

Consultation regarding the academies within Northern Ambition Academies Trust (NAAT) joining Castleford Academy Trust.

The priority of NAAT Trust Board is to ensure an excellent education for all of the pupils within our academies (Airedale Academy, Airedale Infant School, Airedale Junior School and Oyster Park Primary Academy). We are wholly committed to improving standards and ensuring that every individual will be cared for, supported and challenged to maximise their potential in order to create a feeling of self-worth and ambition.

Nationally, the Department for Education's vision is that academies that are geographically close together form clusters of academies (within academy trusts) so that they can work together to maximise outcomes for pupils. In line with this ambition, NAAT's Trust Board have been considering if our academies could be more effective if they share capacity and expertise within a greater network of other schools and academies.

The Trust Board has carefully considered a number of options available, and believes that the best way to maximise the future success of the academies within NAAT, whilst retaining their identity, ethos, philosophy and commitment to improvement, is to consider joining Castleford Academy Trust.

Castleford Academy Trust is a local Trust which comprises of two secondary and three primary academies (Castleford Academy, Crofton Academy, Three Lane Ends Academy, Glasshoughton Infant Academy and Castleford Park Junior Academy). Castleford Academy Trust is a highly successful Trust, with all of the academies within the Trust rated as 'Good' or better by Ofsted.

Over many years, NAAT has worked closely and built strong partnerships with Castleford Academy Trust. The CEO of Castleford Academy Trust is George Panayiotou. Prior to taking up this position, George was a highly successful Headteacher, being amongst the first in the country to lead an academy to Outstanding under the current Ofsted framework. In his capacity as a National Leader of Education, George has worked with a range of schools and academies, supporting them to improve their provision. In addition, George started his career as a trainee teacher teaching at Airedale High School. His love for the local area and commitment to the life chances of local children is unwavering and he has spent his career instilling belief in pupils that they can achieve anything they set their minds to. His wealth of experience and expertise offers an exciting opportunity for the current Leadership Teams within NAAT to work alongside him, and Trust Leaders, to continue to build on the good work that is already taking place in each academy.

We are passionate about working collaboratively with other academies that have the same commitment, ethos and drive to achieve the very best for its pupils as we do. Castleford Academy Trust's vision is 'Working together to achieve excellence for all' and this vision is embedded in all of the work that they do. By working collaboratively with the academies within Castleford Academy Trust, we will be able to share the many strengths that we have at NAAT, whilst also using the expertise within Castleford Academy Trust to support continuous school improvement and ultimately, the outcomes for all pupils. We want to make a positive decision for the future of our young people, and know that making the decision to potentially join Castleford Academy Trust will allow that to happen.

In making this decision we have taken into consideration the following:

- The track record of school improvement demonstrated by Castleford Academy Trust.
- Castleford Academy Trust is a highly inclusive trust that currently meets the needs of a wide range of pupils.
- The capacity within Castleford Academy Trust to provide school improvement support to the academies within NAAT.
- Our commitment to ensure excellent outcomes for our pupils.
- The ability to provide new and further opportunities for staff.
- Securing the long-term financial future of each academy within NAAT.
- Ensuring good governance.
- Joining and being part of a Trust that aligns with our ethos and culture.

We believe that joining Castleford Academy Trust will:

- Protect the identity of our individual academies.
- Recognise and build on the existing strengths within each academy.
- Create opportunities for staff to share skills and expertise.
- Develop a robust programme of mutual support.
- Implement systems of school improvement that lead to improved outcomes for pupils.
- Provide extensive staff development opportunities.

Under these proposals:

- Each academy remains focused on delivering excellent teaching, learning and outcomes.
- Each academy continues to have its own Headteacher/Principal.
- Each academy continues to have its own Local Governing Body arrangements.
- All academies work together on projects to improve education and learning in all academies.
- A Trust Board exists to provide oversight of the performance of each academy and to ensure there is effective investment in improvements across all academies within the Trust.

