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## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

### A PROPOSED MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST PARTNERSHIP INVOLVING

Exeter House School  
St Mark's C.E. Junior School  
Wyndham Park Infants' School

**30 NOVEMBER 2014**

#### PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The three schools above are all on Somerset Road, Salisbury and together form a campus. Despite their different origins the schools have in recent years worked closely, but informally, together. The three Headteachers meet regularly, the Chairs of Governors occasionally, Full Governing Body meetings have been attended by Governors of one of the other schools, joint training has taken place on site, and the schools share some resources (Site Manager, ground maintenance etc). The time was right to consolidate and expand this relationship.

The three schools have therefore agreed to work towards a formal education Partnership based on a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) model. The primary objective of the Partnership is to deliver a high quality educational experience on the campus so that all pupils within the Trust are given the opportunity to develop and achieve their best academically, socially, emotionally, spiritually and physically and to understand their place in the wider community.

This document summarises the key elements and principles of the Partnership as agreed between the partner schools. It is to be used to set the framework and guidelines within which the Partnership will work together to establish the new Multi-Academy Trust on behalf of the schools.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is not a legally binding document but is a valuable step in setting the guidelines and principles for the Partnership. The specific governance and operational arrangements for the new MAT will be agreed between the partner schools during the development of the Partnership and formalised within the legal constructs of the MAT model articles.

#### PARTNERSHIP NAME

1.0. The name of the Partnership will be **Somerset Road Education Trust (SRET)**.

#### PARTNERSHIP PURPOSE AND GOALS (MISSION/VISION STATEMENT)

**The Partnership will create an outstanding, inspirational and inclusive learning community that meets the needs of all young people for their present and future global citizenship. This will be achieved through:**

- 1.1. Working within the Partnership and the wider community to design, and deliver a safe, inclusive, innovative, stimulating and caring environment for the pupils.
- 1.2. Raising the aspiration of all within our partnership in the belief that that there is no limit to what we can achieve individually and collectively.
- 1.3. Developing and nurturing a collective approach to raising achievement through appropriate challenge, support and celebration, and a commitment to early intervention.

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1.4. Providing a learning and teaching environment and culture where all feel safe to take risks in order to learn and grow.

1.5. Equipping and developing all professionals engaged in delivering the curriculum with excellent knowledge and skills through high quality leadership and management.

1.6 Providing a 'learning and teaching environment' in which each school can develop its own culture, beliefs and ethos as appropriate within the overall MAT framework, recognising that two schools are Community schools and one a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school.

1.7 Maximising opportunities to provide outstanding resources that underpin the teaching and learning environments across the Partnership and providing a wider scope of experience and opportunity for the professionals within the MAT.

1.8 Creating Partnership development plans that will be composed in the light of the overall strategic vision: agreed, shared and consistently applied across the Partnership.

### **UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THE PARTNERSHIP (ETHOS & CULTURE)**

**The following principles will guide and secure the purpose and goals of the Partnership. They strengthen the Partnership and are seen as fundamental to its ethos.**

2.1. All trustees, governors and professionals working for the MAT will accept and embrace their professional responsibility to care for every child and young person within the Partnership. They will be open to change, treating all within the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.

2.2. Every child has the right to the highest quality academic, social, emotional, spiritual and physical education.

2.3. High quality intervention will be provided when appropriate to ensure the learning needs of ALL pupils are met at the earliest opportunity.

2.4. Those involved in Partnership leadership and governance accept responsibility to provide high quality in-service training and an appraisal process that is fair, challenging and supportive and enables outstanding teaching and leadership

2.5. All pupils will be nurtured within an agreed moral framework for their school, secured through British values, Christian values, values of community schools and the values identified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2.6. There will be clear structures in place to ensure that the voices of everyone within the Partnership is heard and valued.

2.7. The partnership will value and respect each school's distinctive ethos, character and identity, and not attempt to influence or change their status.

2.8 To identify and foster the passions that motivate each child and provide an atmosphere where children enjoy learning and want to go to school

### **STRUCTURAL CONCEPT – MODEL / GOVERNANCE / ACCOUNTABILITIES**

**The model outlined here is brief, deals with the overarching principles and does not attempt to get into the details, which will need to be agreed at subsequent working party and steering group meetings.**

3.1. A structure will be agreed that will ensure that it is in line with the principles, is democratic and balances the needs of all the partners within the MAT and will be efficient in delivering the outcomes.

