



Compass Academy Trust operates a state-funded Multi Academy Trust (MAT), providing an education free of charge to those who attend the four primary school academies in the trust. Compass Academy Trust became operational on 1 September 2015. The four local authority (LA) maintained schools that converted to academy on that date are:

- Marian Vian Primary School (in Elmers End)
- Oak Lodge Primary School (in West Wickham)
- Unicorn Primary School (in Beckenham)
- Wickham Common Primary School (in Coney Hall)

The Trust has a total pupil capacity of 2160 and had a roll of 2134 in the school census on 11 October 2016 across its four schools.

Compass Academy Trust was formed against the backdrop of a stated aim of the London Borough of Bromley that all schools within the borough should become academies by 2015. By the time serious discussions began in 2013 and 2014, there were already a dwindling number of schools that had yet to convert to academy status. Much of the supporting mechanism the four schools had enjoyed from the LA in the past was already being dismantled as most senior schools and some primary schools became academies. The schools judged that they needed to take the lead on this issue so that they could retain control over their destiny rather than be absorbed by a larger, secondary-led existing trust.

Faced with that situation, the governors of the four schools believed that converting to academy status would provide the greatest chance of allowing them to continue with their current values and ethos and to preserve all that is special about each school. The four schools share many values in common, and they decided that forming the MAT would be creating the maximum opportunities for the future and would reduce risks.

In its first 2 years of operation Compass Academy Trust has sought to:

- Maintain high standards and achievement in education following conversion
- Establish policies and procedures for the effective operation of the Trust
- Commence a programme of reviews to identify opportunities for improving educational achievement, collaboration and efficiency

The Trust made good progress against all of these objectives in its first year and work continues apace on these in the current academic year. In particular:

- The high educational standards of the four schools have been maintained as measured by external and internal measurement and assessment. STATS Sheffield has been introduced successfully with staff becoming more familiar with the related process. The Trust's independent educational adviser has developed with the four Head Teachers an integrated reporting process that provides better comparative data. Our adviser attends Board meetings and reports on this to Trustees termly.
- The formal governance, for the Board, Committees and Local Governing Bodies

(LGBs) has been put in place and this operated well through the year, albeit concentrating on achieving consistency and familiarity. A review of the governance structure commenced in September 2016 in order to ensure that the Trust is well prepared for future pressures and change; including the changing requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) and Education Funding Agency (EFA).

- Work has progressed on a programme of service reviews that assess how the four schools can collaborate more closely, improve their individual and joint effectiveness, and continue to deliver high educational outcomes while facing a continuing challenge of a decrease in real financial resources.

All leaders and staff are determined that all the schools should achieve an 'Outstanding' grade as soon as possible. The Trust seeks to be recognised as experts in Primary education. The success of the first Trust conference in the spring of 2016 demonstrated a Trust-wide determination to flourish and provide a consistently high standard of education whilst holding fast to its founding principles.

In addition to the Trust's strong academic performance our children continue to benefit from a varied and exciting curriculum. Sports, music and the arts remain strong features of the Trust schools together with new initiatives such as outdoor learning.

Parents overwhelmingly support each and every one of the schools which is excellent evidence to suggest that the conversion to academy status has not altered the common culture and ethos that brought the schools together and continues to make them successful.

The review of governance in 2016 and early 2017 had to take account of some changes to guidance issued by the DfE on the role of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Accounting Officer (AO). Originally, one of the existing Head Teachers had taken the role of CEO/AO. This was expected to rotate every 2 years. However, in practice the CEO was a "first among equals" as part of an agreed delegation of some of the CEO duties to the other 3 Head teachers. They took lead responsibility for:

- Human resources
- Health & Safety & premises
- Teaching & learning

Whilst this structure was very useful in bringing together four schools, their LGBs and forming a talented Board of Trustees, experience quickly showed this wasn't an optimum arrangement. It diluted the time available to one Head Teacher to devote their school, and there was never enough time to develop the longer-term, more visionary aspects of the CEO role. Also, in 2016 the DfE directed that rotating the CEO role would no longer be permitted.

The decision was recently taken to appoint a CEO to free up all four Head Teachers from their CEO responsibilities. The aim is to appoint a person who has the time, experience, vision and enthusiasm to lead the trust and develop its future strategy. That person will need to build on all that is good and distinctive about the four schools whilst steering them all toward "Outstanding" in the eyes of local parents and Ofsted.