The formal consultation process begins on **Tuesday 18th June 2024** and will run until **Friday 5th July 2024**. Responses can be submitted using the following link or in writing, using the proforma circulated at the consultation meetings (dates overleaf). <https://forms.office.com/e/4NYjXw4Qr1>

Alongside the consultation process will be the commencement of an official period of due diligence. This is a vital part of the process of joining another Trust. During this time, Castleford Academy Trust will undertake a detailed due diligence process on NAAT. Until the successful completion of this, and subject to approval by the DfE Regional Director, no formal commitment to join Castleford Academy Trust will take place.

The proposed timeline is outlined below and includes an opportunity to speak to Mr P Greenough (Accounting Officer at NAAT), Mr R Hall (Chair of Trust Board at NAAT), Mr G Panayiotou (CEO at Castleford Academy Trust) and Mr A Fletcher (Chair of Trust Board at Castleford Academy Trust).

Yours sincerely,



Paul Greenough
Accounting Officer
Northern Ambition Academies Trust

Consultation period – Tuesday 18th June to Friday 5th July 2024

Purpose/Audience	Date	Location
Meeting for all staff, members, trustees and governors across NAAT.	Monday 17th June at 3.30pm	Airedale Academy.
Meeting for all staff and governors across Castleford Academy Trust.	Monday 17th June at 3.30pm	Meetings held at each academy site.
Formal consultation opens for all stakeholders.	Tuesday 18th June at 9.00am	On-line
Meeting for all governors, members and trustees across NAAT and Castleford Academy Trust.	Wednesday 19th June at 5.30pm	Airedale Academy.
Meeting for Parents from Airedale Academy.	Monday 24th June at 5.00pm	Airedale Academy
Meeting for Parents from Airedale Infant School and Airedale Junior School.	Tuesday 25th June at 3.00pm	Airedale Junior School
Meeting for Parents from Oyster Park Primary Academy.	Wednesday 26th June at 3.00pm	Oyster Park Primary Academy
Stakeholder views to be submitted and end of consultation.	Friday 5th July at 3.00pm	On-line
NAAT Trust Board consider responses.	Wednesday 10th July	
Castleford Academy Trust Board of Trustees consider responses.	Thursday 11th July	
Summary of consultation response published on NAAT website.	Monday 15th July	

Frequently Asked Questions.

1. What are the benefits of joining another Trust?

Pupils will benefit through:

- Having a shared set of values and expectations across all academies;
- Having increased opportunities for learning across all academies through utilising shared resources and expertise;
- Having more opportunities to work together in specific areas e.g peer mentoring schemes and student leadership;
- Having consistent shared policies related to school improvement strategies;
- Supporting the continuous improvement of the overall effectiveness of the academies within the trust leading to improved outcomes for pupils. e.g., effectiveness of leadership and management, quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the personal development and behaviour and welfare of all pupils;
- All academies within the Trust challenging and supporting each other, where innovation and improvement are embraced in parallel to drive up standards across the whole Trust.

Parents and carers will benefit through:

- Having a shared ethos across academies which will enable a common set of beliefs, values, policies and practices to be enhanced across the age range;
- Having co-ordinated and joined up leadership across all academies, leading to improved communication and clearer expectations for all pupils across all academies;
- Knowing that resources and facilities will be shared across academies within the trust to provide a richer provision for their children;
- Knowing that their children will be in academies that are striving to be outstanding and that jointly will work to offer excellent education and provision;
- Knowing that their children will have a greater range of teaching expertise from all academies to enhance their learning.

Staff will benefit through:

- Working in ambitious academies that are at the cutting edge of inclusive education and provision;
- Having increased opportunities to work with other colleagues where the drive to improve professional capital is continuous, leading to enhanced opportunities for teaching and professional development;
- Having a greater understanding of the different but complementary approaches needed for individual pupils across the full age range;
- Sharing specialist expertise and facilities, in particular for school improvement;
- Being part of a highly motivated and experienced workforce.

4. What will the Trust be called?

All academies will become part of Castleford Academy Trust.

