

Frequently Asked Questions Test Valley School proposal to join the HISP MAT

Academies and MATs

What is an Academy Trust?

An Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by Guarantee. It receives its funding directly from the Secretary of State rather than via the Local Authority

What is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)?

A MAT is formed when two or more academy schools join together as one legal entity. When a Local Authority school joins a MAT, it first becomes an Academy then immediately comes into the MAT

What is the current status of HISP and Test Valley School?

HISP has been a Multi Academy Trust with 3 schools (Thornden -Chandlers Ford, Tanners Brook and Portswood, both in Southampton) since July 2020. Test Valley School is a Local Authority School

How many children are taught in academies?

Over 55% of students in state funded schools (over 80% of secondary) are now taught in academies a number that continues to increase. Strong families of schools in Multi Academy Trusts are increasing as schools come together with other like-minded schools.

Is Test Valley being forced to join the MAT?

No. This is a decision that is being considered by the governors of Test Valley School and the trustees of HISP, who believe that Test Valley School joining the MAT will support and strengthen both the school and the MAT.

Can other schools join the MAT?

As a MAT, HISP is ambitious to grow with the intention of supporting more pupils/students, families, staff and communities, challenging ourselves that everything we do should improve opportunities for our learners. Growth is considered and measured as we seek like-minded partner schools who share a similar vision. Schools wishing to talk to us, or parents looking for more information about the MAT should access our website for more information [HISP Multi Academy Trust - Home \(hispmat.org\)](http://hispmat.org)

Can the MAT continue to work with the Local Authority and other providers?

Yes, we will always work with Local Authorities and other local providers to support our children. We will have the option to continue to work with Local Authorities in a number of ways and will be able to continue to access services on a contractual basis. Alternatively, the MAT will also source services from other providers if this would be in the better interests of the schools and pupils, or if financially it would be better to do so.

To whom are MATS accountable?

Directly to the Secretary of State for Education

Do schools in a MAT have to follow the National Curriculum?

No but they must provide a broad curriculum for their pupils

Who funds MATs?

Central Government

Does OFSTED inspect MATs?

OFSTED does not inspect MATs but does inspect all individual schools within the MAT. The effectiveness of the MAT is measured by making a summary evaluation from the schools inspected.

When would Test Valley become part of the HISP MAT? What is the timeline for the change?

The application to join HISP is likely to be submitted to the Department for Education at the end of July. Once approved, we will be able to strengthen the Senior Leadership team and appoint a new Head Teacher to be in place before the start of the academic year in September. The legal transfer will be progressed in the background and should complete within 4-6 months.

Benefits and Impacts on Test Valley

Why are Test Valley and HISP considering this?

Extending the HISP MAT with great schools choosing to join us, will enable our schools to work together even more closely with a commitment to do so with aspiration, continuous improvement, supportive environments and strong links to our communities. This aligned ethos and accountability will continue to strengthen opportunities for the pupils/students, staff, parents and the communities we serve, enhancing the educational experience and opportunities we can offer.

What are the benefits to Test Valley School?

- High quality governance with a clear focus on strategic development, teaching and learning, and accountability
- Building growth and sustainability through strategic succession planning
- The opportunity for teachers and support staff to share good practice with specialists in other schools and to benefit from a common professional development programme
- A more resilient and flexible staffing model which reduces stretch and stress on teachers and adds real value to the education of all students in the MAT
- The ability to work with other schools, in a number of different ways and particularly through the HISP Learning Partnerships
- Efficiencies in administrative functions and joint procurement, which will help us make the most of our resources for the direct benefit of the students

What does this mean for the unique character of Test Valley School?

All of the schools within HISP retain the things that make them unique in their community, including uniforms, character and local governance

Will we lose our independence?

No, Test Valley School will retain its unique character, identity, and position within our local community

Is Test Valley School being merged?

No, the proposal is to join a MAT in which Test Valley School will retain its unique character

Will the School Name be changed?

No

Pupils /Staff/Community

What does this mean for the Year 7 intake?

Nothing will change for the pupils joining us in September. In fact, we hope that being part of HISP and having our new leadership team in place before they start will encourage even more pupils and parents to come to Test Valley

Will the Uniform stay the same?

Yes, MAT schools maintain their own uniforms

Will bus services to the school be affected?

No. We have an existing contract with bus companies which will continue as before.

What will change for the pupils/staff this term?

