



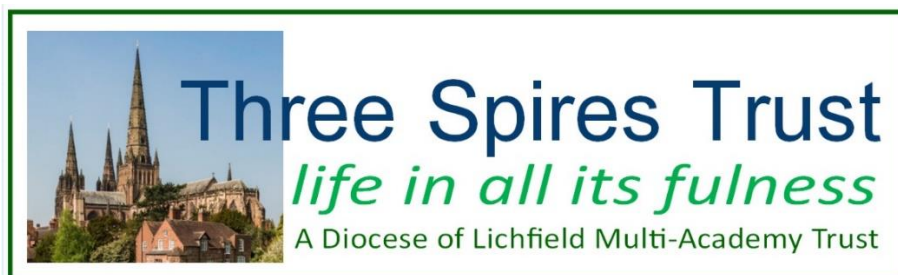
# Consultation Report

## Three Spires Trust

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March 2021

Consultation period: 25.1.21 – 26.2.21



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## 1. Introduction

In December 2020 the Regional Schools Commissioner approved an application submitted by the Diocese of Lichfield for Three Spires Trust to form and for the first four schools to progress forward with their transition to the Trust.

The approval included:

- I. agreement to The King's CE School, Kidsgrove, St Thomas CE Primary School, Kidsgrove and The King's CE School, Wolverhampton to become academies and join Three Spires
- II. confirmation that S. Peter's CE Collegiate School could move from a single academy to join as a member of the new academy trust

One of the first priorities in this phase is stakeholder consultation. Consultation commenced on the 25 January 2021 and concluded on the 26 February 2021 and views have been sought from parents and carers, pupils, staff, trade unions, the community and partners. Further within the report we have shared a breakdown of meetings that happened, communications which were issued, and a copy of all feedback received as part of the process. In addition to these meetings further meetings have been scheduled in response to requests from stakeholders. Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic all consultation was virtual using Microsoft Teams as the vehicle to host the meetings.

The Schools involved as part of the consultation were:

- St Thomas' CofE Primary School, Staffordshire\*
- The King's Kidsgrove CofE School, Staffordshire\*
- S Peter's Collegiate, Wolverhampton
- The King's CofE School, Wolverhampton





\* Please note the schools are federated and known as the Wade Federation. References in this report may refer to individual schools or the federation.

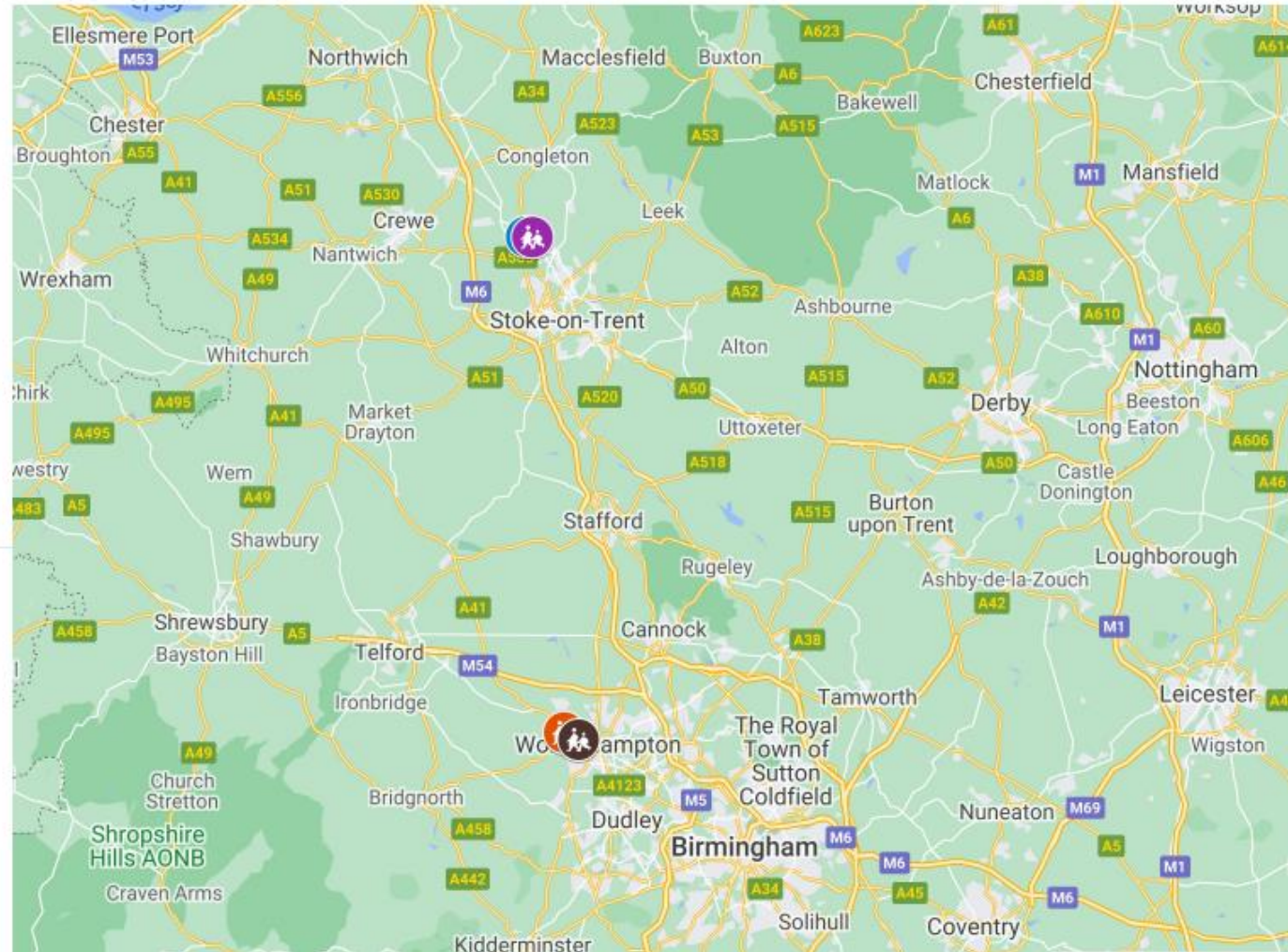
### 1.1 Geographic position of the school(s)

