



# Developing the future of the CHS Learning Trust

## A Message from the Trust Board

The CHS Learning Trust has a very clear strategic aim: to develop outstanding schools for the local communities they serve and to deliver the very best educational opportunities for the students in our care, irrespective of their ability or background.



Over the past two years we have continued to strive towards this vision and have every belief that our Trust is firmly on its way to securing it. Our schools have continued to raise standards, with consistently improving examination results and we are gaining recognition from the Department for Education (DfE) for our achievements.

We are proud of the achievements of all our students and we know our staff and parents want our schools to continue to improve standards. We have become a strong Trust because of our commitment to high quality teaching, our dedicated staff and our hard-working students. We have also become strong by looking to the future and by embracing change. Our schools continue to work in partnership with a range of other local schools, through our involvement in the Manchester Schools' Alliance, the Manchester Teaching School Alliance and other collaborative organisations across the city to help raise standards for all children across Manchester.

The Trust Board believe that working in partnership with other schools develops our staff to improve their own practice, become better teachers and become proficient leaders of school improvement.

**The Trust Board would now like to further develop our capacity and strength by merging with other local Trusts to create a larger, more resilient Multi Academy Trust (MAT) serving the needs of Manchester children.**

## **The Background:**

Our move to Academy status evidenced our commitment to safeguard a vision for high quality educational provision in South Manchester protecting the individuality and ethos that is unique to our school communities. This move has enabled us to keep our autonomy and individual nature; maintain our own admissions policy and curriculum; and work in partnership with a range of local schools and organisations of our own choosing.

At this moment in time all schools face exceptional challenges in a political landscape that has seen a tremendous pace of change in educational policy. All schools are facing significant financial pressures which will have a massive impact on the way they operate and how they continue to deliver high quality educational provision.

During these changing times we have continued to work in close partnership with other Manchester schools. These partnerships have enabled our schools to continue to develop our own best practice whilst supporting others. We firmly believe this is how schools **should** work together; supporting one another and engaging in locally arranged school-to-school support.

With this in mind the Trust Board have recently decided they would like to merge our Trust with other local MATs to create a more resilient and efficient organisation which is more readily able to successfully face the challenges that all schools will face in the future.

**We would now like to consult our parents, co-operative members and stakeholders on their views about this proposed change.**

The Trust Board and our staff are determined to work hard for our schools and the wider community. We will continue to build on our success, becoming more effective in what we do and strengthening our academic achievements. We will continue to provide the happy, safe environments that our children look forward to each day.

**This leaflet explains some of the reasons why we need to consider this now, the timescales of the consultation and some information about what being part of a new Multi Academy Trust would mean to the students, staff and parents of Chorlton High School and Newall Green High School.**

## **What are the political changes that are having an impact on schools?**

- Over the last few years the Government has moved much of the power and accountability for education from Local Authorities to schools themselves. This has enabled schools that have strengths in their own governance and leadership systems to drive their own improvements and develop their school for the good of their own students.
- As the power and the direct funding for the Local Authority has been severely cut it can now only provide a limited range of services and support to schools. The impact of this is that schools have to develop their own capacity and resource to ensure that they provide the highest quality of education to their students.
- It has been highly publicised over recent months that schools are facing unprecedented funding pressures such as inflationary pay rises, the introduction of the national living wage, higher employer contributions to pensions and National Insurance, non-pay inflation and the Apprenticeship Levy. All of these have impacted on school budgets to inflict real term budget reductions.
- In addition, Manchester schools are also set to lose significant amounts of funding under the new National Funding Formula proposals. This means that there will be much less funding for all our schools and we will have to make considerable cost savings to ensure that we can operate our schools effectively.
- In terms of educational policy, we are in a period of phenomenal change, at a great pace. The Secretary of State for Education has changed the curriculum, examinations, assessment structures, funding arrangements, inspection regime and accountability for schools. Our Trust schools are successful because we have always been able to look to the future, ensuring we are well informed, enabling us to innovate and adapt quickly to a changing educational agenda. In this way we have been able to ensure that our students are protected from the negative impact of some of these changes and will continue to be 'Successful, Creative and Happy'. We are confident in our work and have been happy to share our practice with other schools in Manchester and across the country.
- The Government agenda makes it clear that Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) are central to future educational policy. The National Schools Commissioner has

outlined proposals to develop a network of MATs throughout the country structured as:

- Starter Trusts: made up of 5 schools in one region.
  - Established Trusts: made up of between 5 to 15 schools in one region.
  - Regional Trusts: made up of between 15 to 30 schools across regions.
  - System Trusts: made up of 30 plus schools across the country.
- To survive well and innovatively our Trust will need to expand rapidly to be an 'Established Trust' in the very near future.
  - We have already started to develop our centralised services based on the learning and experience of other Trusts. This is beginning to bring some cost efficiencies to our operation.
  - Most MATs report operational efficiencies when the Trust reaches about 5,000 students with about 500 staff.
  - We have already established some capacity to grow, however, this capacity needs to be balanced with the future financial constraints that we face.

