

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an Academy? Academies are charitable companies funded by the Government to provide state education free of charge. Multi academy trusts bring together several academies under a single board of trustees, who are accountable for the academies within the Trust. They are funded at the same level as schools maintained by local authorities; and have the same responsibilities for children with special educational needs, pupils in receipt of pupil premium and for admissions.

So why make the change? All schools need support to improve and we are unable to secure the support we need from the Local Authority. After working with the AAT for a few months under the Partnership Trust agreement, we have already seen many changes and improvements to our school and the outcomes for pupils.

What about the staff? If we joint AAT all our staff will transfer to the trust on their existing terms and conditions protected under the TUPE regulations. The Trust employs qualified teachers and pay all its staff on national terms and conditions. Staff will benefit from opportunities to work closely together and professional development is at the heart of the core values of the trust to ensure that all staff are equipped well for the challenges and demands of 21st century teaching & learning. The trust give recruitment & retention of great staff its highest priority.

Who will be the members of the local governing body? Our Chair of Governors, Jon Hopkins, has already joined the Trust Board for AAT as a Trustee for an initial period of one year. We will continue to have our own Governing Board which will be known as a Local Governing Board. The local governing body will continue to include two elected parents and one elected member of staff.

Does joining an academy trust mean that everything will change? No! Joining the Trust will better enable us to work together and support each other to improve. The schools' names, term dates, school times, uniform and admissions arrangements will not change. We do not expect parents and children to notice any difference in your day to day experience of school.

What changes will there be to staffing, particularly leadership? There will be no major changes to staffing and Leadership and Trustees and governors will continue to work with staff, ensuring that they feel happy and supported and hope that they will invest in working within the Trust for the long term. That may develop further as the Trust grows and as more opportunities arise.

What's the timescale for this change? Governors are consulting in April and will review the outcome of consultation shortly afterwards. If we decide to go ahead, we will be keen to complete the process as quickly as possible with a view to joining AAT on 1 September 2022.

Academies: Some key facts

Curriculum : Academies are required to have a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. For pupils below Key Stage 1 (i.e. reception and nursery), academies are required to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The curriculum must include:

- English, maths and science;
- Religious Education; and
- Relationships education and health education.

Academies are required to take part in the same pupil assessment arrangements and to report on the achievement and attainment of pupils in the same way as all other state funded schools.

Inspection : Academies continue to be subject to Ofsted inspections.

Staffing : The regulations that place requirements on maintained schools do not directly apply to academies. General employment law applies to academies in the same way as to other organisations. Teachers must be suitably qualified. The Academy Trust has responsibility for setting pay and conditions. We will employ all staff on national terms and conditions so there is no change for staff. All teachers employed at an academy have access to the Teachers Pensions Scheme and all other employees at an academy have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Funding : The MAT will receive General Annual Grant from the Secretary of State calculated as the equivalent to that which would be received by a maintained school taking account of the number of pupils at the academy. Capital funding is also available, channelled through the Academy Trust. Every academy trust must abide by the requirements of and have regard to the guidance in the Academies Financial Handbook.

SEND : Academies should be fully inclusive local schools and in common with all other schools have a clear legal duty to do their best to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Admissions : Academies are required to provide education for pupils wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which the academy is situated. Academies must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than available places. Academies are required to provide education for pupils of different abilities (i.e. they may not select pupils by ability).

The conversion process

The conversion process begins with an application to the Secretary of State for Education for an academy order. This is a permission to convert – and confirms that the Government is happy for us to go ahead. Beyond that there are several key steps to make the change, including:

- Consulting parents and staff and other stakeholders
- Consulting staff and their unions on the transfer to a new employer;
- Working with the Local Authority who own our site to ensure that this can be used by the Academy;
- Transferring contracts for goods and services.
- A grant from the DfE will support the costs incurred, including expertise in managing the process so that your child's education is not disrupted.

How can I find out more? There is a dedicated page on the school website called "Academy Consultation" under the "Parents" page.

How can I make my views known? You can give your views and comments by contacting us as above or by using the form attached to this letter or by attending a Consultation meeting.

Please do so by 21st June 2022