5. Governance Structures

The Trust will be governed by Castleford Academy Trust board of Trustees with Local Governing Boards for each academy within the Trust with clear lines of responsibility outlined in the scheme of delegation. The scheme of delegation clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Trust Board, Governors, CEO, Trust Central Team and Headteachers. The scheme of delegation for Castleford Academy Trust can be found at: [Scheme-of-Delegation-Governor-Handbook.pdf](https://www.castlefordacademytrust.com/Scheme-of-Delegation-Governor-Handbook.pdf). ([castlefordacademytrust.com](https://www.castlefordacademytrust.com))

6. How will the accountability process work?

The Headteachers within each academy at NAAT would be accountable to Trust leaders and ultimately to the Trust Board through the CEO of Castleford Academy Trust.

7. What are the key arguments for and against joining Castleford Academy Trust?

Arguments in favour:

- We can protect and develop the best provision for each key stage.
- Teachers can work and learn together to improve the way they teach;
- Academies can share practices that make a difference to the quality of teaching;
- Teachers and leaders can work together on the things that matter – like curriculum and assessment;
- A formal partnership puts us in a stronger position to navigate the future because we will be able to:
 - Carry out effective collaborative planning across all key stages;
 - Recruit, retain and develop the best teachers and leaders;

- Share expertise and bring together best practice and innovation through enhanced collaborative working;
- Share resources to be more efficient – and thereby to invest money in supporting pupils to have wider opportunities;
- Be responsible for each other should any academy get into difficulty.

In the future:

- We want to create an outstanding route through education with outstanding outcomes for young people in our local community;
- We want academies to work together to achieve an OFSTED status of at least 'Good' or better;
- We want to utilise the expertise of Castleford Academy Trust leaders, and work together to bring about transformational change, and to develop the capacity to support other academies in the future;
- We want to motivate and reward all staff by putting them at the heart of an outstanding educational community, giving them new opportunities, and inspiring leadership potential within the academies;
- We want to provide inspirational training for trainee teachers, so that we draw talent from across the region, thereby securing the opportunity to recruit from the very best.

Arguments against:

- The transition process will create a lot of extra work for the Trust Board and Leadership Teams;
- The extra work could distract from the main purpose of running each academy which is to secure outstanding outcomes for our pupils;
- Each academy becomes responsible for the other should it get into difficulties (this could also be viewed as an advantage).

To overcome these disadvantages:

- We will work closely with Wrigleys Solicitors who are experienced in Multi Academy Trusts and will ease the burden on the academy leaders.
- Protecting academies is the prime purpose of the proposal. If one academy gets into difficulty, then it impacts negatively on the other. By working together all academies are strengthened.

8. Who will be teaching my child? Will the same teachers and teaching assistants remain in each academy?

The strength of the Trust rests on the excellence of our staff. We do not wish to lose any member of permanent staff as a result of this process. The existing teachers, teaching assistants and support staff will carry on working in their current academy and there will be no compulsion to work in another academy. However, there may be opportunities for colleagues from all academies to broaden their roles by working in another academy. There will be no pressure to do so.

9. Will the staff still have the same employment rights if we join Castleford Academy Trust?

Staff will transfer their employment from NAAT to Castleford Academy Trust. Their Terms and Conditions of service will be protected under 'transfer of undertakings' legislation known as TUPE, this will involve any measures identified from the due diligence process. It is the intention that Castleford Academy Trust continues to recognise the Local Authority recommended pay and conditions document as well as the School Teachers Pay and Conditions documentation. Equally, it is the intention of the Trust Board to fully endorse continued union recognition rights.

10. Does this include staff employed in a Trust role?

Yes. Staff with a Trust responsibility will be included in the TUPE process.

11. What will happen to the academy uniform?

There would be no immediate plans to change the uniform in any of the academies within NAAT.

12. Will Ofsted continue to inspect academies within NAAT as separate entities?

Yes. However, Ofsted will also expect the trust to attend the Ofsted inspection and give its perspective on progress and achievement.

13. What will happen to NAAT once their academies transfer to Castleford Academy Trust?

Once the academies within NAAT transfer to Castleford Academy Trust, the trust (NAAT) will commence the closure process by mutual consent with the Department for Education.