

Frequently Asked Questions

The proposed partnership of Pennine Academies Yorkshire and Impact Education Multi-Academy Trust is an exciting time for both Trusts and our schools, and a fantastic opportunity for us to further strengthen our offer as a group of like-minded education providers by formalising the relationships between us.

These questions have been created from discussion in conjunction with the partners looking to come together and form a new partnership. We hope they will answer many of your queries, but if not, please don't hesitate to ask by emailing us at comms@paymat.org.

MAT formation partners and rationale	
What is a Multi-Academy Trust?	A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is an academy trust that runs more than one academy.
Who are the settings looking to create a new partnership?	<p>Pennine Academies Yorkshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clayton Village Primary School, Bradford • Crossley Hall Primary School, Bradford • Farnham Primary School, Bradford • Grove House Primary School, Bradford • Hollingwood Primary School, Bradford • Laycock Primary School, Keighley • Lidget Green Primary School, Bradford <p>Impact Education Multi Academy Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berry Brow Infant & Nursery Academy, Huddersfield • Castle Hall Academy, Mirfield • Hill View Academy, Huddersfield • Lee Mount Academy, Halifax • Newsome Academy, Huddersfield • Newsome Junior Academy, Huddersfield • Old Bank Academy, Mirfield • The Halifax Academy, Halifax • The Whitley AP Academy, Halifax • Warley Road Primary Academy, Halifax • Golcar Junior, Infant and Nursery School (due to join in 2026)
Why are we considering this partnership?	Bringing together Impact Education and Pennine Academies will enable us to share resources, improve student outcomes, and support staff development. By working together, we can raise educational standards, operate more efficiently, and build sustainable systems. All schools will benefit from shared expertise and innovative practices.

	<p>The Department for Education (DfE) encourages partnerships like this, as larger trusts can have a greater impact and better meet the needs of their schools.</p>
How will the partnership work?	<p>The process will see Pennine Academies Yorkshire transfer their schools into Impact Education Multi Academy Trust. It is important to note this is a partnership not a takeover. This partnership is proposed from a position of strength. All schools will keep their own identity whilst collaborating across the Trust to ensure that each child enjoys their learning and achieves their full potential in a stimulating, nurturing environment whilst maintaining our high expectations and commitment to inclusion.</p>
Will the schools' names change?	<p>No, all schools will keep their current names.</p>
Who makes the final decision on the proposal?	<p>The Board of Trustees of both Trusts will make the decision on whether the application to come together will proceed. This will be based on the outcomes of the due diligence process which includes engagement with all stakeholders. Following this, if both boards agree, the proposal will be taken forward to the Department for Education (DfE).</p> <p>The application is then considered by the Advisory Board of the DfE Regional Director for Yorkshire and Humber for a decision in early 2026.</p>
Would other schools join us and who would make the decision on if additional schools join?	<p>Following successful completion of the partnership, the Trust will continue to explore beneficial partnerships, not just with MATS but with local authorities and maintained schools particularly in the areas of inclusion and SEND.</p> <p>The Trust will ensure it is strategic when considering future growth opportunities. The Board of Trustees, supported by the DfE, makes the final decision on new schools joining the Trust.</p>
Will the trust grow?	<p>The DfE had previously said that to be sustainable, Trusts should be of a size of 10 schools/7,500 students or more. At this size, MATs can achieve true economies of scale.</p> <p>The Trust would consist of 18 schools and approximately 8,200 students (please note: Impact has one school in the process converting to join the Trust in early 2026, ahead of the proposed Pennine Schools transfer).</p> <p>Trust growth will remain strategic and carefully planned; leadership will remain committed to this vision. Fostering partnerships with local authorities, schools and Trust organisations with a focus on areas such as inclusion and SEND. We will also continue our work to support government with its RISE strategy.</p>

Who is the Trust accountable to?	<p>The Trust will remain accountable directly to the DfE. We would be overseen by the Regional Director for Yorkshire & the Humber at the DfE, as well as continue to be subject to Ofsted inspections. The CEO/Accounting Officer is directly accountable to Parliament for all funds received and how they are spent.</p> <p>Each setting would still have their own separate Ofsted inspections and gradings.</p>
Who runs a Trust?	<p>The Board of Trustees is legally responsible for the Trust.</p> <p>The CEO runs the Trust supported by a leadership team, accountable to the Board of Trustees.</p>
What are the advantages for us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved outcomes and experiences for our students • Stronger expertise in SEND and school improvement • Greater talent development through enhanced career and collaboration opportunities • Improved resilience via shared resources and financial efficiencies • Wider reach across Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees <p>We have continually explored potential structures that will enable us to grow. This partnership will allow us to deliver exceptional education in the future. Having carefully considered the potential advantages and disadvantages, including maintaining the status quo, we are confident that partnering, where together both Trusts have a voice in leading the way, is the best way to bring about the most benefit for our schools and local communities we all serve.</p>
As a larger partnership of schools will you have increased purchasing power?	<p>Due to economies of scale, a larger multi-academy trust (MAT) can achieve greater value for money when procuring essential services, including the following, but not limited to, insurance, accountancy, human resources, payroll, educational psychology, broadband, and IT services, aligning with the DfE's focus on efficient resource management to support school operations.</p>
What are potential risks?	<p>Whilst change might bring uncertainties, this engagement period invites your feedback to address concerns. Leadership, supported by local expertise, will strategically plan this complex operational and cultural alignment with care. Due diligence ensures informed decisions, and shared resources will be allocated based on need, fostering security and opportunity, aligning with the DfE's emphasis on efficient resource management for improved educational outcomes.</p>
What steps have the Boards of Trustees taken to reach this stage,	<p>Both Boards of Trustees have individually voted to begin engagement on the proposed partnership, following a thorough process of evaluation and due diligence. This decision was not made lightly; it involved detailed research, consideration of local and national context,</p>