The map on the next page shows where the schools proposing to join Three Spires Trust are located.

## Three Spires Trust

## Schools

-  The King's CE (A) School,  
Staffordshire
-  St Thomas C Of E Aided  
Primary School, Staffordshire
-  The King's Church Of England  
School, Wolverhampton
-  St Peter's Collegiate Church of  
England School,  
Wolverhampton



## **2. Consultation Methodology**

The overall aim of the consultation process was to ensure that everyone who has a stake in the decision of the schools to become Academies and form a multi academy trust had the opportunity to hear about the plans, to share their views and ask any questions.

The objectives of the process were to:

1. Provide relevant background information for stakeholders
2. Explain the reasons for the proposal
3. Set out the stages in the process for the schools to become academies, to form a multi academy trust and the associated timelines
4. Listen to those participating and answer questions raised
5. Engage in a dialogue and develop relationships

The principles laid down by the project team for the consultation were that it should be:

- An open and transparent process
- Accessible to all stakeholders in terms of:
  - The times of the events
  - The language used (jargon-free wherever possible and acronyms fully explained)
  - Well-publicised

A variety of media were used to consult including:

- Direct letters
- Text messaging
- Publicised meetings involving presentations and questions and answer sessions
- Frequently asked questions and comments slips
- Online surveys
- Dedicated consultation email account
- School websites (See Appendix 1a, 1b, 1c)

### **2.1 Direct letters**

Letters introducing the consultation were sent to the following groups and are included in Appendix 2a i, ii, iii, iv, 2b i, ii, iii, iv, 2c i, ii, iii.

- Governors
- Parents/Carers/Community members
- School Staff
- Trade Unions

Parent/Carer and Community letters were also posted on each school website.

## 2.2 Online survey

Google Surveys were used as an online tool to provide everyone with an opportunity to have their say and to gauge reaction and opinion to the proposal to convert to academy status and form a multi academy trust.

The following questions were asked:

Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are.

1. Have you received enough information regarding our proposal?
2. Should we keep the school names the same?
3. Should we keep the school uniform the same?
4. Do you support the proposal for the schools to convert to academy status and form a multi academy trust?
5. Do you agree that the Secretary of State should enter into a Funding Agreement for the XX School?
6. Any further comments or questions?

The results of the surveys can be found in this report under section 4.