3.2. The Partnership and its schools will continually evaluate, improve and develop through strong, effective and accountable leadership at all levels. The aim is to establish clear and simple but effective accountability, delegated to the most appropriate level within the organisation.

3.3. The partners acknowledge the mix of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools that are joining the partnership and will work with Salisbury Diocese to secure appropriate foundation representation within

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the governance structure. Each school's individual category will be retained within the local governance model to be established.

3.4. The proposed structure as at 30 November 2014 is attached as Appendix A.

#### **RELATIONSHIPS TO EXISTING PARTNERS**

**The academies within the Trust value their established relationships with other partners. In order to further develop and build upon existing partnerships the following will form part of the development of the Trust:**

4.1. All schools within the Partnership will respect and value their existing relationships with other partners. Schools will continue to engage with these partners whilst ensuring that the underlying ethos and culture of the MAT partnership is maintained.

4.2. Within the Partnership, the VC school (St Mark's) will retain and maintain its relationship with the Diocese.

4.3. There will be appropriate representation from the Diocese on the Board of Trustees as agreed by the Partnership schools.

4.4. SRET will work to strengthen the relationship with other schools in the area to the benefit of all of our children, schools and the wider community.

4.5. SRET will aim to build and strengthen relationships with partners and providers from the maintained and voluntary sectors that engage with the 0-4 and post 16 age groups to secure a fully integrated 0-19 learning experience and to promote their health, progress and well-being.

#### **SUPPORT SERVICES AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

5.1 The Partnership will be responsible for the overall budget. Excellent business and financial skills will be required within the leadership and management of the MAT. This will be secured at Partnership leadership, governance and operational level.

5.2 The Partnership will aim to operate in a financially efficient way through the employment of appropriate business and financial management practice. This will ensure that SRET will take full advantage of savings through; bulk purchasing of goods and services, seeking sponsorship and grant support, rationalising facilities and asset management, developing marketing of SRET expertise etc. There will be effective quality assurance systems in place to ensure that the commissioning of services is effective and achieves good value for money.

5.3. Effective financial management systems will be established at Partnership and individual school level. Agreement will be reached to ensure appropriate financial delegation within the governance and operational model. Support will be provided at Partnership and individual school level to manage centrally held and individual school cash-flow. Admin IT software will be rationalised to ensure efficiency and compatibility across the Partnership.

5.4. An agreed proportion of each school's budget will be held centrally and used to fund central services and Partnership priorities identified within the MAT's 3 year business and finance plan.

5.5. Individual schools within SRET will be able to maintain their own 'charitable' funding activity to further improve their provision.

#### **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

**The schools on the Somerset Road site (the SRET) envisage a very close working relationship based on co-location and ease of communication and management. In the short-term the SRET will wish to establish itself and consolidate its ways of working. Then and only then will it consider whether there is merit or not in expanding the Partnership. If it does decide to expand it will follow a regime of due diligence in selecting new partners. From the outset, transparency and trust between partnership schools is**

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**essential in all matters to do with the performance of pupils, teachers, support staff, leadership, governance and finances.**

6.1. The Partnership may consider expanding membership in the future but the unique selling point of this MAT is the co-location of the three schools, so further expansion off-site would be hard to envisage. The members agree that time is needed to allow the original three schools to effectively develop and consolidate before considering whether or not to expand. Other schools wishing to explore joining the Partnership will only be allowed to do so at a later date and after careful consideration.

6.2 If in the future the Partnership decides to be open to enquiries from other schools, these schools will be expected to demonstrate commitment to the shared values and vision that are critical to the success of the partnership.

6.3. All schools expressing an interest in joining the Partnership will be subject to a due-diligence evaluation in order that the Partnership understands the contribution the school would make to SRET and the support needs of the school. This is effective capacity management.

6.4. The Partnership is keen, when the time is right and the schools can demonstrate capacity and expertise, to explore opportunities to learn from other partnerships' success and to export and market its expertise.

6.5. The Partnership members recognise the importance of being financially sustainable while delivering the education outcomes. The leadership of the Partnership will therefore continually monitor the financial position of the Partnership and explore opportunities for outward growth when benefits can be achieved.

#### **DEVELOPMENT PROCESS & TIMESCALES**

7.1. The Partnership members are working towards establishing the SRET and conversion of their schools into academies. A detailed project plan will be established and all partner schools will work within agreed timelines and plans.

