



High Lane Primary School FAQs

Here are responses to a few FAQs that you may wish to know. This document will be expanded and updated regularly in response to feedback from stakeholders during the consultation process.

What does it mean for staff at the school?

All staff have the right to transfer their employment under TUPE legislation from their current employer, the Governing Board, to Four Rivers Multi-Academy Trust. We are also keeping staff updated and offering reassurance that terms and conditions will remain in line with nationally and locally agreed pay and conditions.

How will it affect my child's education?

All of the member schools and the Four Rivers Multi-Academy Trust are wholly committed to ensuring that every pupil achieves his or her full potential. This aligns with High Lane's commitment. We are also wholly committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning and providing staff with the best professional development. By working in collaboration with other schools within the Trust we will be able to benefit the pupils at each school by sharing resources and expertise.

Will there be any curriculum changes?

There are no plans to impose curriculum changes on our school.

What will happen to the uniform?

There are no plans to make imposed changes to the uniform.

Will the times of the holidays change?

There are no plans to change the term dates. Any future changes would be subject to extensive consultation with parents and carers.

Updated 25.6.24

Will staffing levels be affected?

Staffing levels will not be reduced as a result of joining the trust.

Will there be less qualified staff/ Will there be more TAs?

Staff will have the same qualifications as is currently expected under the local authority.

The number of TAs based at the school is not expected to increase on a day to day basis, unless pupil numbers or needs increase. However, there will be greater access to specialists and advisors who will be able to support our current team in a more timely way that is currently the case.

Can we have a specific definition of what excellence looks like?

Excellence involves both the standard of high-quality education and the achievement of positive outcomes for all learners. It refers to the provision of a well-rounded, ambitious curriculum that meets the individual needs and abilities of all, as well as high standards of teaching, learning and assessment. Excellence prioritises the well-being and personal development of learners and staff, ensuring a nurturing and supportive environment that promotes a love of learning and positive attitudes towards education. Excellence also requires effective leadership, strong partnerships with parents and the community, and a commitment to continuous improvement and innovation.

What do you intend to do with the freedom around curriculum and resources?

- At High Lane, we already have a strong and ambitious curriculum. The freedoms available through becoming an academy would be used to further improve what, how and when we teach curriculum content, considering current academic research and the experience and expertise of other schools within the Trust.
- Opportunities for collaboration, research and training with other schools from the Trust would enable our High Lane subject leaders to further refine their curriculum plans.
- We would aim to develop increased access to a greater range of enrichment activities, resources and/or exciting curriculum initiatives.

Would the Trust look at merging schools with another school in the trust if intakes/class sizes remain small?

The Four Rivers Trust recognises and celebrates the fact that each of the schools are individual and there is no intention short or longer term to combine or merge schools.

If enough parents have objections, will it go ahead? Is the consultation just a formality?

Governors have a statutory responsibility to consider all responses to consultation before making a final decision on whether to convert to an Academy and join a Trust. All opinions will be taken into consideration by the Governing Board of High Lane.

What will the benefits to pupils be?

Some of the expected benefits to pupils of joining the Four Rivers Trust will be:

- The Trust will have a range of resources and services that are available to their schools. This will lead to greater accessibility of things we cannot usually afford to pay a premium price for as they will be available to us at a reduced cost or free as part of the formal Trust agreements. This may be, Forest Schools, SEND services, Play Therapist etc.
- There will be opportunities for collaborative enrichment activities for our pupils. This may be linked to author visits, artist workshops, drama activities, visiting the other Trust Schools/having them visit us etc
- Strength in numbers in procurement for essential key services (eg energy, insurance, leading to better services and/or reduced costs.
- As a small school, we are often challenged by the relative costs of resources and enrichment opportunities as we have little bargaining power. This means that we sometimes pay a higher percentage of our total budget for them. A trust has a high degree of bargaining power. This enables them to reduce these costs, leaving more in the pot to go towards other resources for the children.

How will things change/improve for children with SEND?

