



## **Lawn Primary and Nursery School academisation and the Blue Kite Academy Trust**

### **Parent Consultation – information for parents and carers and frequently asked questions**

#### **Identity, values and leadership**

##### **How will Lawn retain its identity and values?**

We are confident that Lawn will continue to retain its own identity and values, as the Blue Kite Academy Trust (BKAT) do not have a “one-size-fits-all” approach and do not require schools to all operate in the same way, as to do so would remove a school’s identity and ability to innovate. We believe that Lawn’s identity and values will continue to reflect those of our local community. BKAT value the strength that comes from diversity within their community of schools and they have a saying that *‘you don’t get harmony if everybody sings the same tune’*. We agree.

##### **How will the leadership of the school be impacted?**

##### **What control will the headteacher lose/gain?**

##### **What will the school stop doing?**

We are confident that the way that our school is led and managed inside BKAT will look very similar to how it does now. Lawn will continue to be led by a Head Teacher, with a senior leadership team and a local governing body. Within BKAT, schools have autonomy to set their own individual vision, to organise their staffing, manage their delegated budget, develop new methods of teaching and decide how to deliver the curriculum. The Trust is there to offer support, as much or as little as is needed.

BKAT is led and governed by its trustees, chief executive and central team and employs specialist staff to lead on different areas, such as the curriculum, IT and estates. Head Teachers and other school leaders within BKAT meet on a regular basis and there are networking groups for governors. When deciding Trust wide priorities for the year, or methods of collaboration, or changing the vision, BKAT do this in discussion and in conjunction with schools.

With respect to finance and the school budget, Lawn will continue to take decisions on how to spend its delegated budget, but as an Academy within BKAT, the processes for managing school finances will be aligned across the Trust. These decisions are informed by the school but the processes are led by the Trust.

##### **Is the curriculum centrally designed/decided?**

We and BKAT believe that individual schools are best placed to design and deliver the curriculum for their pupils. An effective school curriculum reflects the local community, history and geography of the area in which the pupils are growing up. We are confident that Lawn will

continue to be able to make effective decisions on the curriculum and what this looks like for us and that BKAT will offer support on sharing best practice, but the overall design and delivery of the curriculum is up to the school.

### **Staffing**

#### **Are staff going to be moved within BKAT?**

#### **Will each class maintain the same teaching staff each year?**

The Head Teacher will continue to make decisions on staffing levels at Lawn and there are no plans to move staff from Lawn to other schools within BKAT. Although the staff will be employed by the Trust and in theory this does allow for staff to be shared across schools, in practice it has only been done in a small number of cases where it was beneficial to the school and for the member of staff involved for example, for career progression, supporting another school or to avoid redundancies. **Will all children remain in single year groups classes and be taught by a qualified teacher?**

Yes, as long as pupil numbers remain sufficient to employ a teacher per class; this is the same as the current position in a local authority maintained school. There are no plans to change the way that year groups and classes are organised and staffed.

#### **Will the staff's pay and conditions be changed?**

No, all staff employed at Lawn will be protected by TUPE (transfer of undertaking (protection of employment) regulations) to protect their existing pay and conditions.

#### **Who will be responsible for staff pensions?**

There will be no change to staff pension entitlements and BKAT have confirmed that they work with the same pension providers and everything gets carried across for all staff.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

#### **Will Lawn Primary and Nursery School continue to be an inclusive school?**

Yes, Lawn will continue to be an inclusive school and will continue to work to meet the needs of all children including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

#### **How will joining the BKAT improve provision for children with SEND?**

BKAT provides specialist support for special educational needs to work with schools and Lawn will continue to have a Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-Ordinator (SENDCo) as part of the Senior Leadership Team.

The BKAT Lighthouse provides family support for Social Emotional and Mental Health and support for inclusion and attendance working directly with children and families and support for safeguarding and behaviour; it also provides crisis response support, therapeutic support including play therapy, education welfare support and an educational psychologist.

### **Finance, budget and premises**

**How is the income distributed per school?****Would Lawn receive a set amount per pupil in line with funding as a local authority maintained school, or is it pooled, and if so on what basis allocated?**

All of the school funding is received by the Trust into one bank account and is then delegated to schools. The BKAT retain a “top slice” from the General Annual Grant funding, but not from any other funding streams e.g., Pupil Premium, Education, Health and Care Plan or from any income generated by an individual school itself. The “top slice” is 6% of the General Annual Grant and the Trust and the schools have a financial audit each year which is managed by the BKAT central team.

Further details about how academy schools are funded are set out in detail in the Academies Trust Handbook which is published by the Department of Education (DfE) each year.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-handbook>

**Does the 6% “top-slice” payment to the BKAT, include the costs of the Chief Executive and other centrally employed staff at the Trust?**

Yes, most of the “top-slice” payment goes towards covering the staff employed within the Central Team, including the Chief Executive and other senior leaders.

**Would additional money be available for capital improvements and for maintenance of the school itself?**

Money for premises are reviewed across BKAT within an overall premises plan which is linked to the Trust’s specific capital funding allocation. Setting and monitoring delegated budgets sit with the school, supported by a member of the Trust finance team. Access to further money for capital funding for capital projects will be available through grants provided by the DfE, rather than the current arrangements for maintained schools through the local authority.

**Are there any benefits to the school’s premises and buildings as a result of Academy status?**

Yes in relation to capital or funding for building projects, as BKAT are able to receive delegated funding (called the School Condition Allocation funding) specifically to maintain school buildings to provide a safe and secure environment for all children and staff.

