



Sherdley Primary School  
Mill Lane  
Sutton  
St Helens  
WA9 4HA

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*Growing together, Respecting each other*

Headteacher: Mr T Gawne BA (Hons) QTS NPQH

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Dear Parents, Carers, Families & Community

### **RE: Consultation on Proposed Academy Conversion**

Sherdley Primary School has always believed in working collaboratively with educational organisations that are similar in their outlook and vision for the aspirations and outcomes of the young children that we are privileged to teach. We are a school that cares deeply about children's primary school experiences and want to ensure that those years, are ones that children look back on fondly and with many great memories. With this in mind, and following many months of research, the Governors of Sherdley Primary School have taken a decision to consider applying for academy status and to join TCAT (The Challenge Academy Trust).

You may be aware that in January, the Department for Education released the updated School's White Paper that revisited the Department's earlier plans for all schools to join Multi Academy Trusts by 2030. The paper, Every Child Achieving and Thriving, sets out a national ambition for all schools to be part of a high-quality multi-academy trust in the coming years. The White Paper emphasises the benefits of collaboration, shared expertise, and strengthened support for pupils – particularly in current times where school budgets are incredibly challenging and SEND & Curriculum reform is on the horizon.

We want to reassure families that extensive research has been carried out as to what Trusts may work for us and the children here at Sherdley and what Trusts will allow us to keep our unique identity – this is important to all of us. **Some of you may be familiar with the Trust if you have children or family that attend The Sutton Academy, as this is the same family of primary and secondary schools that they are a part of.** As a school, a very large percentage of our KS2 leavers attend The Sutton Academy and to provide our children with an opportunity that would allow them to continue that 'TCAT' experience all the way through their compulsory education years, is an exciting one.

Our school never wants to be in a position where we are forced to join an Academy Trust that is not one of our choosing and it is right that we have the ability to be able to choose one that aligns with our vision, values and hopes for the future.

#### **Benefits of the proposed change:**

- A reliable structure of school support for our children that has a proven history of stability.
- Funded directly by the DFE with the support of The Challenge Academy Trust (TCAT).
- Access to high amounts of capital funding bids to the DFE for building and site development, supported by TCAT and their professional bid writers.
- Cost saving buying powers





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- Strengthened collaboration with the Secondary education academies that our children could attend including, **The Sutton Academy**
- Teacher and team retention
- Access to renowned national and international leaders in education research and development.

### **What that change will mean:**

By bringing schools together, MATs provide a number of benefits through pooling budgets and business arrangements, with cost savings brought about through economies of scale. This means resources can be better managed and savings reinvested to support the school in delivering continued high standards of teaching.

In this way, converting to a MAT will provide more support in managing the 'business' side of the school, enabling the school leadership team to focus more of their time and resources on the 'education' side of the school.

Joining TCAT will provide access to additional continuous professional development for staff - meaning retention and training ensuring our children benefit from the latest and best practice in teaching.

### **What won't change?**

On the surface, parents and children will notice very little change and we'll still be in control of the key decisions that affect our staff, children and families.

Sherdley Primary School will still be the inclusive, aspirational, friendly school that it is currently and it will retain its own unique character, rooted in our local community. The name of our school and uniforms will all stay the same and we will retain our own staff. All funding raised will be kept for our own children at Sherdley Primary and very little difference will be noticed by our school community.

Our excellent 'Blast' wrap-around provision will continue to be run by the school, and any profits will continue to be reinvested into the school's resources. All our income points will continue to be reinvested into Sherdley Primary School.

The Governing Body has been keen to ensure that any change does not diminish or drastically change the school's character and that any MAT we join, has values and principles that strongly align with those of our School. In joining TCAT, the Governing Body firmly believe that this would be the case. There is strong alignment with both valuing individuals and supporting and empowering achievement as well as the importance they place on interdependence and community. TCAT are keen for schools to manage themselves and retain their own identities.





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## Why are we consulting with you?

The Governing Body has a duty to involve you in making decisions about such important changes to the way the school is managed. But more importantly, as you are an essential part of our school community, we want you to understand what those changes will mean and we want to know what you think about them.

## What we will do with your feedback

Your feedback will help the Governing Body to make its decision, informed by what you think about the proposals and how you feel about the changes they would bring. Your feedback may highlight areas for further consideration and development, so it is important that we hear from as many of you as possible.

We thank you in advance for taking the time to give us your feedback.

Link To Feedback: [Sherdley Primary School Consultation Response – Fill out form](#)

## Where can I find out more?

[The Challenge Academy Trust – The Challenge Academy Trust](#)

[TCAT Capital Investment](#)

Take a look at the links above to see some of the work of the Trust and how this can also benefit our school. To allow for parents and carers to ask any questions, there is a feedback form that you can complete and an **opportunity to meet with the CEO of the Trust, Mr Moorcroft, on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July at 4:00pm in school, alongside our Chair of Governors.**

## What is the timescale?

This consultation period will run from Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026 until Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2026. The process of full conversion, including the consultation period, can take anywhere between 6 to 12 months.

Yours sincerely,

Mr T. Gawne  
Headteacher

Mrs C. Robertson  
Chair of Governors