Absolutely nothing. The Senior Leadership Team remain focused on continuing our School Improvement journey and ensuring all pupils achieve their potential

What does this mean for Year 11 GCSEs?

This will not affect GCSEs in any way

How will this proposed change affect the local community?

We are involving the community in our consultation process so that wider stakeholders can help shape the school our community wants

What could this do to the school catchment areas?

Being a member of the HISP MAT does not change anything about the individual school catchment areas or pupil admissions

Would the students from other schools be at a disadvantage?

Quite the opposite. HISP has Teaching School Hub status and all students will benefit from the Maths Hub, Research Schools, Science Learning partnership and School Centred Initial Teacher Training. These entities already support significant numbers of teachers and subsequently pupils/students across our wider region.

Who employs the staff?

The staff at Test Valley will go through a TUPE (protected transfer) process and will be employed by the MAT rather than the Local Authority or single school.

Will the staff be dedicated to Test Valley or will they be expected to work elsewhere in the MAT?

Within the MAT, staff can be associated with one school at which they spend their time and so our staff will continue to spend their time at Test Valley. However, HISP has some staff who are not specifically allocated to one school and can be used flexibly to support schools for short periods of time or teach in a school that has a specific need for a given academic year. During the pandemic HISP have been able to keep schools open on a number of occasions when staffing has been short by using these central staff.

Can our staff work at other schools in the MAT?

No. However, there could be exciting CPD opportunities to work with the research school or other schools or centres within the MAT.

How will the staff be affected in terms of working conditions?

Staff conditions are protected by the TUPE process.

Will the staff stay the same?

We hope these changes will help us retain and grow our staff at Test Valley

Governance & Leadership

What will happen to the current Senior Leadership at the School?

The acting Senior Leadership Team have done a great job maintaining momentum this year with support from Crestwood and the Local Authority. They are highly valued members of our leadership team and will have a big role to play in an expanded SLT going forward

How will governance be structured?

In academies and MATs, the structure includes a group of Members who are similar to shareholders in a company; they appoint Trustees. The Trustees are responsible for any academy operating individually or within a MAT. Each school will have an Academy Committee with delegated powers for the specific school – similar to our current Board of Governors. The Academy Committees for TVS will include both staff and parental representation

Autonomy in relation to school leadership?

The Executive Headteachers, Headteachers, Heads of School and Senior Leaders in each school are best placed to make decisions relating to students and the day to day running of each school. This would not change. But support will never be far away

Budgets, Resources and the TVS Site

How is funding allocated in a MAT?

Schools are allocated funding based on the number of pupils they have. This is not dissimilar to the current arrangement as a Local Authority maintained school

What is the impact for the 2022/2023 academic year planning and budgets?

The budget for next year has already been recommended for approval at the next Full Governing Body meeting. The MAT would adopt this as the agreed operating budget for 2022/23

Who will own the land?

Typically, an academy leases the land from the Local Authority on a long term lease (125 years). The MAT takes responsibility and liability for the buildings and maintenance

How will Test Valley School site be developed by the HISP MAT?

HISP are excited by the wonderful site and rural space we enjoy at Test Valley and will be looking to invest in the site in the same way they have already done at existing schools in the Trust. The detail will be looked at during Due Diligence but learning hubs for Science, Maths and Teacher Training serving the wider Test Valley and North Hampshire area are being considered. The playing fields, sports hall and farm area can be made more accessible for our wider community as well as the Trust

Does this impact on plans for the Open-Air Performance Space or Community Pool?

The old pool area will be filled in over the summer holidays and the school is working with landscape designers to develop the ideas put forward in our pupil competition to create a vibrant open-air performance space. HISP have access to resources and expertise to help us deliver this more effectively as an asset for our community. The Governors support the new proposal for a Community Pool sited elsewhere on school grounds and have shared the headlines with HISP, who are positively disposed to the plan and will be exploring further through Due Diligence

Consultation and Further Information

Will there be a consultation process?

Consultation with parents and other stakeholders will run from until June 21st, Details are contained in the letter to parents sent on May 20th.

Will there be an opportunity to provide feedback?

Yes, if you have comments or questions, please submit them to info@testvalley.hants.sch.uk . We will group questions into themes as they come in and provide regular answers and updates.

How do I find out more?

You can find out more about HISP on [HISP Multi Academy Trust - Home \(hispmat.org\)](http://hispmat.org)

There is information about MAT academies on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>