



# Consultation Report

Report on the consultation carried out between  
20<sup>th</sup> June and 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016 on the proposal for  
Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy  
to join in a multi-academy trust.

September 2016





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## PART A

Part A of the consultation report was written at the end of the consultation period, in August 2016, and circulated to the directors and trustees of Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016 before their separate meetings at which the decision was taken about formation of Goldington Hills Multi Academy Trust.



**Goldington Academy**  
**Haylands Way**  
**Bedford**  
**MK41 9BX**

**Ofsted URN: 136552**  
**DfE number: 822 4000**

**The Hills Academy**  
**Stancliffe Road**  
**Bedford**  
**MK41 9AT**

**Ofsted URN: 139522**  
**DfE number: 822 2178**

A location map can be found at Annex 3.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy have consulted with stakeholders from 20<sup>th</sup> June to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016 on the proposal for both schools to convert from single academy trusts (SATs) to form a single multi-academy trust (MAT). The proposed MAT would be known as Goldington Hills Multi-Academy Trust.

Attached in Annex 1 is a copy of the consultation letter, and in Annex 2 the frequently asked questions referred to in the consultation letter, both of which were published on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

## **BRIEF HISTORY**

### **Goldington Academy**

The school on Haylands Way was established in 1965, and was designated as Goldington Middle School in the early 1970s after Bedfordshire County Council decided to implement the three-tier education system of lower, middle and upper schools across the county (as recommended in the 1967 Plowden Report).

In the 2000s, Goldington Middle School was inspected and was deemed an Outstanding school (Ofsted April 2007), was awarded the Artsmark award and was also designated as a Beacon School.

Plans made by Bedford Borough Council to implement a two-tier education system in the Borough were withdrawn for most Bedford Borough schools following a decision by the coalition government in 2010 to cancel the Building Schools for the Future Project (BSF) and withdraw associated funding. Most of the closure notices that had been served on Bedford Borough middle schools were revoked in February 2011, including that for Goldington Middle School.

To protect the school from closure in the future the governing body, following consultation with stakeholders, took the decision to apply to the Secretary of State for Education to convert to an academy. This application was accepted and the school became Goldington Academy on 1 April 2011.

Ofsted has confirmed that the school continues to be good, in its post inspection letter of July 2016.

*“Goldington Academy is a very welcoming school where pupils achieve well. Pupils, from the youngest to the eldest, and from varying backgrounds, work together with respect for one another and the staff. Pupils feel a sense of belonging at Goldington Academy and, consequently, they are well placed to learn and achieve. ....evidence seen on inspection, demonstrates that overall school performance continues to improve.”*

The school has, for a long time, been very well perceived by the local community and has been oversubscribed for many years.

### **The Hills Academy**

The school opened in 1966 as Hazeldene Infant School and, following a structural reorganisation in 1977, the infant school became The Hills Lower School and the junior school became Hazeldene Lower School. The two lower schools remain in adjoining buildings but with separate catchment areas.

An Early Years Unit was opened in 1987 and this has since been extended to include a 3+ Nursery provision.

In 1993 the school expanded from 1½ to 2 form entry in response to demand; the expansion was accommodated through temporary buildings (which still remain, but are due for replacement in spring 2017).

Ofsted inspections took place in 1996, 2001 and 2007 and on each occasion the school was graded ‘outstanding’.

In 2010 Building Schools for the Future (BSF) money was awarded to Bedford Borough for transition to two tier education (primary/secondary). It was planned that The Hills Lower School would move to a new site (the current Goldington Academy site) and become a primary school. These plans were halted following the cancellation of BSF.

**Bedford Borough Council pursued implementation of a two-tier education system for the Borough again, starting in 2015. As a result, approval has been sought by the schools (in common with other schools in the area), and granted by the Secretary of State for Education, for Goldington Academy to become a secondary school and The Hills Academy to become a primary school, starting in September 2017.**



## **PROPOSAL**

The consultation was launched to consider and discuss the proposal that Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy, both currently single academy trusts (SATs), convert to becoming a single multi-academy trust (MAT) to be known as Goldington Hills Multi-Academy Trust.

The academies' directors and trustees will consider the outcome of the consultation at separate meetings of their governing bodies during week commencing 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016. At these meetings, decisions will be taken on whether or not to move ahead with an application to form a multi-academy trust.

Once the decision is made, if it is to progress with formation of the MAT, an application will be made to the Secretary of State for Education seeking permission for the change to be implemented as soon as possible. Full details can be found in the conclusion section of this report, on page 9.

