



**Confederation
of School Trusts**

Joining a Trust – The Case for Collaboration

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The wrong question:

- “Should my school become an academy?”

The better question:

- “How can my school best collaborate with others in a strong and resilient structure to ensure that each child is a powerful learner and that adults have the opportunities to learn and develop as teachers and leaders?”

Partnerships with shared governance arrangements

There is an emerging body of evidence beginning with an early large-scale study by Chapman and Muijs into what they called ‘performance federations’ – groups of schools in shared governance arrangements, including the early multi-academy trusts. The findings of this research suggest students attending performance federations outperformed a matched sample of their peers in non-federated schools in terms of their attainment.

Chapman, C. and Muijs, D. (2014) Does school-to-school collaboration promote school improvement? A study of the impact of school federations on student outcomes. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 25 (3), pp. 351-393

What is a multi-academy trust (School Trust)?

A multi-academy trust is a **group of schools working in deep and purposeful collaboration** as one entity to improve and maintain high educational standards across the trust.

A multi-academy trust has a single legal and moral purpose at the heart of the Articles of Association: **to advance education for public benefit.**

What a multi-academy trust is not!

- Academy trusts are not businesses – nor are they run by ‘private’ people and they cannot make a ‘profit’
- Land is not passed into ‘private’ ownership and trusts need permission to sell land – just like maintained schools
- Academy trusts are not ‘unaccountable’
- Academy trusts do not have different legal responsibilities for example for pupils with SEND

[Myth busting – what are School Trusts?](#)

What can Trusts do?

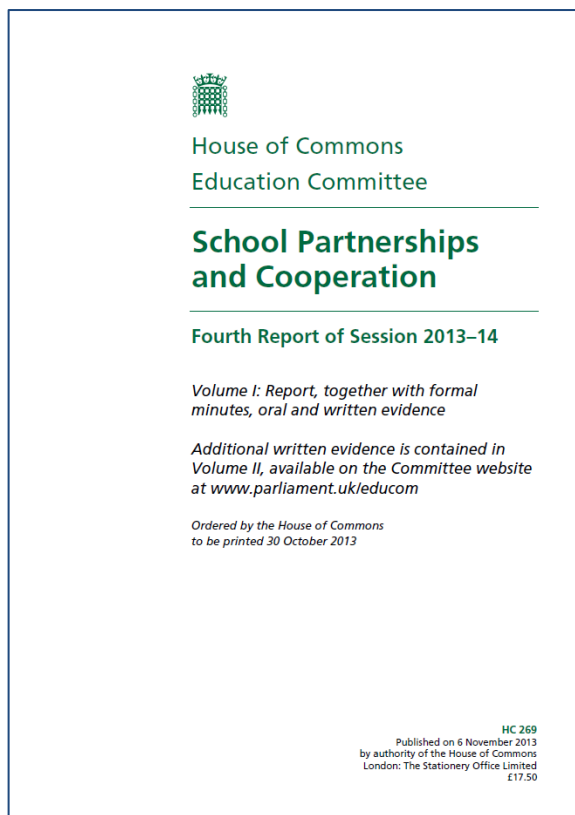
- Teachers work and learn together to improve the way they teach and schools can share practices that make a difference to the quality of teaching.
- Teachers and leaders can work together on the things that matter – like curriculum and assessment.
- In addition, schools where the quality of education is not yet good enough can be supported to improve.
- In the collaborative structure of a School Trust, it is more possible for teachers and leaders to move to another school to help improve the quality of education where that school is struggling – and these moves are more likely to be to schools with more disadvantaged pupils.

Perceived benefits of joining a Trust

- Being able to collaborate with schools that share our ethos and values - finding a Trust with a similar ethos or values
- Being able to retain school identity
- Increased collaboration and opportunities for professional development
- Reduced burden through shared responsibilities
- Increased financial security

DfE Research (2021) [Schools' views on the perceived benefits and obstacles to joining a multi-academy trust](#)

The evidence for the benefits of school partnerships



- “87% of headteachers and 83% of chairs of governors describe partnership with other schools as ‘critical to improving outcomes for students’.”
- “We believe that school partnerships **with clear lines of accountability and some element of obligation** are more likely to be successful.”

The primary sector benefits particularly from collaborative structures



House of Commons
Education Committee

Academies and free schools

Fourth Report of Session 2014–15

Report, together with formal minutes relating to the report

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 21 January 2015

HC 258
[Incorporating HC 981, Session 2013-14]
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“Primary heads told us that, whilst becoming an academy had improved their practice and their school, this was primarily because of the advantages generated by the **collaborative framework of a multi-academy trust.**”

Joining a School Trust: Getting started

When joining a School Trust, knowing where to begin can seem daunting. Our 'Joining a Trust' short reads look give an overview of what to think about at the beginning of your Trust journey. In this short read, we look at some of the practical steps to take when getting started on your Trust journey.

[Short read](#)
[>>](#)
 2 minute read

[Long read](#)
[>>](#)
 Guidance coming soon

Trust >> The Facts

Joining a School Trust: First considerations

When joining a School Trust, knowing where to begin can seem daunting. Our 'Joining a Trust' short reads look give an overview of what to think about at the beginning of your Trust journey. In this short read, we look at some of the first considerations you could think about as you begin to identify Trusts to join.

[Short read](#)
[>>](#)
 2 minute read

[Long read](#)
[>>](#)
 Guidance coming soon

“There is no trust more sacred than the one
the world holds with children.”

Kofi Annan, *The State of the World's Children*, 2000



Further reading

- Dedicated resources for maintained schools thinking of joining a Trust – [Trust The Facts](#)
- Cruddas, L. and Simons, J., 2020, [School Trusts as New Civic Structures – A Framework Document](#), CST and Public First
- Bauckham, I. and Cruddas, L., 2021, [Knowledge Building – School Improvement at Scale](#) CST
- Rollett, S. 2021, [Communities of Improvement – School Trusts as Fields of Practice](#) CST
- Cruddas, L. 2021, [The Case for Collaboration](#), CST
- Barker and Patten, 2022, [Professional Development in School Trusts – capacity, conditions and culture](#) CST



Confederation
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Join the national organisation and
sector body for School Trusts in England

Thank you

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