



Congleton Multi Academy Trust

# CMAT Stakeholder Newsletter Summer 2014

## ACHIEVING SUCCESS TOGETHER



I am pleased to provide an update on the work and developments of the Congleton Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT). We made the transition from a single academy to a Multi-Academy in February 2014. The first school to join us is Black Firs Primary school and others are considering joining us in the next few months. These schools have recognised the significant benefit that comes with the economies of scale of working as part of a group under one leadership structure. The primary schools that join us retain their individual characteristics and to their stakeholders it will feel like “business as usual”.

### Why are schools joining CMAT?

The strength is in the economies of scale that are generated by several schools working together. If a primary school wishes to convert to academy status and gain the freedoms, this is the simplest way to do it. We are also able to provide all the back office financial functions which would be an overhead for a single academy. Examples include:

- Savings on financial reporting. Financial reporting must meet the stringent requirements set out by the Educational Funding Agency (EFA) and Companies House. As a well-established academy, CHS is well used to planning and delivering the quality of financial reporting to meet the standards. We simply add the primary school on to our existing contract for auditing and only one report is required for all the schools in the group. A single academy must pay for the entire process which typically costs £8000 per year.
- Shared Staffing. We have some teachers who work in more than one school during their normal working week. For example, our languages teachers provide a weekly service to the primary schools.
- Shared Assets. The use of shared assets such as our fleet of minibuses has been an obvious advantage.



## The New Board

The Members of the Board are delighted to welcome the staff of Black Firs Primary School to CMAT. David Whitewright (Chair of Governors at Black Firs) and Martin Casserley have taken up their seats at the Board to join the six original Directors. The Board meets once a month to look at any strategic issues. To enable CMAT to gain the economies of scale, we are looking at working much more closely to secure financial savings that can be ploughed back into frontline services. One of the examples of working on a larger scale is that we can plan the educational journey much more precisely from Nursery, Primary, Secondary and sixth form/college towards employment.



**Back Row Left to Right:**

Andy Pear; David Hermitt CEO; Richard Hinckley, Chair; Fiona Hampton; David Whitewright

**Front Row Left to Right:**

Geoff Eardley; Richard Benson (Vice Chair); Martin Casserley

## Employee Benefits

We have met with the new staff from Black Firs on 30<sup>th</sup> June to introduce the employee benefits package. This includes a salary sacrifice scheme and medical benefits. These benefits were welcomed by the staff at Black Firs, especially the medical benefit via Simply Health. Everyday medical needs are provided for with a “cash back” plan. For example, this provides £60 per year cash back to pay for opticians expenses. We encourage all staff members to take advantage of this employer backed scheme. If you have not already made a claim, you will find that it is an easy process of forwarding the relevant receipt and you will be reimbursed within a few days.

## CMAT Development Plan

The original document issued to all staff outlined some of the developments that we are working towards as part of our long term vision. The steps needed to realise our vision are being put together into a CMAT Development Plan. This is a plan that is more about dealing with strategic medium and long terms issues such as:

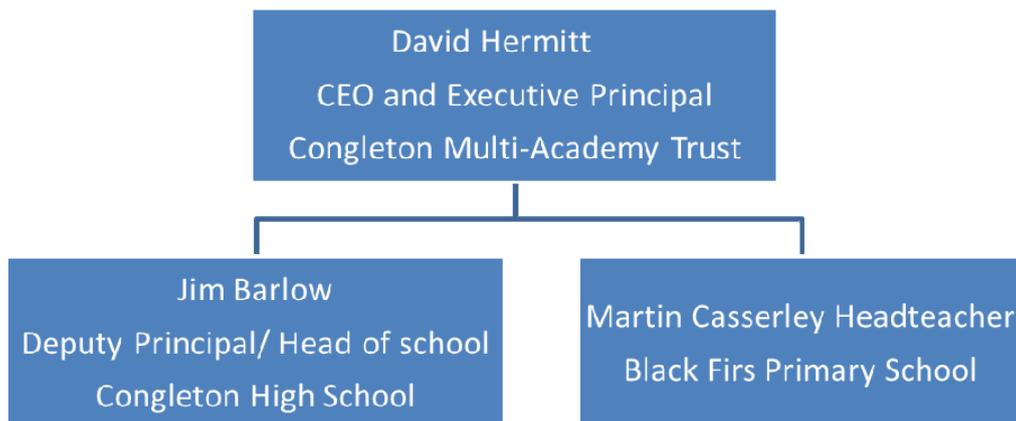
1. The need for another local Primary school based on increased housing
2. The need for better College provision in the town

There are also some operational issues that we are working on such as building a new website for CMAT which is different to the CHS one.

Do you think there are any other issues that should be included in our plans? If so this is your opportunity to contribute. Simply email me at [ceo@congletonhigh.com](mailto:ceo@congletonhigh.com). This will enable your ideas to be incorporated into our future planning.

## Who's Who at CMAT?

Executive Leadership Team consists of David Hermitt (CEO and Executive Prinicipal), Jim Barlow ( Deputy Principal and Head of school – Congleton High School) and Martin Casserley ( Headteacher – Black Firs Primary School). The team meets on a weekly basis to work on projects. In July we are setting aside time for teachers from both schools to meet to work on projects that would strengthen professional development.



“ We have always worked closely with our partner primary schools, but we can now provide all the secondary staff with a deeper insight into what it is like in a modern primary school”

Jim Barlow

## Congleton College News

We have launched our plans to develop Congleton College this term. We have held meetings with students, parents and employers to gain their views about our plans. They have been very positive meetings in which there was universal agreement that it would be a good thing to strengthen the College provision in the town. Major employers such as Siemens, Reliance Medical, Berisfords, Pecks Restaurant, Plus Dane Housing Group, Eric Charlesworth Electrical Contractors, Nortek, Burns Garages and Datastor Systems Ltd all attended the business breakfast on 1<sup>st</sup> July. These business have already employed former students and know the benefits of gaining work ready employees by working closely with the school.



We plan to strengthen the vocational pathways for our students so that they can gain local employment. We are delighted that we have 100% of our former students who have gained employment, education or training after leaving us. What we would like to now do is provide better links to local businesses so that our students who wish to work locally can secure opportunities. We know that the apprenticeship route is best for some of our students and we believe we can strengthen this route through providing a College. We are modelling our provision on the Malting College in Halifax. We have secured the help of the founder of this College to support our preparations.

The college provision for the pilot group in September will be mainly based at our existing site. Phase two is for September 2015 and we intend to provide off site provision for the College aspect of our work.

If you know of any employers who might be willing to work with us then please let me know by emailing me at [ceo@congletonhigh.com](mailto:ceo@congletonhigh.com).

### Conclusion

As we approach the summer break we know that the next term will be a busy one. We anticipate that the CMAT will grow organically and continue to fulfil its mission "Achieving Success Together".

**David Hermitt**  
**Chief Executive Officer**