

23 November 2023

Dear Parents/Carers and Local Stakeholders,

As you are aware we recently consulted with you on the proposed voluntary merger of Bedford College Academies Trust (BCAT) with Knowledge Schools Trust (KST). We sent a consultation information pack to all parents/carers, local schools and local stakeholders and held two consultation events between the 11th October to the 15th November 2023. We received 9 responses in total and no objections. The general areas raised in the responses that we have considered and responded to are:

1. If the merger goes ahead will the merged trust look to take on more local schools?

If the merger goes ahead we will look to add up to 2 more suitable primary schools and 1 secondary school in the local area over the next 18 months. This will enable greater economies of scale and assist in the future retention and recruitment of staff. However, we would make sure this would not be at the detriment or put at risk the improvements that have been made and are being embedded at both Wixams Academy and Wixams Tree Primary over the last year.

2. How much overlap is there in terms of secondary teaching approaches and the secondary curriculum between both trusts?

At Key Stage 4 (GCSE/L2) Wixams Academy run 15 of the same qualifications as KST's secondary school (West London Free School) and 8 out of 15 qualifications at GCSE are the same exam board and specification. At Key Stage 5 (A-Level/L3) we run 13 of the same qualifications of which 6 of 13 are the same exam board and specification. Again, Wixams Academy's Sixth Form runs a few vocational courses that West London Free School does not and this reflects the fact that we are a local community school and this would not change. It is important to note that the KS4 and KS5 qualification offer at the West London Free School has broadened in recent years. At Key Stage 3 they run a Classics offer which we don't and we run a Dance, Drama and Technology offer which they don't, this reflects the expertise of staffing and how each school has developed its offer over time. We do not envisage any major changes to Wixams Academy's curriculum following the merger and would reevaluate this in 2025 incorporating staff, parent and pupil feedback and any national policy changes.

3. Will there be any changes to the pension schemes we use for existing staff?

There will be no changes, we will continue to use the Teacher Pension Scheme and the Local Government Pension Scheme.



The next steps are that the consultation feedback and a voluntary merger application have both been submitted to the Department for Education for a decision and we will update you further following this decision.

Yours sincerely



Hywel Jones
Chief Executive Officer

