



Where Pupils Achieve and Excel
Headteacher: Mrs T Price BA (Hons) MA Ed

Multi-Academy Trust Frequently Asked Questions

What is an academy?

An academy is a publicly funded independent school that provides an excellent free education to local students of all abilities. They provide a teaching and learning environment that is in line with the best in the maintained sector and offer a broad and balanced curriculum to students of all abilities, focusing especially on one or more subject areas (specialisms). A Multi-Academy Trust is formed from a group of schools coming together.

What benefits can an academy bring?

An Academy has greater flexibility and freedom for the Head-teacher and governing body to decide how it is run, how money is budgeted, how staff is paid and how the curriculum is delivered to the pupils ensuring that specific needs of the pupils are met. As well as providing the best opportunities for the most able students and those needing additional support, academies have a key part to play in the regeneration of communities and raising standards through innovative approaches to management, governance, teaching and the curriculum.

Why are we considering forming a Multi-Academy Trust?

This is the opportunity to shape, control and future-proof our schools. As an academy we would have greater control of our school budgets and greater autonomy over our curriculum. Over the next few years there is going to be a tightening of budgets and we need to prepare for cuts. By being in a MAT we can secure greater opportunities for financial savings. As we have learned through our partnerships, collaborative working with other schools can provide an improved educational experience for our own students through various areas including teaching and learning, an enhanced and engaging curriculum, staff development and progression opportunities, finance and human resources, legal services, school improvement structures and governance arrangements.

How will an academy raise achievement?

The running of the academy is based on the belief that everybody can achieve and that learning should be both exciting and smart. A high quality of leadership, providing staff and students with an effective learning environment and a range of initiatives to support teachers, pupils and their families will be used in order to increase achievement.

Will pupils' education be affected by a transition to academy status?

When an academy is approved to go ahead, it will do so with minimal disruption to the staff and students. This will be ensured by a detailed programme being created in order to outline the step-by-step guide on the progress. The main priority is to ensure the safe

working environment for both staff and students while work is being undertaken whilst providing a first class standard of education.

How is an academy funded and does this improve on current funding arrangements?

Academies receive the same level of per-pupil funding as maintained schools, plus funding to meet additional responsibilities that are no longer provided for them by the local authority. Headteachers and governors in academies have greater freedom over how they use these budgets to best benefit their students.

Will our school change?

We want to continue to be a great school where every child is valued. We therefore do not intend to change except in ways we think will improve the schools even more. For children, it is unlikely that they would see much, if any, change in their day-to-day school lives. Academies have more freedom than other state schools over their finances, curriculum, length of terms and school days. However, we do not intend to take any such steps at this stage and would engage with parents/carers, staff and students if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future.

Do academies have to follow the National Curriculum?

Academies do not have to follow the National Curriculum.

Would academy status affect the SEND provision?

No, SEND services would stay exactly the same and we would continue to provide SEND services as we do now.

What would the changes mean for staff?

Staff would not notice significant changes in their everyday working lives. They already experience and champion the benefits of partnership work and that would not only continue but grow. Terms and conditions for existing staff would remain the same and pensions would transfer (including pension contributions). Their contracts would TUPE across to the Trust. The change will come when one day their employer is James Bateman Junior High and the next day their employer is the Trust. Professional development would further expand and there would be a greater range of opportunities for advancement.

Who makes the final decision on whether each school converts to an academy?

The Board of Governors.

Can an academy be closed?

Academies are still subject to Ofsted inspections. Any school which is not making satisfactory progress or does not meet expected standards is at risk of intervention. If the schools are no longer part of the local authority, then who are they accountable to? The Trust would be accountable directly to the Department for Education and our accounts audited by the DfE's Education Funding Agency and external auditors.

Who runs a MAT?

Above the Local Governing Bodies is The Trust, essentially functioning as one board of governors overseeing the local boards. They would be the main decision-making group and

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accountable for all schools within the Trust. The Trust consists of nine Trustees, specifically selected for their skills, tasked with ensuring the excellence of all school.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Creative Learning Partnership and the accounting officer is Mrs Lynne Bennett (Head-teacher of Hempstalls Primary School). The Chief Operating Officer is Mr Sam Compton (Head-teacher of Parkside Primary School) and the Chief Financial Officer is Amanda Wilkinson. The accountants and auditors are Hardings and the MAT receives financial support from Edbc education business consultancy.

Can schools withdraw from the conversion process?

Schools are able to withdraw right up to the point that they sign the Funding Agreement. Once this is signed there is a legally binding agreement between the Secretary of State and the academy and the termination process would require a long notice period.

What is the timescale for conversion?

The entire process from start to finish generally takes 3-5 months, with conversions being official on the 1st of the month. It would be a smooth transition in which children, staff and parents are unlikely to perceive any change, and no disruption to the normal running of the school. If we convert, the date would be determined with the Department for Education and we would let you know when it is confirmed.