagues.

What is a MAT (Multi-Academy Trust)? A MAT is a formal collaboration a group of academy schools that are developing effective practice and working strategically with each other. The principle is to provide schools with direct access to group strength which they otherwise would not have immediate access to. Academies are state-funded schools in England, which are directly funded by the Department for Education and independent of Local Authority control. The group of schools in a MAT work together under a shared academy funding agreement under one Trust Board.

What are the benefits of joining the OAK TREES MAT?

Improved Quality of Education - The overarching intention is that for any school joining the OAK TREES MAT, there will be a positive benefit for children in relation to the quality of their learning experiences. The OAK TREES MAT annually puts on a range of events to enhance pupil experiences, and shared good practice ensures each child makes good progress across our Trust.

Stronger Leadership - There is a greater capacity to grow and develop our own leaders within the Trust. For Headteachers, there will be opportunities for Executive Headship across multiple schools as the Trust expands. The infrastructure of the OAK TREES MAT should allow school leaders to focus on the areas that really matter – teaching and learning.

Specialist Resources - School improvement services are provided on a school to school support basis, so you can be confident that you have access to professionals with current school-based expertise. This sharing of expertise across schools will provide access to a wider pool of specialist knowledge and experience for any school joining the Trust.

Professional Development - The OAK TREES MAT annual Continuing Professional Development plan ensures that we can recruit, retain and develop our highest performing staff. There is a central programme of professional development designed to support staff on the journey from being Early Career Teachers right through to Headship. Opportunities for promotion across our group of schools will facilitate career development within the Trust.

Economies of Scale - In addition to the financial savings on procurement (due to the bulk purchasing of goods and services) schools will have access to a range of centrally provided services, including financial management, HR, Payroll, GDPR and Health and Safety.

Shared Accountability - Since the Trust represents multiple schools, it is in our interests to raise the profile and performance of all our schools in line with rising expectations.

- The ethos, values, uniform, brand and culture of schools will remain unchanged ensuring continuity for children and families.
- Children and families will be part of a wider school community with regular access to experiences beyond the boundaries of their own school.
- As the Trust grows to include a special school or an additionally resourced provision, the intention is to distribute access to specialist expertise. This continuum of provision will ensure that the needs of all learners can be met and that all children truly have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

How are central services funded?

We recognise that schools are often at different points on their journey towards inclusion and excellence. Schools will not be charged with a one size fits all top slice, but will instead make a proportional contribution based on size and the level of support required. Oak Trees MAT does not want to make a surplus from its Academies, so the central services charge will be minimised to reflect only what is required to cover core costs and ensure that the MAT is able to have a positive impact on all Oak Trees staff and pupils.

As new schools join the Trust, we expect to grow and develop the financial model so that it benefits all schools and their respective communities.

How will we be affected financially?

Academies receive the same levels of funding for their students as maintained schools and there is no additional funding for being in a MAT. It is up to schools how funding is allocated and spent, and each school is responsible for its own budget and spending.

The MAT benefits from employing a highly qualified Chief Finance Officer who supports the schools to perform well financially and ensures that the schools fully comply with the Academies Financial Handbook.

Governance

Will a school lose its independence by becoming part of Oak Trees? No. The government has stressed that the MAT model allows schools to benefit from working together while retaining a level of autonomy and unique identity. Although there will be a single Board of Trustees to oversee all the MAT and provide strategic governance, each school still has the opportunity to maintain a local Governing Body to provide community governance. The governors on this local board are there to represent the interests of their school. In addition, Headteachers will continue to lead their own schools in the MAT, but are more able to focus on teaching and learning as over time many of the operational aspects of school management are dealt with across the Trust.

What about teachers and the curriculum?

Will being part of Oak Trees MAT have an impact on the curriculum? Academies are not required to follow the National Curriculum and have greater freedom to determine the content of the school's curriculum but there is still a requirement to teach:

- English, Maths and Science
- Religious Education
- Relationships and Sex Education

As a Multi Academy Trust, we work together to plan an exciting, vibrant and relevant curriculum which is bespoke to each individual school. Working together we feel that we can get the best outcomes for your child.

Our teachers plan and collaborate to ensure the best outcomes for our pupils across the Trust.

School Improvement is led by our School Improvement Lead, Adrian Martin, who works with schools and headteachers to ensure that the service we provide to our families is of a high quality.

Will my child have new teachers if the school joins the Oak Trees?

The staff currently employed by the school will transfer into the employment of the Trust. Under this model staff have more flexibility to move between schools to share good practice but decisions on how staff are deployed are made by the Board of Trustees and Headteachers in consultation with staff.

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