



Friday 10th October

Dobcroft Junior School proposes to join INOVA Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following a lengthy period of careful consideration, the Governing Body of Dobcroft Junior School has made the 'in-principle' decision to seek conversion to academy status and join the INOVA Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). This decision is based on thorough internal discussions about the long-term future and continued improvement of our school. We are now commencing a formal consultation period to gather your views and answer any questions you may have.

Why we have chosen to join a multi-academy trust

The educational and financial landscape has changed significantly over recent years and some of the support traditionally provided from the local authority often has to be sought elsewhere. As a consequence, most schools in Sheffield are now part of a multi-academy trust (MAT). Being part of a MAT will ensure we have the robust support we need which will lead to improved provision and outcomes for our pupils. Particular areas of support include:

- Safeguarding and inclusion (including special educational needs)
- Development of teaching and learning
- Staff development and succession planning and all levels
- Financial planning support
- Human resources support
- Premises support
- Health and safety/compliance support

Why we have chosen INOVA Multi-Academy Trust

The Governing Body has spent a significant amount of time exploring various avenues to ensure the best possible future for our students and staff. You will be aware that the Infant School joined Peak Edge trust earlier in the year. Whilst we valued and saw the potential of joining Peak Edge, governors felt the need to explore further options to best meet the needs of our pupil's current and future education and strongly feel that INOVA is the best fit for our school, especially as it comprises of a mixture of primary and secondary schools across Sheffield.

Our decision to pursue a partnership with INOVA MAT is based on a number of key factors:

Shared Vision and Values: INOVA's commitment to innovation, collaboration and excellence aligns closely with our own school's mission of ensuring every child achieves their full potential ready for the next stage of their education in Key Stage 3 and beyond. We believe this partnership will allow us to strengthen our shared values while retaining our unique identity and culture.

A Commitment to Collaboration and Excellence: INOVA has a proven track record of bringing schools together to share best practices, resources and expertise. This collaboration will provide new opportunities for our pupils and staff, helping to further enhance our curriculum and learning experiences. INOVA's strong and skilled central team of staff facilitate invaluable support and resources across many areas of school life which will positively impact all stake holders including pupils, staff, families and governors.

Strength in Community: INOVA is composed of a family of schools that are rooted in their local communities, and

are forward thinking and open to learning from one another. The trust comprises a mixture of primary and secondary schools in Sheffield, from varying local communities, and this diverse make-up aligns with our school value of embracing difference and it is committed to upholding the individual character of each school within its family.

Securing Long-Term Sustainability: As a member of INOVA, our school would benefit from greater financial autonomy and centralised support services, allowing us to focus our resources where they matter most: on delivering a high-quality education to your children.

What does this mean for our school?

- Your child's school will not change day-to-day. The school's name, uniform and core identity will remain unchanged.
- **Our strong working relationship with Dobcroft Infant School will not cease.** As we do currently, under two structures (Peak Edge and a local authority school), head teachers will still set the same INSET days; communicate in adverse weather conditions in order to make joint decisions; meet regularly as school leaders; ensure robust transition arrangements from year 2 to 3 and continue to support organisations such as FODs and DASH together.
- Staff will transfer with their employment rights protected. All current staff would transfer to the employment of the Multi-Academy Trust under the TUPE regulations, protecting their existing terms and conditions.
- We will retain our unique ethos. The structure of INOVA MAT is designed to support the individual character and ethos of each school. Our distinct ethos, culture, and day-to-day leadership will remain intact.

The Consultation Process

Your views are extremely important to us, and we are committed to making this process as open and transparent as possible. This formal consultation will run from **Monday 13th October to Monday 17th November 2025** during which we invite all stakeholders to share their feedback.

Here is how you can engage with the consultation:

Information Meeting: We will hold a meeting for parents and carers on **Wednesday 12th November at 6pm** in the school hall. This will include a presentation from the Governing Body and members of the INOVA team, followed by a Q&A session.

Provide Feedback: You can submit your comments and questions in writing via email at enquiries@dobcroft-jun.sheffield.sch.uk. The deadline for feedback is 5.00pm Monday 17 November.

Following the consultation period, the Governing Body will carefully review all feedback before making a final decision. We will publish the outcome via a letter as soon as is possible after the consultation closes.

We encourage you to take this opportunity to learn more and share your thoughts and ask questions. We believe that joining INOVA Multi-Academy Trust is an exciting next step that will benefit our entire school community for many years to come.

Yours sincerely,

Katherine Oglesby (Chair of Governors)

Nicola Sexton (Headteacher)

Dobcroft Junior School