## 2.3 Publicised meetings

The following events were communicated to stakeholders and carried out during the consultation period:

Date	Time	Event	Venue
<b>The King's CofE School Kidsgrove and St Thomas' CofE Primary School</b>			
27 January 2021	10.15am	Staffordshire Union/Change Forum Consultation Meeting	Virtual
1 February 2021	3.30pm	Staff Consultation Meeting	Virtual
1 February 2021	5:30pm	Parent / Carer & Community One Consultation Meeting	Virtual
9 February 2021	6:00pm	Governors Consultation Meeting	Virtual
<b>S Peter's Collegiate CofE School</b>			
3 February 2021	2:30pm	Wolverhampton Trade Union Consultation Meeting	Virtual
4 February 2021	3:30pm	Staff Consultation Meeting	Virtual
4 February 2021	5:30pm	Parent / Carer & Community One Consultation Meeting	Virtual
8 February 2021	5:00pm	Governors Consultation Meeting	Virtual

The King's CofE School Wolverhampton			
3 February 2021	1:15pm	Wolverhampton Trade Union Consultation Meeting	Virtual
3 February 2021	3:45pm	Staff Consultation Meeting	Virtual
3 February 2021	5:30pm	Parent / Carer & Community One Consultation Meeting	Virtual
11 February 2021	6:00pm	Governors Consultation Meeting	Virtual
All Schools			
9 February 2021	5:00pm	Parent Two Meeting for all schools	Virtual

## 2.4 Staff, Parent/Carer and Community Meetings

At each of the consultation meetings a presentation was given with information about why the schools were proposing to convert to academy status (for S. Peter's who are already an academy this was to join Three Spires) and forming a multi academy trust. A copy of the presentations can be found in Appendix 3a-c.

## 2.5 Frequently asked questions (FAQs) and comment slips

At Appendix 4 is the FAQs document that was distributed to parents/carers, community members and staff in the school and a copy was also displayed on each of the school websites. Due to the Covid19 pandemic comment slips were returned to the email set up specifically for consultation: [consultation@threespirestrust.org](mailto:consultation@threespirestrust.org)

## 2.6 Consultation Email

A dedicated email account was set up ([consultation@threespirestrust.org](mailto:consultation@threespirestrust.org)) to capture feedback, respond to questions and facilitate attendance at virtual meetings. Stakeholders were able to confirm attendance and in turn were issued a link to the relevant meeting they wished to attend.

# 3. Overview of the Feedback received

Appendix 5 contains all the questions, comments and feedback received from the various meetings, emails and surveys which took place throughout the consultation period. Numbers of participants in meetings and survey responses are outlined on the next page.

## 3.1 Attendance at Consultation Meetings

Date	Event	Venue	Number in attendance
The King's CofE School Kidsgrove and St Thomas' CofE Primary School			
27 January 2021	Union Consultation Meeting	Virtual	15
1 February 2021	Staff Consultation Meeting	Virtual	30
1 February 2021	Parent/Carer/Community One Consultation Meeting	Virtual	10

9 February 2021	Governors Consultation Meeting	Virtual	19
<b>S. Peter's Collegiate CofE School</b>			
3 February 2021	Union Consultation Meeting	Virtual	9
4 February 2021	Staff Consultation Meeting	Virtual	78
4 February 2021	Parent/Carer/Community One Consultation Meeting	Virtual	15
8 February 2021	Governors Consultation Meeting	Virtual	11
<b>The King's CofE School Wolverhampton</b>			
3 February 2021	Union Consultation Meeting	Virtual	8
3 February 2021	Staff Consultation Meeting	Virtual	53
3 February 2021	Parent/Carer/Community One Consultation Meeting	Virtual	24
11 February 2021	Governors Consultation Meeting	Virtual	9
9 February 2021	Parent Two Meeting for all schools	Virtual	12

Feedback from all the meetings was collated in note form and records made. The questions raised and responses provided are summarised in Appendix 5. In total there were over 120 questions raised at meetings.

### 3.2 Google Survey

We received 253 completed surveys online.

S. Peter's CE Collegiate School x 38

The King's CE School x 28

Wade Federation x 187

Full detailed feedback is provided in section 4.

### 3.3 Email

We received four emails which included specific questions linked to the consultation. Three from staff and one from a Parent.

The questions and answers are captured in the respective school feedback which can be found in Appendix 5.

