



Exe Estuary Federation

C/O Countess Wear Community School, Glasshouse Lane, Exeter, EX2 7BS

Tel: 01392 203560

Email: admin@countesswear.devon.sch.uk

Executive Headteacher: Rachel Pattison

19th February 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to inform you that, after careful consideration, the Governing Body of Exe Estuary Federation are seeking to convert Clyst Heath Nursery and Community Primary School to an academy and join Cornerstone Academy Trust alongside the other two schools in our Federation. We have been given permission to start this process by the Department of Education and an academy order was granted on the 22nd January 2024.

In seeking to convert to an academy, our priority is to ensure we continue to provide a high-quality education for our pupils. We believe joining an academy trust will provide the freedom to make effective financial decisions, securing our future and driving improvement.

Cornerstone Academy Trust (TCAT) comprises of four primary schools, Broadclyst, Westclyst, Monkerton and Yevo Valley Primary School. TCAT is a forward-looking, agile MAT where like-minded schools collaborate and develop in a local, supportive learning environment. With a national and international reputation for the use of digital technologies in education, where pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum, and where innovation is at the heart of teaching and learning. Its distinctive, extended curriculum opportunities provide a challenging learning environment that inspires children to achieve high standards and become life-long independent learners.

With strong partnerships locally, regionally, nationally, and globally, TCAT also provides teacher training, professional learning, leadership development and school-to-school support at both primary and secondary levels. It has been appointed a DfE English Hub, Behaviour Hub, and a Science Learning Partnership, is also part of the West Country Computer Science Hub and awarded a Microsoft Showcase System.

Cornerstone Academy Trust has a proven track record of maintaining outstanding judgements in their founding school Broadclyst, achieving an outstanding judgment at Westclyst, successfully moved an inadequate school to good with outstanding features and achieved good with 4 outstanding areas at Monkerton in its first inspection. If you would like to read more about TCAT please click on this link to their website here: [TCAT prospectus](#).

Before proceeding with the conversion, there will be a formal consultation in which we invite you to share your views and ask any questions you may have by completing this [form](#). Additionally, there is also an opportunity for you to meet the TCAT team on **Thursday 29th February 2024 at 7pm** where you will be able to ask questions in person.

We'd like to invite you to read through our answers to FAQs about this consultation, which you can find on our website. We will be looking to regularly update this area of the school website with any further questions that have been asked, and their answers.

This is an exciting opportunity to shape our future and bring about positive change in the way we run our school, develop our character and values, and continue to drive the best outcomes for our pupils. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us as detailed above with any comments and questions you may have.

Thank you,

Rachel Pattison, Exe Estuary Federation Governing Board



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Academisation consultation FAQs

What is a multi-academy trust?

Academy trusts are not-for-profit companies. They have trustees who are responsible for their performance, in the same way that local authority (LA) maintained schools have governors.

The trustees are both company directors and charity trustees, and the academy trust employs the school staff.

We're proposing to join an existing multi-academy trust called Cornerstone Academy Trust. This means that we'll be part of a community of schools that are governed by one board of trustees. The trust will also employ a team of staff who will work across the schools to provide support and drive school improvement. As part of a trust with multiple schools, our school will have the opportunity to collaborate and share resources and services with the other schools across the trust.

What is the benefit of academisation for our school?

The benefits for our school will include:

- Improved teaching and learning for our pupils, because:
 - Teaching expertise and resources can be shared across the trust
 - There will be more training opportunities for our staff
- Greater freedom in deciding how to spend government funding
- The opportunity to collaborate
 - So, we can have more or better extra-curricular activities, for example
- Greater financial efficiency
 - By procuring goods and services at a larger scale across the trust
 - By sharing staff, including specialist staff who work centrally for the trust, like a school improvement team or pastoral team

The reason we're choosing to join Cornerstone Academy Trust?

As two of the schools in our Federation have been allocated by the DfE to be sponsored by Cornerstone Academy Trust Governors have voted for the benefit of all the children across the Federation for Clyst Heath to also join Cornerstone Academy Trust.

Will the trust or trustees make a profit from the school?

No. Academy trusts are charities, and any surplus or other income must be used to benefit pupils.

Will the trust take any money away from our school?

The trust will receive our school's money known as the general annual grant (GAG). It will pool all of the GAG from each school and use it to support all its schools (known as GAG-pooling). The trust will carefully consider the funding needs and allocations of each school so there will be no detrimental impact to the children.



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Will our school get more money as an academy?

The amount of funding allocated per pupil at our school won't change. We'll get the same funds that we would have done as a maintained school.

However, we'll be able to negotiate our own contracts for products and services, which means we'll have the opportunity to find the right services for our schools and at the best prices.

When our school is an academy will it still be inspected by Ofsted?

Academies are inspected by Ofsted and are held to the same standards as other state-run schools.

When our school is an academy will it follow the National Curriculum?

The Cornerstone Academy Trust teaches all the subjects of the national curriculum, and it offers a well planned and well sequenced curriculum that is taught in a challenging learning environment that inspires children to achieve high standards and become lifelong independent learners. They set consistently high expectations, build children's confidence, and ensure engagement for all. They have an ethos of being fully inclusive and having unlimited aspirations for all their pupils.

In each of their schools they aim to develop all pupils as creative thinkers, inquisitive questioners, avid problem solvers and successful communicators with flexible and transferable skills. Children learn to collaborate effectively at all levels, including working with their international partners, and to adapt to the needs of a diverse and ever-changing society.

To see more click [here](#).

When our school is an academy will we change our name/logo/uniform?

The Trust may change the uniform and logo, but this will be done in consultation with parents and phased in over time. There would be good notice and where needed financial assistance to support parents in this change.

When our school is an academy will our term times change?

No, the term times will not change, however term dates will be aligned across the Trust to enable school improvement and training for all staff across the Trust.

When our school is an academy will our catchment area or admissions policy change?

Catchment areas will not be changed because the schools are joining an Academy Trust. Academies follow the same admissions code as maintained schools but they are their own admissions authority. TCAT will draft and consult on its admissions policies each year.

How will academisation affect ...

... our pupils?

Our pupils will benefit from the shared opportunities and facilities from the wider Trust. There will be a shared curriculum and TCAT will seek to invest in the opportunities that enrich the curriculum as they do in their other



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schools. They will build upon the successes of the schools and ensure that there is a clear focus on providing high quality teaching across all the schools to ensure the best outcomes for the children.

.... our provision for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)?

We will have access to a larger team of SEND trained staff and build upon Cornerstone Academy Trust's outstanding SEND provision (as evidenced in their recent Ofsted inspections). Supporting all children, whatever their needs, will continue to be a clear focus of the school and we work as a wider team to ensure we have the support to achieve this.

... our school staff?

By joining the Cornerstone Academy Trust our school staff will transfer to Cornerstone from DCC. They will be consulted with through the process, which is a legal process of a TUPE transfer, which transfers employees and all other employee liabilities to the new employer. TUPE stands for 'Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006' and its amendment in 2014.

Staff will be supported throughout this process and there will be no direct impact on you as parents or that of the children. As you can appreciate a change such as this can create some uncertainty for staff about what the changes might mean, how this might affect their daily routines and their careers. We hope that the staff will see the benefits of joining the Cornerstone Academy Trust not only for the reasons outlined above, but also in terms of the training and career opportunities the Trust will provide.