Children with SEND at High Lane already receive a carefully tailored offer that is designed to meet their needs to the best of our ability. Joining a strong and inclusive trust will

- enable staff to further benefit from bespoke training (including SEN training)
- enable easier access to high quality advice and guidance
- put High Lane in a position to be at the cutting edge of innovation and research into best practice in supporting all children, including those with SEND
- enable us to loan resources from other schools to trial them when working towards developing provision to meet pupils' individual needs

Updated 2.7.24

Why has this particular MAT been chosen? How do you know what it will offer as it is a newly formed Trust?

For over a year, the Headteacher and Governors have been on an information gathering journey, finding out about new and existing local trusts. As part of our detailed due diligence activities, consideration was given to what each MAT had to offer our school and what we could offer to them. Representatives from some trusts (including the CEO of the Four Rivers Trust) were invited to come and speak to Governors and the websites and documentation from established trusts were examined.

For further information, please review the 'Summary of Governing Board Discussions' document that summarises discussions and meetings that have been held with the Governing Board to explore what they would be looking for in a Multi-Academy Trust in order to provide the best platform for High Lane Primary to continue to thrive in the future. This document can be found on the academisation page of the school website.

Following discussions and meetings with Four Rivers representatives, it was clear that the ethos, vision and strategic direction of the Four Rivers Trust meet all of the essential and desirable features that the Governing Board are looking for. The Trust Members, Trustees and CEO of the are highly respected and experienced in their respective fields and will provide strong leadership and strategic direction to deliver the Trust's aims.

In addition to this the Headteacher and staff team have a long history of working with the four schools that are forming the Trust through cluster meetings, shared projects, collaborative activities and inter-school moderation. This has given us an insight into what it would be like to work in a formal partnership with these schools and staff have been very positive about the proposal.

In the meeting to decide which trust the school should look to enter into partnership with and consult stakeholders, the Governors were unanimous in their views that the Four Rivers Trust would be the best fit for High Lane Primary School.

Updated 18/7/24

What feedback is there from parents and teachers from the other schools already in the trust that HLPS is proposing to join?

The Trust is a new trust, but the schools have been working together in a less formal capacity for many years. Feedback from staff and parents in the schools that are forming the trust has been very positive, both formally through the academisation consultation and parent view surveys and informally through discussions with High Lane school leaders.

Have Ofsted formally noted any improvements in the other trust schools since they became Academies?

All of the schools that are forming the Trust are judged as Good (3) or Outstanding (1) by Ofsted. High Lane was also judged to be Good in May 2023. As it is a new Trust, Ofsted will not visit for the statutory settling in period so there have been no Four Rivers visits as yet, but these will occur in the usual cycle of visits.

We note that no term date changes are expected at this time, without further consultation. Do you expect any changes to the school day timings?

The DfE have published non-statutory guidance around this theme. This guidance remains non-statutory at this time and it is not a legal requirement for schools. If we move to a 32.5 hour week, this will be a change that will come in because of the guidance, rather than because of conversion to academy and we would consult with our families as to the best way to achieve it in the first instance.

Does Academy status change the catchment areas for local secondary school intake?

The vast majority of our learners usually transition to one of three secondary schools: Hazel Grove, Marple Hall or Poynton. Some also go to New Mills, Stockport Grammar or Stockport School. New Mills, Marple Hall and Stockport school currently use their respective Local Authority models as they are Local Authority maintained schools (although Marple Hall is in consultation to convert). Hazel Grove (Stockport) and Poynton (Cheshire East) are already academies, but have chosen to adopt their Local Authority models. Hazel Grove use the Stockport LA application process and policy and Poynton use the Cheshire East application process and policy. As a fee paying school, Stockport Grammar have their own admissions arrangements.

In short, there is currently no difference in the 'catchment areas' for local secondary school intake. More information can be found on the schools' websites or on the relevant council website.

Are there any changes to what parents may need to fund or not fund once in Academy status? E.g. School lunches.

As a trust that prides itself on inclusivity, parents could expect that the trust would aim to keep costs to parents as low as possible for families and would expect its schools to do the same. This is the approach we already take at High Lane.

Arrangements for funding school meals would remain as they are now. Children who receive a free meal would still be eligible for this (including infant free school meals) as they are subsidised by the DfE.

The school would continue to make many decisions regarding costs and funding as they do now (eg uniform suppliers, paid meals etc).