7.2. Academy conversions applications have already been submitted and approved for the three schools.

7.3. Appropriate external support and services will be secured for the development of the Partnership where these are not readily available to be released from a member school

7.4. The member schools will pool an agreed level of initial funds, resources and expertise and all academy based grant monies to cover the costs of the conversion programme and the development of the Partnership. Conversion and MAT grant budgets will be overseen by the working party and individual schools will be able to access the conversion budgets to support conversion work and staff release.

7.6 The SRET will be designed initially to include only the schools that have signed this MOU. Provision will be made in the design to provide for the SRET to expand if and when appropriate.

#### **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT APPROACH**

8.1. The Partnership will develop a consistency of approach for engaging with its stakeholders.

8.2. The Partnership will both communicate and consult on the plans for SRET. However, consultation is not permission, and the schools and Partnership leaders will make the necessary decisions on the development of the Partnership and the schools joining it.

8.3. The partnership will hold initial discussions with staff and governors before an application is made. More formal consultations, following DfE guidelines, will take place following each school's application to convert. These will be planned as a partnership approach.

8.4. All correspondence and information to stakeholders will be carefully co-ordinated so that the same message is given at the same time to demonstrate a united approach and commitment to the initiative.

8.5. The Working Group will take the lead but recognise that Headteachers and Chairs of Governors are best placed to deliver local communications in a planned approach to ensure consistency of key messages.

8.6. A detailed plan will be developed to oversee and manage communications and consultation and this will be closely aligned to any legal consultation requirements.

8.7. Feedback and reporting the outcomes of the consultation process will form part of the plans.

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### **MEMBER SCHOOLS**

The following schools have committed to work in partnership based on the principles and key information described within this MOU with the aim of working towards a Multi-Academy Trust.

Exeter House School

St Mark's C.E. Junior School

Wyndham Park Infants' School

### **Confidentiality**

All matters which are to be treated as sensitive or confidential between the Working Group and the Parties will be declared as such at the time of its disclosure.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Proposed Governance structure as at 30 November 2014**

The 'Directors' in the structure will also be called Trustees.

The SRET will be a charitable company limited by guarantee, with all Trustees registered as directors with Companies House. As a company that is limited by guarantee, the financial liability of Directors is limited to a nominal amount (currently £10 each), should the company face financial difficulties. Additional directors' and officers' liability insurance will be provided for Trustees to cover against loss as a result of a legal action brought for alleged wrongful acts in their capacity as directors and officers.

An **Accounting Officer** will be appointed, as required by the Funding Agreement. This person will be the Executive Principal of the MAT and will be personally accountable to parliament for the financial probity of the Trust.

The MAT structure will include **Members, Trustees, an Executive Principal and Local Governing Bodies (LGB's)**.

**Members** – they establish the Trust, are its owners, and set out and regularly review the constitution of the Trust, through signing its memorandum and articles of association. They are responsible for signing off the annual report and accounts and the SRET strategy document. They can appoint and dismiss some of the Trustees.

In order to represent the views of the community there shall be four Members of the MAT. Membership shall be the Chair of Governors of each of the three schools and a representative of the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education.

The Members will be responsible for the scrutiny of all aspects of the Trust. They would be open, transparent in their activity and accountable to the wider community. It was recognised that transitional arrangements will need to be made, initially set up the first group of Members then allow it to evolve over time.

**Directors/Trustees** – they set the strategic direction for the MAT. They bring a wide experience within and beyond education but as trustees represent the MAT, not specific groups or interests. They are accountable to the Secretary of State for the performance of the schools within it. They are also 'directors' registered with Companies House. Trustees will enter into the master funding agreement and supplemental arrangements with the DfE. They determine the structure of the MAT and its functions. They are accountable for the performance of the schools within the MAT but may delegate aspects of their governance to the LGBs. They hold LGBs accountable for their functions.

It was agreed that SRET should appoint 12 Trustees to ensure that the group can work effectively. Three of the twelve would be appointed by the DSET. Trustees would be appointed for the skills required to support and develop SRET (eg education, finance, entrepreneurial). The following would be Trustees:

- The Headteacher of each school (3) (one to be Executive Principal)
- The Chair of Governors of each school's LGB (3)
- 3 Diocesan representatives (ideally one from each school)
- 3 others, ideally one from each school
- Business manager (ex officio – non-voting)

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**Local Governing Bodies** will oversee functions as delegated to them by the Trust Board in the Scheme of Delegation. The intention is to delegate down as much as is possible to these bodies. They support the work of the Board of Trustees through taking decisions/making recommendations.