## **WHO DID WE INFORM?**

We informed and invited comments from a wide range of stakeholders and the wider community.

A public meeting was held for parents and stakeholders at Goldington Academy on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016.

Staff meetings for all staff (teaching and support staff) were held at both academies during June 2016.

We used various means of communication to reach our stakeholders including letter and email. An electronic version of the consultation was placed for all stakeholders (and other interested parties) on the websites of both schools.

We emailed copies of the consultation to:

All neighbouring local authorities, the two Dioceses, the NHS and University of Bedfordshire.

All local schools, nurseries and pre-schools within a three-mile radius of Goldington Academy and users of the school premises.

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

In 2015 the Local Authority instigated a change to the school system in Bedford Borough, moving away from a three-tier (lower, middle and upper schools) to a two-tier (primary and secondary schools) model of education. Most schools in the area will move to the new system from September 2017.

The government has said that it would like to see all schools become academies. Whilst this is no longer going to be compulsory, there is a hope that all good and outstanding schools will see the benefits of the transition, especially as the ability of many local authorities to support their schools diminishes.

For those academies that are currently standalone, the encouragement is to form multi-academy trusts thus promoting high educational standards through locally-based provision and achieving greater economies of scale by sharing common resources.

Individual schools will no longer have the option to become standalone academies, but will rather have to join existing MATs or combine with other schools to form new ones. High-performing academies are also being encouraged to become sponsors in terms of taking on schools that are deemed to be under-performing and which, from now on, will be taken down the academy route.

Goldington Academy has been approved as a sponsor academy. As high performing academies, Goldington and The Hills together will be well placed to support weaker schools, if required.

## OPTIONS APPRAISAL

### 1. Stay as we are – single academy trusts

*The benefits of this proposal are:*

- Both schools will continue as before and initially there will be no noticeable change to parents, pupils and community members. However, in the longer term we believe this option is unsustainable.

*The challenges to this proposal are:*

- In this time of austerity, with school budgets currently being cut year on year, there is a need to find ways to save money whilst still delivering a high quality service. Working collaboratively will allow the schools to gain from the shared purchasing of goods and services and benefit from economies of scale. It may also enable the sharing of staff or staff related matters, such as training, to the advantage of both schools.

- Local authority services across the UK are under significant ongoing pressure due to funding cuts. This means that their support for schools and academies is diminishing in many areas. It is therefore imperative for schools and academies to develop alternative support networks and we believe formation of a local MAT will fulfil this need.
- Commercial MAT chains are interested in building their portfolios of schools and it would be more difficult to resist a take over from one of these organisations as a standalone academy, particularly if the individual school suffered a dip in performance. Whilst such a dip is not anticipated, it would be naïve to assume Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy are immune to such a possibility. The significant changes taking place in the education system both nationally and locally, for example changes to the Ofsted inspection framework, implementation in Bedford Borough of the two-tier system and changes imposed by central government to the education testing and scoring systems, are challenging for all schools.

## **2. Change – to form a multi-academy trust**

*The benefits of this proposal are:*

- Working in collaboration will make the schools stronger to cope with the challenges cited above. In addition, once formed, the MAT will provide a strong basis from which to support other schools in our local community, who may also wish to join the MAT.
- The collaboration between schools will promote the raising of standards for all students through the sharing of good practice and skills in the following areas:
  - High quality governance with a clear focus on strategic development, teaching and learning, and accountability.
  - Building sustainability through strategic succession planning.
  - The continual professional development of personnel.
- Efficiencies in administrative functions and joint procurement, which will help us in these more austere times to the advantage of the students.

*The challenges to this proposal are:*

- As a MAT, the central board of trustees will be accountable for any other academies that join the MAT, not just Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy. This means increased responsibility. However, as part of the conversion process, the governing body will ensure that members and trustees appointed will possess appropriate professional skills and experience and that robust schemes of delegation and terms of reference are adopted between the MAT and all member schools.

## RESPONSES

No responses were received to the proposed MAT conversion consultation, either in writing or via the dedicated email address published in the consultation letter and on the schools' websites.

A number of questions were raised at the consultation meetings and these were all answered to the questioners' satisfaction at the respective meeting. The two main questions raised related to admission arrangements for students, and terms and conditions for staff.

### **Admission Arrangements**

The multi-academy trust will be responsible for setting the admission arrangements for all member schools in the future. At the current time there is no intention for the arrangements to be significantly changed. This means, specifically, that the pupils of any one primary school would not be guaranteed admission or given priority admission to the secondary school.

### **Staff Terms and Conditions**

All staff would be employed by the new MAT under all the same terms and conditions under which they are currently employed.