### **Our Future: The merger proposal:**

- To merge the successful:

**Piper Hill Learning Trust**

**and CHS Learning Trust**

- To create a new Multi-Academy Trust, the '**Prospere Trust**', which is able to provide excellent opportunities for all our students and lead education forward in the North West, based on our commitment to academic rigour and exceptional opportunities for all young people in our Trust schools.

*(We are also in discussions with other local Multi Academy Trusts and hope to bring them into our new Trust at a later stage.)*

## **Information about the Piper Hill Learning Trust:**

- This Trust was established in March 2015 building on the success of Piper Hill High School, a 155 place High school for children and young people with very significant additional needs, aged 11-19.
- It now also includes Pioneer House High School (a 100 place vocational specialist support high school) which opened in September 2016.
- Piper Hill is a three times outstanding school, a National Support School, with a National Leader of Education as Executive Head.
- Piper Hill is a Teaching School as part of the Manchester Schools Alliance Teaching School (Teach Manchester).
- The school is ambitious for every one of its pupils and staff, ensuring the whole school community reach their potential.
- Pupil achievement is outstanding, with over 75% pupils making outstanding progress compared to similar schools nationally.
- In 2015 Piper Hill was approved as an Academy sponsor. Pioneer House, is an innovative free school with a new vocational pathway for pupils with significant additional needs.
- The Trust is committed to working cooperatively to share their skills and expertise, and also to learn from others. The Trust is a learning organisation and constantly seeks to improve its practice.

## **Information about the CHS Learning Trust:**

- This Trust was established in March 2015 building upon the success of its founding school - Chorlton High School.
- Chorlton High School is a diverse and innovative Academy which has evidenced rapid and significant improvement in student outcomes.
- It is a mixed, multi-cultural and multi-faith school catering for students aged 11-16 and is proud to be at the heart of its local community with strong, effective links to local Primary Schools, Sixth Form providers, Further Education colleges and local businesses.

- The school's academic transformation is a credit to the relentless commitment of students, parents, carers and staff. Our school improvement strategy is rooted in the provision of excellent teaching and learning for all students alongside the provision of rich and diverse learning experiences.
- The school has held a national reputation for high quality training and development of staff and is a strategic partner of the Manchester Teaching School Alliance (MTSA) leading on Initial Teacher Training (ITT).
- In 2014 we were approved as a DfE Sponsor and welcomed Newall Green High School into our Trust as a Sponsor School.
- The CHS Learning Trust has just been approved as a Free School provider with our proposal for CHS South receiving approval in the Wave 12 Free School round.

### **The Prospere Trust - Our Vision:**

- To provide exceptional education for children from any background so that they become happy, confident adults with excellent academic knowledge and qualifications.
- The Prospere Trust is committed to fully comprehensive education and working in and around Greater Manchester to provide inspiring, memorable schooling for all its students.

### **The Prospere Trust - Our Values:**

- High quality educational provision is an entitlement of all young people.
- Our schools and academies will deliver high standards of academic achievement and personal development.
- We will recruit, train and retain the very best staff driven by a strong culture of professional development and mutual support in the pursuit of highly effective teaching and the highest levels of student progress.
- We will be forward thinking and highly aspirational grounding our strategy and development in the latest educational research.

- Our academies will be truly comprehensive and rooted within their local community.
- We will enable all of our students to succeed promoting and providing equal opportunities and equity of provision.
- We will champion the Cooperative values of Self-help, Self-responsibility, Democracy, Equality, Equity and Solidarity.
- We will operate our organisation with the ethical values of Openness, Honesty, Social Responsibility and Caring for others.

