The Growth of Multi-Academy Trusts

The implications and opportunities for the Independent education sector

March 2016
The genesis of MATs

• The academy movement owes part of its DNA to the independent sector
  – Academies were conceived as independent state schools (forerunners were City Technology Colleges)
  – Academy trusts grew out of both independent school groups and school improvement federations/groupings in the maintained sector
Legal framework

Accountability to Secretary of State via Regional School Commissioners

Funding agreement

Exempt charities regulated by DfE

Members

MAT board (Trustees/directors)

School A LGB

School B LGB

School C LGB
Pathways to becoming a MAT

The MAT is established by a sponsor who is an external agent/organisation, not a school.

The MAT is established by a lead school – e.g. a converter academy converts its standalone trust into a MAT and is approved as a sponsor.

A group of schools decide to work together to establish a MAT, sometimes under the leadership of one school.
A growing number of MATs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group range</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41+</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sponsors

829 sponsors approved nationally (and rising)
Changes in sponsorship over time

Percentage of sponsors that are school based

School sponsorship has become the dominant model
Support beyond sponsorship

- Independent sector schools are also supporting academies with
  - Governors and governance
  - Leadership
  - Subject expertise
  - Broader partnership programmes

- Some academy chains are a mix of state and independent schools
Learning from early sponsors

Best sponsors

- Geographically focused
- Worked through clusters
- Did not expand too fast
- Had clear pedagogical approach
- Used improvement expertise within schools
- Strong, distributed and continuous leadership
- Effective governance
- Strong oversight
## Learning from early sponsors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best sponsors</th>
<th>Struggling sponsors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographically focused</td>
<td>Geographically dispersed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked through clusters</td>
<td>Overambitious: expanded too fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not expand too fast</td>
<td>No clear school improvement approach and insufficient school improvement capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had clear pedagogical approach</td>
<td>Tended to rely on regional directors, consultants and bought-in school improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used improvement expertise within schools</td>
<td>Weak central organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong, distributed and continuous leadership</td>
<td>Some financial improprieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective governance</td>
<td>Variable oversight/governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong oversight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Reforms made by struggling early sponsors

- Change of leadership - new CEOs
- Improved governance
- Loss of academies
- Independent reviews
- Move to clustering
- Emphasis on school improvement
- Links with stronger schools/TSAs
- More independent audit
- Pause on further expansion
Characteristics of newer sponsors

- Most have fewer than 10 academies
- Building more on in-house expertise
- Cross-phase trusts becoming more commonplace (but impact not yet proven)
- Often a mix of converter & sponsored academies
- Increasing number of diocesan MATs
- Differential levels of autonomy
- Some MATs struggling with business sustainability
- Clustering becoming more the norm
MATs working through clusters

Scale and spans of control in a growing MAT
MATs working through clusters (and in some cases) regions

Some larger MATs also using Regional Directors
Impact of sponsored academies and MATs (1)

Difference between sponsored academies and similar maintained schools in 2014 percentage achieving 5 A*-C including English and maths

Impact of sponsored academies and MATs (2)

- Not that much difference in the distribution of LA and MAT performance
- Big variations within and between MATs
Impact of sponsored academies and MATs (1)

- Some challenges
  - 130 academies have received a warning or pre warning notice(s)
  - Around 100 academies (or more) have had to be re-brokered from one sponsor to another
  - The rate at which sponsors are turning round ‘inadequate’ schools is arguably not as rapid as for maintained schools*

*The evidence is partial and sponsors are taking on some of the toughest schools
There are risks in not being part of a MAT

“Academy converters were initially high-performing schools that were given the option to become academies. Over time, the option to become a converter was opened to schools with lower performance. Forty-five per cent of converter academies are in MATs.

“Last year, we reported that more converters that were not in MATs declined than those that were in trusts. This remains the case in inspections this year.”