### 3.4 Email / Whole School Communication

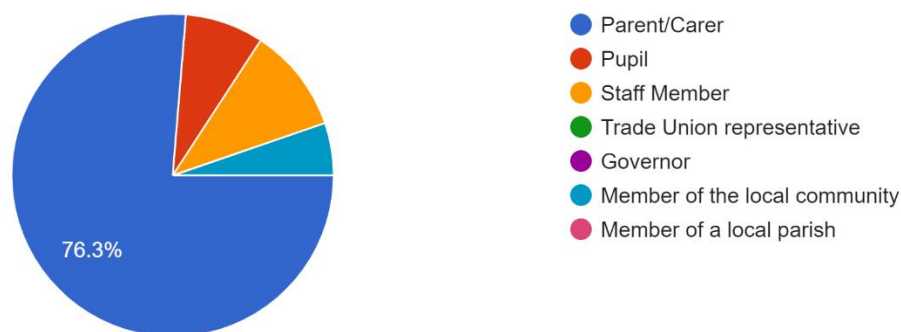
On the 23<sup>rd</sup> February a whole staff communication was issued to all colleagues in schools to provide a summary of the consultation findings to date and key messages / answers to questions which were being raised.

## 4. Google Survey Responses

### 4.1 S. Peter's CE Collegiate School

Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are?

38 responses



Answer	Number of responses
Parent/Carer	29
Pupil	3
Staff member	4
Local community	2

**Have you received enough information regarding our proposal?**

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	7
No	15
Don't Know	5
Other	11

**Should we keep the School name the same?**

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	36
No	0
Don't Know	1
Other	1

### Should we keep the school uniform the same?

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>32</b>
No	<b>1</b>
Don't Know	
Other	<b>5</b>

### Do you support the proposal for the school to join a multi academy trust?

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>6</b>
No	<b>15</b>
Don't Know	<b>13</b>
Other	<b>4</b>

### Do you agree that the Secretary of State should enter into a Funding Agreement for S. Peter's Collegiate School?

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>17</b>
No	<b>4</b>
Don't Know	<b>14</b>
Other	<b>3</b>

### Any further comments

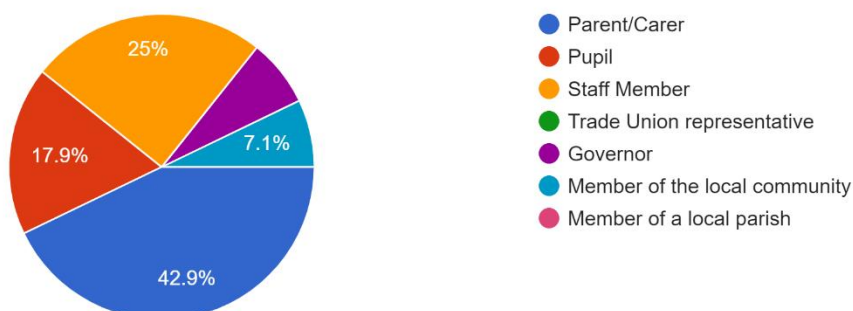
Further comments were made and can be summarised as follows:

- What are the advantages of joining a Trust?
- What is the impact of all the change on the school?
- Do not throw the history away
- Reputational
- Leadership stability
- Timing
- Transparency

## 4.2 The King's CE School, Wolverhampton

Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are?

28 responses



Answer	Number of responses
Parent/Carer	<b>12</b>
Pupil	<b>5</b>
Staff member	<b>7</b>
Local community	<b>2</b>
Governor	<b>2</b>

### Have you received enough information regarding our proposal?

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>20</b>
No	<b>1</b>
Don't Know	<b>4</b>
Other	<b>3</b>

### Should we keep the School name the same?

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>21</b>
No	<b>1</b>
Don't Know	<b>3</b>
Other	<b>3</b>

### Should we keep the school uniform the same?

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>20</b>
No	<b>2</b>
Don't Know	<b>3</b>
Other	<b>3</b>

### Do you support the proposal for the school to join a multi academy trust?

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>13</b>
No	<b>4</b>
Don't Know	<b>9</b>
Other	<b>2</b>

### Do you agree that the Secretary of State should enter into a Funding Agreement for The King's CofE School Wolverhampton?