**With regards to the funding allocation, will Lawn’s funds be used to support any struggling schools within the Trust?**

No. Any school with a funding issue would work with the Trust to put in place a budget plan to move towards a more stable financial position. The funding allocated to Lawn or to another school would not be used in that way.

**Does Blue Kite encourage schools to generate additional income through lettings etc outside of school hours? If so, would that income then ring-fenced for Lawn?**

Yes, any additional income would remain with Lawn. Although BKAT does encourage schools to look at ways to generate additional income through lettings etc any monies would remain with the school. We don't have any plans to change our policy on lettings or to change the way the school building or site are used outside of school hours.

### **The Blue Kite Academy Trust**

#### **How many schools belong to BKAT?**

Currently there are 25 schools in the Trust. BKAT don't have plans to become a large MAT spread throughout the country and have committed to being geographically close to their schools in Swindon and North Wiltshire to aid collaboration.

#### **What is the chance of BKAT being taken over by a larger trust?**

Mergers between Trusts do happen, however we understand that Blue Kite is seen as a strong, successful Trust with stable finances and effective school improvement systems in place, so we believe that this is unlikely.

#### **Has the role of the Blue Kite CEO and team been stable?**

Yes, the initial leadership team who set up the Trust in 2015 are still in place. The central team has grown over time as more schools have joined the Trust.

#### **If Lawn joins Blue Kite then later on decided we wanted to change and join a different Trust, could we switch?**

There is a process that if a school was unhappy and felt their needs were not being met by the Trust, then there is a process to raise these concerns with the Regional Director SW. We understand that this is rare but a transfer to another Trust can take place if appropriate.

#### **What does the conversion process involve?**

The conversion process involves a number of key steps in addition to the due diligence that we and BKAT have been carrying out. These include opening a new bank account so that as an academy we will be able to receive funding through our new funding agreement; we then have to close down our existing budget and transfer contracts and service agreements. Staff would be transferred under TUPE and the school site and buildings would be transferred from the local authority Swindon Borough Council to BKAT on a long lease. Lawn Primary and Nursery School would then open as an academy school as part of BKAT on an agreed date.

### **School admissions and transition to secondary school**

#### **Will the admissions application process change?**

No, there will be no changes to school admissions which will continue to be managed and operated by the local authority Swindon Borough Council.

#### **Will the arrangements for transition to secondary school change?**

No, there will be no changes to transition to secondary schools as the admission process will continue to be managed and operated by Swindon Borough Council and Lawn will continue to work closely with our local secondary schools to ensure a smooth transition to secondary school for our year 6 pupils.

### **School holidays and the school day**

#### **Will the school day/ hours change?**

No, there will not be any change to the school day as a result of joining BKAT as that would continue to be a local decision for Lawn.

#### **Would Lawn be forced to have the same holidays as the rest of the BKAT schools?**

No, there will be no changes to school holidays which would continue to follow the term dates set by Swindon Borough Council. The dates for teacher training/INSET days will continue to be set by the Head Teacher, apart from the date of one joint BKAT INSET day.

### **Breakfast Club/After School Club**

No changes are proposed to our wraparound care for all children at Lawn (from Nursery (3 & 4-year olds) to year 6). All our sessions will continue to be run by fully trained members of staff and run throughout the school week during term time.

### **Clubs and after school activities**

We do not propose to make any changes to the programme of clubs and activities available after school and would continue training for our sports teams in the same way as we do now.

### **Trips, Visits, Events & Residential**

#### **Will Lawn still get to decide on trips/visits/residential?**

Yes, we still get to decide on trips/visits and residential and we do not propose to make any changes to the range of trips and educational visits that take place throughout the year and these trips, events, visits and residential trips will continue in the same way across all year groups.

### **School dinners, food and snacks.**

#### **Will school dinners change?**

No, at Lawn Primary & Nursery School, we are proud to serve freshly prepared meals every day, made in our on-site kitchen. We believe that healthy eating plays a vital role in supporting children's learning and well-being and no changes are proposed to school dinners or to the arrangements for free school meals.

No changes are proposed to the arrangements for snacks and milk; children in Y1 and Y2 will continue to receive daily fruit from the government scheme and Years 3 – 6 may continue to bring in a healthy snack. Milk will continue to be provided free of charge to all children under 5

and can be purchased for older children. Milk will continue to be offered free to all children who receive free school meals. Our school tuck shop will continue to run weekly during morning break.

### **School Website and communications**

#### **Will the school website and communications with parents be changed?**

The school's website will be updated to include information about BKAT, but there are no plans to re-design or change the website.

#### **Will BromCom be changing?**

Bromcom - MCAS, or My Child at School, is the parent portal we use at Lawn for managing all our pupil information. We have no plans to change BromCom/the MCAS App and this will continue to be used for parental communications in the same way.

### **School Uniform**

#### **Will the school uniform be changing?**

No changes are proposed to school uniform and we will continue to encourage all children to wear the school uniform as it helps to foster a feeling of community and identity at Lawn.

### **Mobile Phones and Electronic devices**

#### **Will the policy on mobile phones be changing?**

No changes are proposed to our policies for mobile phones and other electronic devices.

### **Friends of Lawn**

#### **What about the Friends of Lawn?**

The Friends of Lawn (FoL) is a registered charity run by a joint group of parents and staff, volunteering together at Lawn Primary and Nursery School and we are very grateful to the FoL for all the fundraising, events and activities they organise and for their continued support. The FoL will continue to operate as it currently does with all funds raised going to support Lawn Primary and Nursery School.