### **The Prospere Trust - Our Purpose:**

The purpose of our Trust is to:

- Enable the academies in our Trust to deliver educational excellence to all our students.
- Maintain and develop good and outstanding academies for the local community.
- Ensure the rapid improvement of schools and academies which need support now (and in the future).
- Act as lead sponsor for schools and academies that require our support.
- Enable effective collaboration and the sharing of best practice across our academies.
- Deliver efficient and effective operational procedures so that economies of scale can benefit our group of academies.

### **The Prospere Trust - Our Principles:**

- Openness to build trust, be transparent, sharpen accountability and drive improvement.
- Commitment to excellence in all that we deliver.
- Operation of a simple, efficient, low cost organisation.
- Delivery of an effective and robust governance framework.

- Tight control of resources to achieve economies, efficiencies and effectiveness across our operations.
- Develop highly effective professional relationships so our staff can excel and consistently deliver high quality educational outcomes.
- Invest in the development of strong, insightful and resilient leaders.

### **Our Future - The rationale for merger:**

- The bringing together of the two MATs develops capacity across the new Prospere Trust.
- It allows the leadership of the Trust to plan **a growth strategy which will deliver excellence** in all Trust schools but not at the expense of existing partners.
- The Prospere Trust will be **a thinking organisation**, which will use research and collaborative intelligence to develop processes which support accelerated student progress and innovative student experiences.
- Curriculum alignment across the Trust's schools will allow for assessment and examination efficiency and the development of thinking directorates which will focus upon incremental improvements across all strands of school performance.
- The merger also allows for all the schools in the Trust to develop a resilient plan to counter the impact of the current funding pressures, which are having a significant impact on urban schools' budgets.
- The new Trust's capacity to develop **a long term teacher recruitment strategy**, including a Trust wide School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) provision is radically improved with the increased flexibility across a MAT which includes more schools and different contexts for those schools.
- We will also develop **a Trust wide retention model** so that talented staff can be developed and retained within Trust schools. The existing Trusts have a strong track record of developing leadership from within and we are committed to these principles across the Prospere Trust.
- Our **commitment to children from all backgrounds** may lead to the Trust being asked by the Regional Schools Commissioner to support schools who face complex challenges. The capacity to take on such complex schools with endemic

issues is radically improved by the increased capacity and structural resilience gained from the larger Prospere Trust.

- Our moral mission, to bring **systemic educational improvement** in areas that have been previously not been able to offer students such provision, will require expertise across a number of strands of school leadership.
- Our School Improvement Model will offer genuine development to teachers and students in schools which have been previously lacked this systematic opportunity.

### **Why consider working in a larger MAT across a wider range of schools?**

- When our schools took the decision to become a MAT it was to protect **our commitment to comprehensive education**. We believe it is vital that our schools remain schools which serve their local communities, across all ability groups and range of individual needs. We believe other schools have the right to do this too.
- Our existing MAT structures and our proposed new MAT structures have a **robust and secure system of governance at their heart**. Our Trust Board will be constituted with highly skilled parents, staff, members of the business community and members of our local community. This is driven by our clear underpinning principles of developing outstanding community schools for the locality they serve. Our new Trust will secure effective, strong governance in all its schools.
- Working in partnership with other schools **develops the skills and professionalism of our own staff**, providing them with development opportunities that will help our schools to retain the excellent expertise that they have at both a teaching and leadership level. This would mean that there would be a significant investment in high quality professional development of all staff.
- It would build on the **effective partnerships** (of our own choosing) with a wider range of successful organisations to support our core purpose.
- There are also significant **financial benefits**. Our own Trust has already benefitted from financial autonomy; it has been able to secure better value for money with quality Service Level Agreements for a range of services; it is also

able to source financial support from a range of appropriate sources, e.g. grant funding, sponsorship, capital projects etc. which in turn has enabled more effective and efficient running of the school. The efficiencies that can be delivered through shared centralised services and greater buying power through joint procurement will bring significant financial efficiencies at a time when our school budgets are facing tremendous pressure.

- There would be **increased and flexible staffing resources**. This could help the schools share expertise; for example if specialist input was needed and one school could not support a staff appointment in that area, the Trust could look at an appointment that worked across a number of the schools.
- There would be the opportunity to establish succession planning programmes and, in doing so, **retain high quality staff, including Senior Leaders** who might otherwise move on to other positions in external establishments.

