



Hilltop parent questions to HEARTS Trust

Thank you to all parents from both schools who attended the parent evening at Hilltop Junior School on Wednesday evening with the staff and leaders of both schools and senior leaders from HEARTS. It was great to meet so many of you. Thank you for all your questions and supportive comments.

We didn't get around to answering the questions sent in before the meeting but most were covered during the evening. However, here is a brief response to the most frequently asked questions.

What are the benefits of the school(s) joining HEARTS Academy?

The benefits include:

- Improvement in the quality of teaching through participation and collaboration with more schools and teachers.
- Access to the Teaching School Alliance and the training and resources that it brings.
- Outstanding school provision expertise.
- Directors of Learning and subject specialists who can advise, coach and model the best teaching.
- Access to shared resources and planning which supports teacher workload and ensures that inexperienced staff have access to skilled experienced teachers with time and capacity to support.
- Economies of scale.
- Community involvement and commitment to all pupils from ages 2-11.
- OFSTED inspector and pupil premium reviewer skills.
- Improved outcomes for pupils.
- Upskilled governance focused on teaching and learning and safeguarding and community.

Will the current school(s) structure change? If so, how?

HEARTS have standard staffing structures which are currently being shared with schools and when they are finalised parents will be notified.

Does joining HEARTS Academy affect the school(s) budgets? If so, how?

Yes, it gives increased economies of scale including shared purchases at discounted rates.

How will this affect the day to day running of the school(s)?

It shouldn't impact on day to day running at all. Systems and processes should improve due to increased capacity.

Will school applications still go through the Local Authority?

Coordinated admissions will carry on as normal.

Will Hilltop Infant children automatically move to the juniors or will they still need to apply?

- Admissions policies won't be impacted other than the normal annual update and revision.
- We would not want to see infant pupils that we have worked with for three years not move on and up to our own school.

Does the school(s) have a choice about joining HEARTS?

The Governing Bodies of both schools have made the decision to join HEARTS. The junior school was asked to find a sponsor.

How do the school(s) staff feel about it?

- At a meeting this week, staff shared their thoughts about change including how it brought anxiety and worry but that they could see the benefits and increased capacity.

How will this affect my child's education?

- None of the extra capacity and skill that being part of a Trust brings should impact on pupils other than positively.

Will the school year/holiday dates change?

- At the current time the school year remains the same. There will be a consultation regarding training days later this term.

What affect will this have on the school's SEN provision?

- The Trust is very committed to all pupils and SEN/vulnerable pupils are a priority. The increased access to SEN provision and leadership is a positive.
- All schools have enhanced funding for pupils with EHCP plans and this is used to impact on pupil outcomes.
- SEN pupils remain the responsibility of the class teacher however and this responsibility can't be displaced.

What affect will this have for gifted and talented?

There is a strong programme for KS1 pupils currently and next year this is a priority to replicate in KS2. The schools will already have some provision for this but challenge for the more able remains a priority bearing in mind that all pupils are expected to achieve at higher standards than ever before.

What happens with Parent Governors and Parents' Associations (Shipmates, HJSA)?

That is up to individual school leaders but our Scheme of Delegation gives clear lines of accountability around funding, how it is spent, audited and how decisions are made on what to spend it on. Most of our current schools have parent associations which raise funds and provide extra resources as a result for their schools. This was discussed at length at the meeting this week. HEARTS do not get involved in what these funds are spent on.