

SOUTH CUMBRIA MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

VICTORIA INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL PROPOSAL TO JOIN SCMAT



RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING 08/2/24

Below are questions that were asked as part of the consultation process and responded to by Victoria Infant and Nursery School Headteacher Lindsay Grayless, SCMAT CEO & Executive Headteacher Professor Andrew Wren and SCMAT school member headteacher Mick Cull (Ormsgill) as part of the public meeting on February 8th 2024.

Q: Victoria Academy (juniors) is in Furness Education Trust, would there be any issues with the fact that this school is looking to join SCMAT and how will you mitigate against them?

A: Lindsay Grayless/Andrew Wren

- At present as a local authority school we are not in the same trust as the main schools we feed into and there are no issues. We do not see that changing.
- We want to make sure our children are ready for the next step and SCMAT offers the best fit in line with our vision and values and retaining the individuality of the school and everything that is good about Victoria Infants.
- What is important is the relationship between schools and we work with Victoria Academy and St Paul's as well as events that the secondary schools put on. Parents have got the right to choose the right junior school for their child. This time there have been applications into five different schools, we are not aligned with just one and we want to retain that independence. At least 50% of our pupils progress to schools other than Victoria Academy.
- As an associate member of SCMAT we have had support from them and that has been better support than from the local authority, which is facing challenges due to reorganisation.
- Mick Cull – Our Year 6 children go to Furness Academy, St Bernard's, Dowdales, Walney and Chetwynde and we have a good relationship with them all for transition events so even though we are in different trusts we all have the pupils' best interests at heart.
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Q: What is the day-to-day support that SCMAT can give?

A: Andrew Wren/Mick Cull

- There is support from central services for finance, HR, estates and communications to help you with the day-to-day running of your school.
- We have an Operations Manager who oversees estates and spends time in the schools.
- You are still involved in decision-making and the day-to-day running of the school is with the headteacher.
- We have a series of CPD sessions for staff and professional network groups with members of teaching and support staff in working cross-trust in specialist areas such as maths, MFL, SENCOs to name a few.
- There is also support from our Education Advisor who works with you on your school improvement plan and can help prepare you for any upcoming Ofsted visit.

- The CEO ensures that he builds and maintains relationships with key strategic stakeholders such as the Regional Director and the Director of Children's Services, and he ensures that SCMAT is recognised and well represented.

Q: What safeguards are in place for funding?

A: Andrew Wren

- You still control what money is spent but together there are mechanisms to keep you on track.
- Our financial controls are in the academies handbook and we cannot take money from one school and give to another or build up huge reserves.
- We are regulated by the ESFA, what is not mandated is what you do with a surplus but as a Trust we would invest it back into schools. Any surpluses must be, and will be, used for the benefit of education in the area we serve.