### **Who would be the schools that would join our new Trust?**

- In practice any school who shared our values, ethos and drive could ask to become part of the Prospere Trust. A MAT model is intended to allow other schools an opportunity to join and form even closer links to work together to achieve their aims.
- We are already in discussions with other local Multi Academy Trusts who are interesting in joining with us. If our new Trust Board feels that such a development would be beneficial to both existing organisations then they would support such a proposal.
- The CHS Learning Trust already sponsors Newall Green High School, which has been of mutual benefit to both Chorlton and Newall Green High Schools.
- As a member of a larger Trust with additional capacity and resource we firmly believe that we are well placed to support other schools in such a position. The Trust Board may decide, following an appropriate Due Diligence process, to sponsor additional schools and bring them into the new Prospere Trust should they feel that this will be of benefit to our existing schools and the other school.

## **How does this affect Chorlton High School and Newall Green High Schools?**

- To a large extent it doesn't. Our schools are autonomous through our existing MAT status and benefit from having very strong leadership and management across the Trust.
- The new Trust will need to appoint a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to take a strategic lead of the new Trust. We are fortunate that we have strong Executive Leadership Teams across both existing Trusts which will then form the Executive Leadership Team of the new Trust.
- We already work very closely with the Piper Hill Learning Trust and other Trusts. They help us to review and enhance our curriculum provision, help support our teaching and learning development and provide specialist advice and guidance to us as necessary. We are already working with these Trusts to help reduce costs through joint purchasing and procurement exercises.
- However, there is no longer a mechanism that ensures that schools do work together. As such strong schools can survive, and weaker schools may not have access to an appropriate support structure.
- We have worked hard building partnerships with schools through the Manchester Schools' Alliance, the Manchester Teaching School Alliance and other organisations to promote effective collaboration between schools. In a MAT we are all responsible for the outcomes of students in all of our schools. The move to working as a larger more resilient MAT is the most effective way to ensure we offer the best educational provision to students across our city.
- In merging the strengths of our existing MAT with other high quality MATs we give ourselves a much broader platform to build strength, resilience and capacity and have a much greater chance of securing successful outcomes for all our students and for other students across Manchester.

## **Employment across the Prospere Trust**

### **How will the pay and conditions of staff working in the Multi-Academy Trust be affected?**

All Staff are currently employed by the CHS Learning Trust. As we move to the new entity all staff will move to be employed by the Prospere Trust. This takes place within the *Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE)*, which ensures that there will be no change to staff terms and conditions of employment or their pay.

### **Will pension arrangements change for teachers and support staff in the Multi-Academy trust?**

The teachers' pension scheme and support staff (Local Government) pension scheme are run by bodies external to the school. These arrangements, including the liability for the support staff Local Government Pension Scheme, would be unchanged.

### **Will the staff be expected to work in other schools or provide cover in other schools?**

- At present a small number of our staff work across our Trust schools. We would anticipate that these staff will be able to operate across a wider range of Trust schools as we grow.
- As we have already mentioned we have started to develop our centralised and shared services across our Trust schools. Again as the Trust grows some of our employees, particularly in administration and other support services would become part of a wider centralised pool of staff offering services to all Trust schools. This is one of the ways we can start to become more efficient and deliver greater financial savings.
- No current member of staff would be asked to work in a partner school if they did not wish to do so, although having the ability to move staff between schools could provide a great opportunity for career development if it was needed.

## **Changes to Chorlton High School and Newall Green High School:**

There will be no significant changes to either school. The Trust Board is committed to retaining all the positive elements of our schools that we have worked so hard to develop and is not looking to make significant changes to our working practice. This will include:

- The name of the schools, the uniforms and the ethos.
- The commitment to developing as an outstanding comprehensive school for the local community.
- The belief and drive to enable all students to leave CHS Learning Trust schools as Successful, Creative and Happy students – the drive for academic and social excellence.
- The commitment to developing and embedding the co-operative values across our schools.
- Commitment to providing outstanding teaching and developing cutting edge learning experiences for students.
- Our commitment to sustaining a highly skilled and professional workforce and highly effective leadership at all levels, who believe in our core purpose and values and who are accountable for delivering success.
- Our commitment to working in partnership with other schools at local and national level.
- The Prospere Trust would still be bound by the statutory codes for Special Educational Needs and the Admissions criteria for each school would remain unchanged. Student entitlements to free school meals would remain the same.
- There would be no change to the pay and conditions of staff.