In total 23 people attended the consultation meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016. These comprised parents of current and future pupils, and staff and governors from the two schools, as detailed in the table below:

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Numbers attending one of the consultation meetings</b>
Parent of a student currently attending Goldington Academy	2
Parent of a student currently attending The Hills Academy	2
Member of the Governing Body at Goldington Academy	4
Member of the Governing Body at The Hills Academy	5
Member of staff who works at Goldington Academy	3
Member of staff who works at The Hills Academy	7

Most staff attended the meeting that was held at their respective school.

## VISION AND VALUES SURVEY

Whilst the vision and values survey conducted was separate to the MAT proposal consultation, we wish to acknowledge the fantastic support we received from stakeholders, with 115 responses received.

Those who responded to the survey were asked to nominate three words from a list, which they felt the MAT should adopt as key values. The words most selected were ***respect, happiness and responsibility***.

The comments respondents made are valued and valuable and they will be used to influence the vision and values, ethos and mission of the MAT should governors decide to move forward with the MAT proposal.

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## PART B

Part B of the consultation report was written after the meeting of the directors and trustees of Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016, at which the decision was made about the future direction of the academy trusts.

It provides details of the decision taken.





On Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016 the directors and trustees of Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy met separately to consider the consultation report that summarised the outcome of the consultation on the proposal for Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy to convert from single academy trusts to form a single multi-academy trust, to be known as Goldington Hills Multi-Academy Trust.

## **TRUSTEES DECISIONS**

The trustees of Goldington Academy Trust voted unanimously in favour of converting from a single academy trust to a multi-academy trust (MAT), to be known as Goldington Hills Multi-Academy Trust, in collaboration with The Hills Academy.

The trustees of The Hills Academy Trust unanimously voted in favour of closing The Hills Academy Trust (single academy trust) and joining the Goldington Hills Multi-Academy Trust alongside Goldington Academy.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Work will now be conducted to prepare the business case for submission to the Department for Education as soon as possible, with a view to the multi-academy trust being formed early in 2017.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The directors and trustees of Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy wish to thank all those who have taken part in this consultation process.

Reflecting on the questions raised by staff and other stakeholders at the meetings we held, and reviewing the responses to our visions and values survey, has been very helpful. We believe that, as a result, the decision made on the future of the two academies reflects the wishes of those who will be affected by the change and will ensure the schools are successful and sustainable for many years to come.





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Headteacher:  
 Mrs Moya Whitehead

20<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Dear Stakeholder

## **Multi-Academy Trust Consultation**

As you are aware, both Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy are supported by their own academy trusts. It is proposed that the academy trusts will convert to a single multi-academy trust (MAT), meaning that the MAT can support more than one academy school. We would propose that in the first instance the MAT would include Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy, when its funding agreement is granted. We are consulting on this proposal between 20<sup>th</sup> June to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

### **What will becoming a MAT mean for Goldington Academy (GA) and The Hills Academy (THA)?**

Currently GA and THA are supported by their own academy trusts. If the schools form a MAT, the governance arrangements for the current trusts will change. Currently GA has 3 members and 15 trustees and THA has 3 members and 13 trustees. We are proposing a change in name to Goldington Hills Multi-Academy Trust, which will have 5 members and no fewer than 7 trustees. Goldington Hills Multi-Academy Trust would be the board for the MAT. Goldington Academy would then have its own local governing body, as would The Hills Academy.

### **What are the benefits of being a MAT?**

In the opinion of both schools the benefits are numerous:

- High quality governance with a clear focus on strategic development, teaching and learning, and accountability;
- Building sustainability through strategic succession planning;
- The opportunity for teachers and support staff to share good practice and to benefit from a common professional development programme that adds real value to the education of all students in both academies;
- The ability to support other schools, in particular local primary schools in the future
- Efficiencies in administrative functions and joint procurement, which will help us in these more austere times to the advantage of the students.

### **Are there any disadvantages to becoming a MAT?**

As a MAT, the central board of trustees will be accountable for any other academies that join the MAT, not just Goldington Academy and The Hills Academy. This means increased responsibility. However, as part of the conversion process, the governing body will ensure that careful decisions are taken to ensure that the right governance structure and systems are in place to successfully operate more than one academy.

### What else will change?

We do not intend to change anything else about the day to day operation of both GA and THA as a result of converting to MAT.

### How can I find out more?

There is a document called frequently asked questions, which can be collected from the offices of both schools and will be on both school websites.