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>21</b>
No	<b>1</b>
Don't Know	<b>5</b>
Other	<b>1</b>

### Any further comments

Further comments were made and can be summarised as follows:

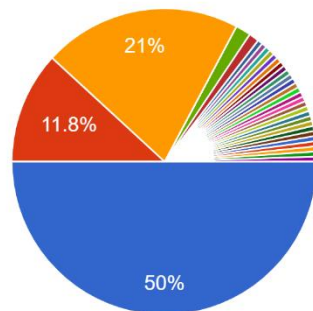
- Christian ethos
- Benefits for children and staff
- Strategic direction
- Reputational
- Transparency

#### 4.3 The Wade Federation

186 responses to this question

Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are?

186 responses



- Parent/Carer - please state which school
- Pupil - please state which school
- Staff Member - please state which sch...
- Trade Union representative
- Governor
- Member of the local community
- Member of a local parish
- The Kings

▲ 1/5 ▼

Answer	Number of responses
Parent/Carer	<b>95</b>
Pupil	<b>23</b>
Staff member	<b>63</b>
Local community	-
Governor	<b>0</b>
Trade Union	<b>3</b>
Member of the local parish	<b>3</b>

**Have you received enough information regarding our proposal? (186 responses)**

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>131</b>
No	<b>14</b>
Don't Know	<b>39</b>
Other	<b>2</b>

**Should we keep the School name the same? (185 responses)**

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>163</b>
No	<b>4</b>
Don't Know	<b>12</b>
Other	<b>6</b>

**Should we keep the school uniform the same? (186 responses)**

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>158</b>
No	<b>5</b>
Don't Know	<b>11</b>
Other	<b>12</b>

**Do you support the proposal for the school to join a multi academy trust? (186 responses)**

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>121</b>
No	<b>21</b>
Don't Know	<b>44</b>
Other	-

**Do you agree that the Secretary of State should enter into a Funding Agreement for the Wade Federation? (184 responses)**

Answer	Number of responses
Yes	<b>117</b>
No	<b>4</b>
Don't Know	<b>61</b>
Other	<b>2</b>

**Any further comments**

Further comments were made and can be summarised as follows:

- Staff conditions and structures
- Nervousness of the academy agenda and whether it will have a positive effect in the schools
- Schools individual identities and caring nature
- Curriculum
- Reputational
- Cost increase
- What are the benefits?

## **5. Themes and Key Messages**

Appendix 5 contains all the questions, comments and feedback received from the various consultation events / media used throughout the consultation period. A summary of all the responses and the messages contained therein, with implications for the Trust and / or schools are provided in the remainder of this section.

Stakeholders are most interested in:

### **5.1 Maintaining identity and feeling a sense of ownership**

Stakeholders were keen to highlight that the school's individual identities should be kept as is, this included school names, uniforms, vision values and Church of England status. There was a nervousness for some that a move to a multi academy trust would mean major changes and that identity would be diluted.

### **5.2 Three Spires Trust, governance and leadership**

The Trust is new and without a tried and tested background, stakeholders are keen to understand what systems and processes will be in place ready for when the schools join. Clarity was sought on:

- What governance structures will look like at an individual school level
- Who will be responsible for what across all levels of the structure?
- Further detail on Three Spires and the Trustees and leadership who will be accountable for all schools
- Strategic direction – what is the five year plan? Will there be future growth?

### **5.3 Staffing / employment matters**

Many staff sought clarification and assurance around any proposed changes and what it would mean for them personally. A whole school communication (see Appendix 6) was issued in February to help allay some of the nervousness which exists amongst staff and we have continued to meet with staff and answer questions as they arise.

The main themes for staff were surrounding:

- TUPE
- The possibility of having to work in other schools
- Contractual changes to terms and conditions
- Pensions
- Non contractual detail for example childcare voucher and cycle to work schemes
- Introduction of a Trust / Trade Union Recognition Agreement

## 5.4 Education

Stakeholders sought assurance around the quality of education and that the Trust were not planning to change staffing and curriculum structures, as well as practical aspects like whether or not the school days would change, term times and holidays etc.

Questions were raised in writing and at meetings about whether the Trust planned to merge the Wolverhampton schools and have one CofE secondary school for the city and this was confirmed not to be the case.

There was a theme surrounding the primary school and whether they felt this proposal was in the best solution for the school as they would be the only primary school. The relationship between primary and secondaries overall were explored and stakeholders could see the benefit of being in a Trust that had both age ranges within it.