and is the partnership guaranteed to proceed?	<p>and assessment of current partnerships. Trustees and Leaders have been supported by independent external partners, including Gail Khan Associates and CJK Associates, throughout this period.</p> <p>At the end of the engagement period—which includes further due diligence—each Board will review all evidence and feedback before making a final decision on whether to apply to proceed. Therefore, while significant steps have been taken, the partnership is not guaranteed until all due diligence is complete and both Boards formally approve the application.</p>
What are the timescales?	<p>If both Boards of Trustees decide to proceed, the application will be submitted to the DfE in Autumn 2025, with a decision expected by Spring 2026. If approved, the transition of schools into Impact will begin in Summer 2026 with official transfer from 01 September 2026.</p>

Impact on staff	
How will this affect the daily work of staff?	<p>For most staff, the partnership will not have an impact on their daily roles. Teaching and support staff will continue in their same roles at their current setting.</p> <p>For some members of leadership/business roles there may be more change, and this is likely to increase as the Trust develops. The central services team may grow and develop in a larger Trust, and some systems may be different/new.</p> <p>As the Trust develops and grows there will be exciting opportunities around increased collaboration, wider professional networks, shared CPD, career pathways and progression opportunities.</p>
Will staff be employed on current terms and who would be their employer?	<p>Currently there are no plans to change terms and conditions for staff.</p> <p>Terms and conditions for existing staff in transferring schools would remain the same and pensions would transfer (including pension contributions).</p> <p>Impact would be the employer of all staff.</p> <p>If the proposal moves forward and is approved, any changes that were proposed would be consulted on with any staff affected following consultation processes.</p>
Will staff have to reapply for their jobs	<p>There are currently no such plans. If any restructuring decisions were made, those directly affected will be consulted with individually.</p>

Will staff be moved across locations?	<p>There is no plan to have staff working across locations, we all have our specialisms and expertise, and we would want to make best use of these. Being part of a larger organisation may allow for progression opportunities and personal development.</p> <p>As there are at present, there will be opportunities to work across the Trust through collaborative structures and networks.</p>
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Impact on Teaching and Learning and students	
Will all our local partnerships stop if the two trusts join?	<p>No. The trust's philosophy is about local communities bringing about local solutions, so there is a huge advantage to continuing with all partnerships irrespective of the designation of the school. Sharing and collaborating for the benefit of young people in our community will always be supported and encouraged.</p> <p>A key driver for both Trusts is ensuring all students achieve well and that we continue to raise aspirations and removing barriers that can impact on our young people from fulfilling their ambition. We will continue to work with the local authorities we serve, other education providers, health and welfare professionals and charities, etc. to fulfil these aims.</p>
Are we going to be teaching common curricula across the Trust?	Retaining individuality and creativity of each organisation's curriculum is important to drive innovation and further improvement.
How will Ofsted judge us?	<p>Each individual setting will be judged by Ofsted as they have been in the past. They have their current rating and will be inspected in line with the current inspection framework.</p> <p>For Trusts, Multi Academy Trust Summary Evaluations may be conducted.</p>
Will there be any changes to the admissions policy/criteria?	No. All schools will remain non-selective, and we plan to have the same criteria applied for admissions as is the case now.
Would the term and holiday dates or the timings of the school day change?	As in previous years we follow current Local Authority term dates as much as possible. However, individual Academies are afforded, by agreement, local flexibility that best meets the needs of each school community.

Impact on systems and operations	
What will change within the central services?	As The Trust will have significantly grown it will need to have a redesigned operating model including central services. We are being supported by a sector leading consultancy (CJK Associates) with this redesign.
How would estate development be funded	Trusts with over 5 Academies and 3,000 students are eligible for the Schools Condition Allowance which is an annual fund that comes directly to the Trust on a formula basis. This enables Trusts to plan for long term priorities and allocate resources according to need, condition data and ensuring funding is shared appropriately. Trusts are also eligible to bid from a range of wider funding opportunities and grants for specific projects, particularly those of wider benefit to the community.
Will our systems change (e.g. MIS, parent pay, etc)	An independent review and re-design of operating models and systems is underway. This will feed into final decision making on future structures and systems

These questions and answers will be updated during the engagement period to reflect questions asked during the engagement period. We hope they will answer many of your queries, but if not, please don't hesitate to ask by emailing us at comms@paymat.org