



12 February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Consultation on Trust membership

As Chief Executive of the Lighthouse Schools Partnership (LSP), I have been involved in the governors' consultation on St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School (SMRT) joining our Trust. I have had the opportunity of speaking at two parental consultation events but inevitably not everyone is able to attend occasions such as those, so this letter is to share more widely my response to some of the issues and questions raised.

I understand that a change such as joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) of schools raises questions, particularly regarding the school's unique identity, resources, and local decision making. I want to reassure you that joining Lighthouse Schools Partnership would not risk losing what makes SMRT special; rather, it would provide the school with the operational stability and professional support it needs to thrive.

Admissions: I can give you clear assurance that the admissions oversubscription criteria for Year 7 and the Sixth Form, would continue to be determined by the school's Governing Body, as is the case in all our schools. This includes the school's right to maintain its current criteria, such as church-going priority. Any future change to this delegation would need to be approved by the diocese, which adds further assurance.

Local decision making: Not all MATs are the same and our Trust regards local decision-making as a key principle. As Chief Executive of the Trust it is my role to run the central service and to provide additional strong support and challenge where it is needed. Educationally SMRT is currently doing very well indeed, so I would not expect to be involved in this element day to day, but I would be ensuring that the school was continuing to progress and is using its resources for the full benefit of its pupils and community. People have asked about the structure of the school day and the early Friday finish; matters such as those would remain entirely with the Headteacher and Governors, so long as the school was meeting its obligations on learning hours for pupils.

Christian Ethos: As a Voluntary Aided school SMRT could only join a MAT where half of the Trustees are appointed by the Church of England. LSP works with two dioceses both of whom have rights and responsibilities in appointing our Trustees. Essentially our governance matches SMRT's. We delegate the oversight of school culture and ethos to the local governing body, who are required to have an Ethos Committee, that includes members of staff, to ensure that the Christian ethos is lived. A member of the LSP Central Team works with our church schools to ensure that they are meeting their obligations. SMRT is already doing this very well!

Financial Stability and Support: Some people have expressed concern that a trust might take resources away from the school. LSPs 'top-slice' (charge to each school) of 4.79% provides essential central services and subscriptions that the school already pays for. Indeed nearly three quarters of the 'top slice' covers existing direct costs and bills so this would not be additional spending. The remaining element funds the support that our experienced Central

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Team delivers in areas such as premises management, HR advice, IT delivery, procurement, purchasing etc. Expert guidance on quality of teaching, school improvement, professional development and SEND are also funded this way. As one of the last maintained schools in the region SMRT currently does not have access to this sort of support and the Local Authority no longer has the capacity to provide these services. Addressing this gap is what has led Mr Planter and the Governors to explore membership of LSP. Furthermore, as SMRT is currently managing a budget deficit, joining LSP means it would be supported by the Trust's reserves, allowing for a more manageable recovery period than would be possible as a maintained school. The school would also get access to our existing contracts, many of which are negotiated at a better rate than those currently in place for the school. Joining our Trust would improve SMRT's financial position significantly.

Staff pay and pensions: I want to be very clear that there would be no negative changes to the pay or pension entitlements for any staff member, although to align pay scales a few members of support staff might have a slight uplift in salary. We strictly adhere to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) and National Joint Council (NJC) scales for support staff. Teachers would remain in the Teachers' Pension Scheme, and support staff would remain in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Enhanced SEND Support: Joining LSP would provide SMRT with additional support for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The school would gain access to our central SEND team, including our Director of Inclusion and Lead Teacher for SEND. All specific SEND funding would continue to be received directly and in full by the school. The deployment of Teaching Assistants is entirely delegated to schools.

Outward looking: Joining our Trust would not take SMRT out of Bristol. Our Trust already has four Bristol schools, most of which transferred to us after the dissolution of the Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust. Supporting those schools to strong outcomes is my highest current priority. LSP works closely with Bristol City Council and the Bristol Diocese as a fully engaged civic partner.

Giving and receiving: Strong schools like SMRT can continue to learn from others while sharing their own expertise. The word 'partnership' is intentionally placed within our trust's name as it is at the heart of our culture and ethos. There are mutual benefits to SMRT joining LSP; we will benefit from the school's strengths and experience and SMRT will receive support and challenge where needed.

I am sure that the governors would want me to refer you to the consultation page on the [school website](#) where you can see how to engage in the process if you have not done so already.

Yours sincerely,



Chief Executive

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