## 5.5 Finance / capital investment

Many questions were received about finance and how this would work day to day within the Trust. Areas of interest included:

- On a practical level how does funding work for an academy and a Trust
- What would the central charge be and what services would be provided to schools?
- What would schools retain responsibility for and what finance tasks would be done centrally?
- How will economies of scale be realised?
- Will it cost more?
- Financial challenges at one of the schools linked to buildings issues
- Will the Wolverhampton schools get the support they need to address buildings issues?

## 5.6 Communication and Engagement

For some stakeholders they reported feeling the process of conversion was feeling rushed and it was going too fast and there was a lot of information to digest in a short period of time.

The challenge surrounding the virtual nature of the consultation has meant the schools leadership, governors and the Three Spires Trust have facilitated a variety of routes for engagement and communication which has included:

- Meetings for groups and individuals
- Direct contact with HR representatives and Trade unions
- Opportunity to complete an online survey
- Ability to email questions
- Access to updated information throughout the process via school websites

Stakeholders do not want communication channels to dry up or stop just because the formal consultation period has ended. Receiving regular updates is essential.

Engagement with pupils has been mixed and all schools received some feedback using the methods above however, when they return to school on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March each school will facilitate ongoing engagement with all pupils and this will be done by using appropriate communications and feedback to the Trust from each of the schools.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

On compilation of all feedback and data received, the conclusion that can be drawn is that there are no apparent legitimate reasons why the new MAT cannot be established according to the timescales outlined however, further consideration should be given to the perceived speed the transition is happening at.

For some there is a view that this will be a positive move for the schools, but this is not yet shared widely amongst all stakeholder groups and it is important to recognise the ongoing dialogue is going to be extremely important.

Work with pupils was limited due to the lockdown, further work should be undertaken when they return on the 8<sup>th</sup> March (see recommendations below).

Response rates overall to the consultation were excellent especially considering the virtual nature of the process. Over 350 comments or questions were raised in the consultation from a cross section of the communities the schools serve, and the feedback should now inform the Trust communications strategy and plan in order to inform the journey and bring stakeholders with you.

Following the completion of the consultation period for all schools proposing to join the MAT it is recommended that:

1. All schools proceed with the next phases of the joining process
2. A range of media are used to further inform stakeholders of all the milestones and timescales and plans for the MAT as they progress. Communication should be ingoing, clear and timely.
3. Communications strategy and plan should be generated by the Trust
4. Due diligence and financial modelling is completed and information shared with each school and actions plans subsequently put in place
5. Each school consults with pupils in greater detail on their return to school from the most recent national lockdown and the outcomes are shared with the Trust. A pupil consultation report/newsletter should be collated to summarise findings and any actions.
6. Clarity is provided on the Trust financial data and planning and how this will work operationally in schools.
7. Governance structures are completed and populated with named individuals with associated clarity provided on terms of reference and responsibilities

## 7. List of Appendices

- Appendix 1**    1a S Peter's website extract  
                     1b The King's Wolverhampton website extract  
                     1c The Wade Federation website extract
- Appendix 2**    2a i S Peter's Governors invite letter  
                     2a ii S Peter's Parents, Carers and Community invite letter  
                     2a iii S Peter's Staff invite letter  
                     2a iv S Peter's Union invite letter
- 2b i The King's Wolverhampton Governors invite letter  
                     2b ii The King's Wolverhampton Parents, Carers and Community invite letter  
                     2b iii The King's Wolverhampton Staff invite letter  
                     2b iv The King's Wolverhampton Unions invite letter
- 2c i The Wade Federation Governors invite letter  
                     2c ii The Wade Federation Parents, Carers and Community invite letter  
                     2c iii The Wade Federation Staff invite letter
- Appendix 3**    3a i S Peter's Staff Presentation  
                     3a ii S Peter's Parent Presentation  
                     3a ii S Peter's Governors Presentation
- 3b i The King's Wolverhampton Staff Presentation  
                     3b ii The King's Wolverhampton Parents Presentation
- 3c i The Wade Federation Parents Presentation  
                     3c ii The Wade Federation Staff Presentation  
                     3c iii The Wade Federation Governors Presentation
- Appendix 4**    Frequently asked questions
- Appendix 5**    Feedback – Questions and Answers
- Appendix 6**    Three Spires Trust whole staff communication