Six areas of potential learning from the best MATs

1. Layered governance
2. Sharp accountability
3. Leadership models and pathways
4. Staff development
5. Business support
6. Balancing hierarchy and networking
1. Layered governance

MAT members

- Oversight of mission and values of the MAT
- Appoint and – as last resort – remove directors
- Approve annual report and accounts

Board of trustees/directors with overall accountability for all academies in the MAT

- Formal schemes set out respective accountabilities for strategy, funding, policies and performance
- Mechanisms for consultation and dialogue

Local governing bodies or academy councils focused on individual academies
1. Layered governance

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| Board of trustees/directors with overall accountability for all academies in the MAT |
|• Formal schemes set out respective accountabilities for strategy, funding, policies and performance |
|• Mechanisms for consultation and dialogue |

| Local governing bodies or academy councils focused on individual academies |

- Emphasis on skills
- Good training and development
- Size typically of 7-11 members
- Fewer committees
- High quality chairs
Examples of formalised operating rules

The Park Federation Academy Trust
TPF Academies
Governor Handbook
2015/16
2. Sharp accountability (1)

Source: Cabot Learning Federation
2. Sharp accountability (2)

Source: ARK Schools Trust
2. Sharp accountability (3)

- Peer review and/or external review
- Joint lesson observations
- One-to-ones between senior leaders
- Shared assessment and moderation
- Learning walks
- Joint reviews on issues of concern
- Common performance management
3. New leadership models…

Director of Teaching & Learning
- Leadership development
- Coordination of Coaching & JPD
- Deployment of expertise

Executive leader
Head of school
Faculty heads
Lead teachers
Specialists

Executive leader
Head of school
Faculty heads
Lead teachers
Specialists

Head of school
Faculty heads
Lead teachers
Specialists

Head of school
Faculty heads
Lead teachers
Specialists
3. …and pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Within schools</th>
<th>Between schools</th>
<th>Beyond schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headteachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including day-to-day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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4. New ways of thinking about staff development...

What do we know?
- Lit reviews
- Toolkits
- Reading groups
- Speakers
- Teach meets
- Seminars
- Training
- Master classes

What works in our context?
- Lesson study
- Action research
- Pupil-led research
- Peer review & coaching
- Classroom-based Masters
- Online forums and observation

What’s the impact?
1. New knowledge
2. Improved experience and outcomes for pupils
3. Teachers supported to be learners and so better equipped to teach

Effect size
RCTs

* Adapted from an idea by Sarah Stafford - http://miss-stafford.com
4. ...to support the growth of a shared teaching and learning model

- Agreeing on the fundamentals of school turn-around
- Sharing schemes of work, curriculum models and student voice
- Building up a shared understanding of outstanding teaching and learning
- Standardising through co-construction key aspects of pedagogy
- Flexing the curriculum to meet students’ needs
4. …with a teaching school as part of the MAT

Welcome to the Harris Federation Teaching School Alliance

The Harris Federation Teaching School Alliance is the professional development centre for the Harris Federation. We provide high-quality training that is facilitated by experienced school leaders, who have exemplary records in leading successful school improvement, and improving outcomes for their students. Our highly practical training and support programmes are available to all schools and academies, not just to Harris Federation staff.

The Harris Federation has a proven track record of transforming underperformance rapidly, with 20 of our secondary academies all rated as ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ and 75% rated ‘outstanding’ (Ofsted). The success we have had so far is a direct result of the talented and dedicated teachers, support staff and leadership teams we have in our Academies.

Read More
5. New model for business management

- Shared posts and teams across schools – particularly at senior AND middle leadership level and in specialist areas
- Flexible deployment of staff with expertise
- A chief operations function to lead:
  - Shared services – HR, EWO, ICT, estates etc
  - Joint procurement
  - Integrated business planning and financial management
  - Common data systems
5. New model for business management

- CEO
- PA
- Business Manager
- Other senior leaders/consultants carrying out ad hoc roles
- Chief Operating Officer
- Director of Finance and/or Management Accountant
- Directors of Standards* Director of Teaching & Learning**
- Full- or part-time Data Analysis, ICT Management, HR and Marketing Support
- Full-time Directors of Standards & Teaching & Learning
- Key curriculum specialists*
- Central Business Team (including ICT)
- HR and Estates Managers

*Might be linked to SLT role in a MAT academy
**Might be an external consultant/expert

*Might be based in academies

Fledgling
MAT spectrum
Mature
6. Balancing hierarchy and networking

Shared understanding of how to improve teaching and learning

Inquiry-led learning

Quality assurance systems

Fit governance

Clear vision and strategy

Sustainable business model

Executive leadership

Talent management and leadership development

High social capital
Pause for thought

Questions?

Disagreement?

Discussion?

Debate?