Key principles for the LGBs include:

- Size and make-up of each school's LGB to be determined locally – effectiveness rather than representation (skills) but with the longer term objective that the three bodies should be the same size.
- LGBs will deliver their individual SDP in the context of the Trust Development Plan
- They will contribute to compilation of the Trust Development Plan
- They are guardians of their school's ethos/identity
- They ensure policy delivery (local and Trust)
- They appoint staff (but not the school's Headteacher) and conduct performance management in collaboration with the Executive Principal and the Trustees

**Executive Principal** provides the professional leadership of the Trust. The following key skills are required:

- Proven experience of leading/managing a large organization
- Innovative and entrepreneurial
- Willingness to understand the characteristics of the area
- Strong grasp of education at all phases

**Individual Principals/Heads of School** are responsible for the day-to-day running of each school in the MAT and are accountable to the Trustees (via the Executive Principal) and LGBs, depending on where responsibility is delegated within the MAT.

### **Financial Management**

In the initial set-up of the MAT each LGB will be responsible for managing its budget. The expectation is that each school within the MAT will continue to receive the same funding as they received pre-conversion. The additional funding available as a consequence of conversion, including the recovered top-slice from the Local Authority will be managed by the Trustees to provide for wider MAT activity as identified in this MOU. There will be a Business Manager for the Trust and one for each school. The Trust BM will be responsible for the harmonisation of financial and other business affairs across the Trust.

These details are summarised in the Annex below.

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## Annex

### The Members and Directors/Trustees of the Somerset Road Education Trust

The Members of the Somerset Road Education Trust at its formation on 1 January 2015 are as follows:

Clare Clifford	Chair of Governors, Exeter House School
Roy Bexon	Chair of Governors, St Mark's C.E. Junior School
Stephen Hackett	Chair of Governors, Wyndham Park Infants' School
Gavin Walker	Representative of the Diocese of Salisbury Education Trust (DSET)

The Trustees (Directors) of the Somerset Road Education Trust are appointed by the Members; the Trustees at its formation on 1 January 2015 are as follows:

Clare Clifford	Chair of Governors, Exeter House School
Roy Bexon	Chair of Governors, St Mark's C.E. Junior School and Chair of MAT Board
Stephen Hackett	Chair of Governors, Wyndham Park Infants' School
Richard Chapman	Headteacher of Exeter House School
Gareth Flemington	Headteacher of St Mark's C.E. Junior School
Alison Smith	Headteacher of Wyndham Park Infants' School
Jonny Bowden	DSET Trustee (Wyndham Park)
Neil Curtis	Legal (St Mark's)
Angus Mayhew	DSET Trustee (Exeter House)
Mark Podkolinski	Finance (Exeter House)
Patricia Wain	DSET Trustee (St Mark's)
Gavin Walker	Representative of the Diocese of Salisbury Education Trust (DSET)

The Headteachers are responsible for school improvement.

The Chairs of Governors are responsible for Vision and school improvement.

The other six Directors/Trustees are responsible for:

Finance  
HR  
Legal  
H&S  
Safeguarding  
and  
Communication & documents

It is envisaged that each of these six Directors will be responsible for, and take the lead in, one of these six major areas but will be able to call on appropriately skilled resources to meet their requirements.

Richard Chapman will be the Accounting Officer/Executive Principal from 1 January 2015.

<p>For and on behalf of <b><u>EXETER HOUSE SPECIAL SCHOOL</u></b></p> <p>SIGNED by .....  (name school) Chair of Governors - Print Name)</p> <p>.....  (Signature - Chair of Governors)</p> <p>Date .....</p> <p>SIGNED by .....  (name school) Headteacher- Print Name)</p> <p>.....  (Signature – Headteacher)</p> <p>Date .....</p>	<p>For and on behalf of <b><u>ST MARK’S C.E. JUNIOR SCHOOL</u></b></p> <p>SIGNED by .....  (name school) Chair of Governors - Print Name)</p> <p>.....  (Signature - Chair of Governors)</p> <p>Date .....</p> <p>SIGNED by .....  (name school) Headteacher- Print Name)</p> <p>.....  (Signature – Headteacher)</p> <p>Date .....</p>
<p>For and on behalf of <b><u>WYNDHAM PARK INFANTS’ SCHOOL</u></b></p> <p>SIGNED by .....  (name school) Chair of Governors - Print Name)</p> <p>.....  (Signature - Chair of Governors)</p> <p>Date .....</p> <p>SIGNED by .....  (name school) Headteacher- Print Name)</p> <p>.....  (Signature – Headteacher)</p> <p>Date .....</p>	