If you have any unanswered questions, please email:

Mrs Justine Henderson:  
[hendersonj@goldington.bbvtle.com](mailto:hendersonj@goldington.bbvtle.com)

or Mrs Moya Whitehead:  
[headteacher@thehillsacademy.co.uk](mailto:headteacher@thehillsacademy.co.uk)

and we will endeavour to assist.

### How can I make representations?

The closing date for making representations is Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

A consultation meeting will be held at Goldington Academy on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016 from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

Representations can be made in writing to:

GA and THA MAT Consultation  
Goldington Academy  
Haylands Way  
Bedford  
MK41 9BX

Or by email to: [feedback@goldington.bbvtle.com](mailto:feedback@goldington.bbvtle.com)

### Have your say.

We would like to develop our vision in partnership with all members of our community and therefore value your input. Details of how you can be involved will follow.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs D Field  
**Chair of Governors**  
Goldington Academy



Mr C Jones  
**Chair of Governors**  
The Hills Academy



Mr F X Galbraith  
**Principal**  
Goldington Academy



Mrs M Whitehead  
**Headteacher**  
The Hills Academy



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 Headteacher:  
 Mrs Moya Whitehead

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. What is an academy?**

An academy is a state school that is run by an academy trust. The academy trust enters into an agreement with the Secretary of State for Education that sets out its responsibilities and accountabilities for the effective running of the academy. The academy is funded directly by the Government not through the Local Authority. The trust is given charitable exemption, which means it must operate much like a charity.

### **2. What is a multi-academy trust (MAT)?**

A multi-academy trust (MAT) is when two or more academies come together in partnership. The governing body of both Goldington Academy (GA) and The Hills Academy (THA) believe that the best option is to form a multi-academy trust from local schools. Each member school will keep its own name. In the future, it will be possible for other academies to join the trust.

### **3. How would forming a multi-academy trust benefit our schools?**

We believe becoming a MAT will enable us to deliver:

- Higher standards of teaching and learning in all classrooms
- New opportunities for children to work across schools and access learning opportunities.
- Enhanced confidence and morale in staff
- Greater opportunities for career development
- Greater visibility of the strengths and weaknesses of each school
- Stronger governance across the schools
- Increased efficiency and effectiveness of school administration and business management.

These changes are about enhancing teaching and learning for all children. They would allow us to maintain control of our schools for our community, share skills and operate more effectively.

### **4. Who will be responsible for running our school?**

The newly formed multi-academy trust will have a board of trustees that will include individuals from the local governing bodies of member schools. The trust board will delegate powers to the local governing bodies, which will be similar to the role that they currently have. A leadership structure is yet to be finalised, but it is intended that:

- Each school will remain focussed on delivering excellent teaching and learning within its local community.

- Each school will continue to have its local headteacher with less administration and more time to focus on the teaching and learning within the school.
- Each school would continue to have its own local governing body.
- All schools will work together on projects to improve education and learning in all schools.
- All schools will share administration and support in order to reduce costs and improve effectiveness.
- A joint board will exist to provide oversight of the performance of each school and ensure effective investment in improvements across all schools.

## **5. What is involved in becoming a multi-academy trust?**

GA and THA will complete a consultation with parents, pupils, staff and the wider community which the governors will take into account in reaching its decision. The governing bodies of both schools have voted for this proposal in principle and if, following consultation, governors decide to proceed, it will be the Secretary of State for Education who decides whether or not to approve our application.

## **6. Would the schools have to change their names, logos or uniforms?**

No, the governors have no plans to change the names, logos, uniforms or individual identity of each school as a result of this proposal.

## **7. How will being a multi-academy trust affect staff?**

Currently, the staff are employed by the academy trust of the school at which they work. After formation of a multi-academy trust all staff at all the member schools will be employed by the MAT. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. Their continuity of service is protected, and all staff will be consulted in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations.

## **8. How are the children affected?**

In many ways the children will not notice any immediate difference; they will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. We will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all our children. However, in time the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the pupils' learning.

## **9. Will we get more money as a member of a multi-academy trust?**

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. All funding comes direct from Government to the multi-academy trust which controls the overall budget. Each school does not necessarily have more money, but as a group the schools are better able to control their part of the budget.