## **Academy governance:**

### **How will the Prospere Trust be governed?**

- The existing CHS Learning Trust and Piper Hill Learning Trusts are responsible for agreeing the new governance structure of the Prospere Trust.
- The new governance arrangements will be based on the standard Department for Education model articles for Multi Academy Trusts.
- The new Prospere Trust would not technically be a Cooperative Trust as we are now but would operate with a clear commitment to the Cooperative values of Self-help, Self-responsibility, Democracy, Equality, Equity and Solidarity. We will operate with the ethical values of Openness, Honesty, Social Responsibility and Caring for others, in line with existing Cooperative Schools.
- The existing Trust Boards will nominate individuals to act as Members of the new Trust and will in the first instance nominate individuals to act as Directors / Trustees of the new Trust.
- The Directors are then responsible for establishing the Local Governance arrangements at each of the Trust Schools. It is proposed to keep the current Local Governance arrangements in place at all schools in the first instance.
- As the new Trust grows it will be necessary to review the Local Governance arrangements to ensure that they are effective and provide the Trust Board with the assurance they need.

### **What will the responsibilities of the Local Governing Body be?**

The Multi-Academy Trust is responsible for delegating appropriate responsibilities to the Local Governing Body via the Trust Scheme of Delegation.

The key responsibilities are to:

- Ensure the delivery of high quality educational provision.
- Monitor and challenge the performance of the Academy.

### **How would local Governors be appointed?**

Local Governors are technically appointed by the Trust Board, based on an evaluation of the skills required to ensure that governance is highly effective and robust. It is the Trust's belief that the contributions of parents, staff and members of the local community are highly valuable and applications will be sought from appropriate stakeholder groups with appropriate selection processes being put in place if necessary.

### **Will a poor Ofsted rating in one of the schools affect the others within the MAT?**

- There would be no adverse effect on the judgments of other schools.
- Schools within the MAT will be supporting each other to raise standards, so this shouldn't happen. However, if it does happen, then there will be a network of support already in place to support those schools.

### **Will each school lose its financial independence and its ability to manage its own finances?**

- There would be a common series of financial procedures to be shared amongst all the schools, and the Prospere Trust will produce a single set of statutory accounts which will result in economies of scale across the Trust. However each school will be expected to manage their own allocated budgets and produce local financial reports.

## **Consultation process**

The Trust Board would like to hear the views of all interested parties. The CHS Learning Trust has distributed information to its co-operative membership, all parents and staff, and will engage in consultation with students through the Student Council.

### **What happens following the consultation?**

The Trust Board will collate and examine all the views from staff, parents, students and other community stakeholders. They will inform all parties as soon as possible when a decision has been made.

## Timeline for Consultation

This is the timeline that we will be running for the consultation. We want to hear the views of all stakeholders so that we can take their views into account when we make the decision.

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| <b>12<sup>th</sup> May 2017</b>                   | <b>Information</b> sent out to stakeholders.  |
| <b>12<sup>th</sup> May – 16<sup>th</sup> June</b> | Information regarding the proposal and the consultation will be placed on the school's website.<br><br>A dedicated <b>online information</b> document will allow stakeholders to access additional information. This can be accessed through the website:<br><a href="http://www.chorltonhigh.manchester.sch.uk">www.chorltonhigh.manchester.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>6<sup>th</sup> June 2017 7pm</b>               | <b>'Information &amp; Discussion evening'</b> CHS to allow all stakeholders to listen to further information and discuss the issues - 7pm - Blue Box Theatre, Chorlton High School.   |
| <b>7<sup>th</sup> June 2017 5.30pm</b>            | <b>'Information &amp; Discussion evening'</b> NGHS to allow all stakeholders to listen to further information and discuss the issues – 5.30pm - Theatre, Newall Green High School.  |
| <b>5<sup>th</sup> June 3.15pm</b>                 | <b>Staff Meeting - CHS</b>  |
| <b>6<sup>th</sup> June 3.15pm</b>                 | <b>Staff Meeting - NGHS</b>   |
| <b>16<sup>th</sup> June 2017</b>                  | <b>All paper and online views to be returned by 3pm.</b>  |

**Following this the Trust Board will review and discuss the returns from the consultation before making their final decision.**

You are invited to submit your comments and views to the Trust Board using the e-mail address [e.shaw@chorltonhigh.manchester.sch.co.uk](mailto:e.shaw@chorltonhigh.manchester.sch.co.uk) or by writing to us at the school. Please address any correspondence to the 'CHS LEARNING TRUST'.