

Frequently Asked Questions for Esteem MAT Trustees

1. **What does it mean for us to be a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)?** A MAT is a group of state-funded schools and PRUs that have come together (to form a single organisation) and be governed by a trust board, rather than by the local authority. We share a common ethos and vision and have more freedom over the way our schools and PRUs are run.
2. **Will the schools keep their governing bodies?** Yes, each school is still led and managed by their local governing body. They will still support and challenge the leadership of their school and ensure high quality outcomes and provision for all pupils. Governors will also help to develop and support the vision of the whole MAT. Local governing bodies have functions delegated to them by the Trust Board for managing school budgets, appointing staff as well as developing the curriculum in their schools.
3. **What is the role of the Trust Board?** The trustees are like company directors. Along with the CEO, they are accountable to the DfE for the performance of all the schools and PRUs in Esteem MAT. Headteachers and local governing bodies report to the trust board and the CEO about how their schools are performing. The Trust Board sets the strategic direction of the whole MAT as well as creating robust systems for ensuring accountability. They also make sure that all public money in the MAT is spent fairly and effectively. The trustees monitor standards, achievement and plans for improvement across the MAT to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress. The main way they do this is by holding the CEO to account for the Trust's performance, both at Trust Board meetings and through the performance management of the CEO.
4. **How does the MAT support schools/PRUs?**
 - a. The MAT's governance officer will support the clerks to local governing bodies by offering advice about processes such as minute-taking and reporting.
 - b. The chair of the trust board will meet regularly with chairs of local governing bodies to make sure there is clear and open communication between the trust and school governors.
 - c. The finance director will visit schools regularly to support in managing their budgets.
 - d. The CEO will visit schools regularly to ensure that the MAT's school improvement offer is being delivered effectively.
5. **What is the role of the CEO?** The Chief Executive Officer, or CEO, is responsible for ensuring that the MAT performs well and achieves its goals. The CEO is the chief accounting officer and is accountable inside that MAT to the Trust Board of the MAT for the financial health, probity and educational performance of all the academies within the Trust. He/she is also accountable to the DfE and the ESFA for the performance of the MAT. The CEO works closely with headteachers on the executive team and leading school improvement across the MAT as well as their performance management. In addition, the CEO leads the central team by line-managing central team staff, or delegating that role to other senior staff, like the finance director.
6. **What is the role of the finance director?** The Finance Director oversees financial matters and is responsible for the Trust's detailed financial procedures.
7. **What is the role of headteachers in MAT schools?** As previously in maintained schools, headteachers are responsible for leading and managing their schools to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress and outcomes. Also, being part of the executive team, every headteacher will lead a key area of work across the MAT. Other school leaders may also take on MAT roles.
8. **What is the role of the executive team?** The headteachers of every school/PRU sit on the Executive Team. They work with the CEO and the finance director to lead the day-to-day work of the Trust, as well as advise and make recommendations to the Trust Board.
9. **What is the role of the members?** Members are like the shareholders of a company. They meet once or twice a year to review and sometimes amend the Articles of Association. In certain circumstances, members can appoint and remove trustees.
10. **What is our vision for Esteem MAT?** Our vision is for our pupils to achieve more than when we were maintained schools by:
 - a. *Greater collaboration* between the schools/PRUs in the Trust and sharing and delivery of better practice.
 - b. *Concentrating skills and knowledge* to improve the curriculum and SEND offer both to Esteem schools and schools outside the MAT.

- c. to overcome the current fragmented provision for SEND and *become a regional hub in the midlands for SEND expertise.*
 - d. *Combining resources* to get better value for money for our pupils. As a MAT we can commission services and ultimately become a service provider.
11. **What are our values and ethos?** We believe strongly that schools can achieve more for our pupils collectively than as individual schools and PRUs. We also know that our pupils do best when we focus on the 'whole child'. So, joined-up thinking between schools and different agencies is essential to deliver the right support for our pupils. As a MAT we can ensure that sharing and delivering the better practice becomes a requirement, not just an option.
 12. **Will the education that pupils receive be different now the schools have converted to academy status?** No, each pupil's educational provision will stay the same as before, as their entitlements haven't changed.
 13. **How will the MAT run on a day-to-day basis?** The schools/PRUs in Esteem will operate in a very similar way to how they did previously. Most of the functions that were carried out by local authorities will from now on be performed by the MAT's central team at its office at Annesley near Junction 27 of the M1
 14. **Will there be any more money for academies?** No, academies and LA maintained schools receive the same amount of funding. However, each converting school and PRU received a grant of around £25,000 from the DfE to pay for conversion costs. In addition, the trust has been awarded a multi-academy development fund grant of £147,000 to help set up the trust. Unlike LA maintained schools, academies can regularly bid for further funding from the DfE to fund capital projects.
 15. **Will the schools continue use local authority services?** Some schools may still be using LA services that they purchased prior to conversion. As academies, we are free to choose what services we provide for our schools. In reaching these decisions, the first criteria will be 'value-for-money' rather than loyalty to a particular local authority. It may be that when we have sufficient capacity, the MAT itself will provide most school services, on an 'in-house' basis. Until then we will purchase services from a number of sources. Therefore, from the start, Esteem MAT will provide our own school improvement support. HR services will come from Flint Bishop solicitors and our own central team. While, we are using Derbyshire County Council's payroll to administer the payment of staff wages. We are also looking to pool our own IT technical resources so that the MAT can provide IT support to all our schools and PRUs.
Over time, and as Esteem MAT grows, it is hoped that we will have more capacity to provide a greater number of services to schools so more of each school's budget can be spent directly on pupils.
 16. **Will the schools and PRUs keep their identity?** Yes, each of our schools/PRUs has a distinct identity based on the very specific and different needs of the pupils. We want that very much to remain. So, school logos and uniforms will not be changed by the MAT
 17. **What will be Esteem MAT's relationship with local authorities be like?** Unlike mainstream MATs, being a MAT of special schools and PRUs means that Esteem will still be partly funded by local authorities, via pupil top-up funding. Only the pupil places will be funded by central government, via the ESFA. Also, local authorities will still place pupils in our schools/PRUs. This means that Esteem will continue to have an ongoing relationship with local authorities, particularly Derbyshire and Staffordshire.
Derbyshire LA has made it clear that they want as little to change as possible in the relationship they have with Esteem schools/PRUs. Therefore, Esteem schools/PRUs will still be invited to meet with Derbyshire LA representatives at its Special Forum, alongside the other special schools outside the MAT. Also, a place has been retained for Esteem schools/PRUs on the Schools' Forum that makes decisions about school funding in Derbyshire.
 18. **Will the MAT grow?** Yes. Although, only there are only 7 schools/PRUs in Esteem at the moment. NEDSC and AVESC's conversions have just been held up by lands issues that are being resolved with Derbyshire County Council. The 2 PRUs should convert and join in October. Also, St. Clare's Special School in Derby has applied to join Esteem. This means that by the end of 2018 Esteem MAT is likely to consist of 10 special schools/PRUs.