#### **10. What are the risks of becoming a multi-academy trust?**

The MAT schools would remain out of Local Authority control, but this does not exclude the school from Local Authority support. For example, academies can continue to receive finance, HR, health and safety support and other services from the Local Authority and where these represent 'best value' the MAT would use these services. Where the MAT feels that others can provide better services or better value it will have the freedom to make these changes. There are risks associated with not forming a MAT. At some stage in the future, any school might be influenced to become part of a larger academy chain. We believe that the ability to create a local MAT, under local direction, offers the best opportunity to sustain vibrant, successful local schools

#### **11. How will admissions to the school be affected?**

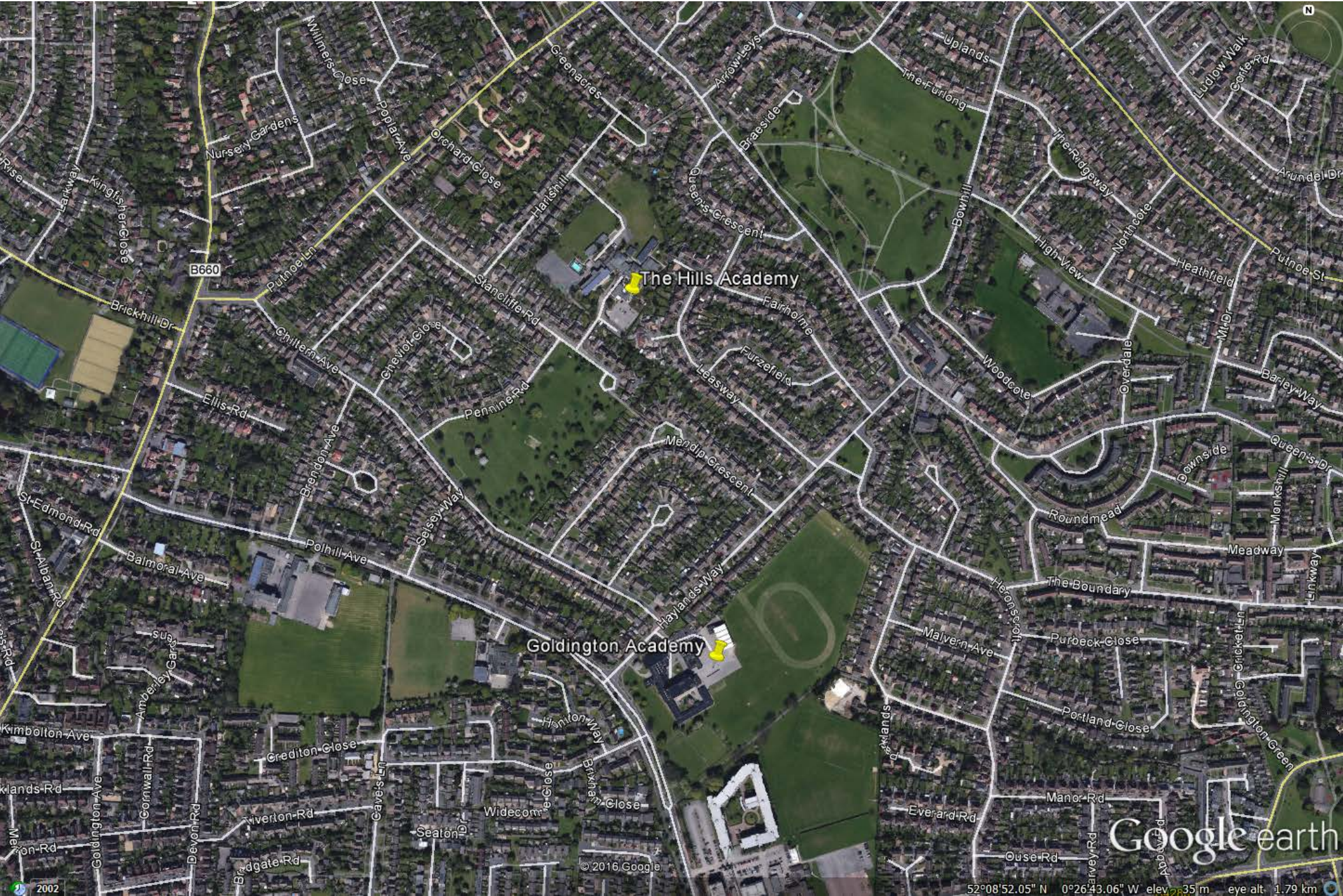
The MAT will become the admissions authority for all the member schools, but will be required to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The Local Authority will continue to have responsibility for making sure there are sufficient places locally and will coordinate the admissions process for all schools. This means parents will still only have to complete one application per child. Applications will still be via the coordinated process.

#### **12. Does becoming a multi-academy trust change the relationship with other schools and the community?**

We hope formation of the MAT will enhance the relationships we have with other local schools. We will continue to be at the heart of the community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other schools and the wider community.











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