

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON ACADEMY

QUESTIONS	RESPONSE
What will happen to the Fernvale governors?	The Governing body will stay the same with a local Governing body and be part of a multi academy trust. We will have two trustees sitting on the trustee board.
What will happen to the Head Teacher?	The current Head Teacher of Fernvale will remain as Head Teacher and will also be part of the trustees' board. The Head Teacher will be responsible to Ofsted as currently happens.
What will happen to the staff of the school?	The staff of Fernvale would remain the same working at our school.
What will happen to the pupils?	Pupils will continue to go to Fernvale and the school uniform will stay same. The ethos of Fernvale school will remain the same.
What will happen to the buildings?	The Members of the trust will ensure the management of the buildings in conjunction with the local Governing body. We will also buy back into the local authority for appropriate resources.
What are the changes that ACADEMY will bring?	ACADEMY will bring closer collaboration between the schools. The Head teachers will work together across the Multi Academy Trust. Over time it is likely that some newly appointed staff will have the opportunity to work across all schools, as with current staff if they wished to do so.
Will there be more activities for my child?	Over time it is likely that a number of activities available to children from the schools will increase, whether that is the availability of music lessons, additional sport opportunities, drama experiences and holiday clubs and residentials.
Will I be able to see the Head Teacher?	The current Head Teacher will be based at Fernvale. – No change.
How will Fernvale work with 3 other schools already within the trust?	The Strategic director / Executive Head Teacher will spend time at each school during the week. The Head Teacher of Fernvale will remain at Fernvale.
Who would be in charge when the Head Teacher is not at a school?	The Deputy Head Teacher will run the school as normal. With support from the Strategic Director as required and if appropriate.
Will my child's education suffer?	No, opportunities for learning would be enhanced.
Why these 3 particular schools?	They are of similar ethos and close geographically.
Will each school's uniform and name remain the same?	Yes, all schools will keep their own school uniforms and names.
Will the Parent-Teacher Associations continue in their present form?	Absolutely. All funds raised will continue to go to the individual schools. Money raised by Fernvale will be spent on Fernvale Children.
What happens when the SAT's results at Key stage 1 are published?	SAT's are published separately for all schools, as are Ofsted reports.
What powers would the Trustees have to form the strategic direction of the four schools?	Decisions are made at local Governing body level and then taken to the Trustees to be ratified. Trustees make decisions based on sound knowledge of each of the 4 schools.
What would be the roles of the members? How would they interact with all four schools?	Members oversee work and agree work carried out by the trustees, review the annual report and check accounts before sending to the Department for Education.
What would be the role of the strategic director? And what influence would they have over the four schools?	The role of the strategic director is to provide the strategic direction of travel in conjunction with trustees and agreed by members to benefit the pupils within the MAT. To oversee accounts and to report back to the members during meetings held termly. An Annual report is produced with 4 schools information in and presented to Governors, directors and members. To ensure the organization and running of the Multi Academy Trust is successful and accountable.

<p>How would we share resources across the four schools?</p>	<p>Each school would run its own budget and have an agreed amount per pupil put into an addition funding stream.</p>
<p>What are the benefits of joining a Multi Academy Trust?</p>	<p>Continued improvements in teaching and learning for children through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff in the schools working together to learn from each other and share best practice.</li> <li>Joint staffing opportunities, including specialist teachers sharing expertise and wider career opportunities across the academy to improve staff development and retention.</li> <li>Enhanced senior leadership teams who share expertise across the schools.</li> <li>The opportunity to further enrich the curriculum both during and after school.</li> </ul>
<p>Why change to become part of a Multi Academy Trust?</p>	<p>Autonomy given to the Schools rather than the Local Authority, thus giving the school a stronger focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to further develop excellent educational standards in all schools.</li> <li>Freedom to funnel extra resources towards our children, and their educational needs.</li> <li>Greater level of curriculum freedom.</li> <li>Gives the schools an ability to change the curriculum to fit the needs of our children.</li> <li>Sharing of expertise, services and resources.</li> <li>Academies will bring clearer understanding of shared resources from school to school.</li> <li>Ability to 'shop around' for best value services.</li> <li>Better Opportunities for staff professional development.</li> </ul>

## **WHAT IS AN ACADEMY?**

Academies are independent, state-funded schools.

There are two types of academies:

Converter academies – those previously with ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ Ofsted grades that have converted to academy status voluntarily.

Sponsored academies – mostly underperforming schools converting to academy status due to government intervention and academies run by sponsors.

They receive funding directly from central government, rather than through a LA.

They are overseen by charitable bodies, called academy trusts, which provide advice, support and expertise.

An academy trust that operates more than one academy is known as an academy chain or a multi-academy trust (MAT).

While academies may be free from LA control, they are still subject to other restrictions, which must be kept in mind when discussing the increased freedom of academy status.

## **FACTS AND STATISTICS**

As of June 2015 there are 4,676 academies in England – this has risen from 203 in 2010.

Over half of all secondary schools in England are now academies.

Since converting to academies, an estimated 55 percent of schools have changed their curriculum and eight percent changed the length of their school day.

Ofsted have previously said that around 56 percent of academies work together in academy chains, which are governed by an MAT.

A DfE analysis found that 17 sponsors have been formally blocked from being able to expand due to concerns over the performance of their schools.

It has been found that secondary converter academies previously graded ‘good’ are more likely to retain and improve their Ofsted grade than previously good maintained schools.

“There is no robust evidence that any particular school structure or type – such as academies, free schools, faith schools – is beneficial for improving the performance of poor pupils.”

## **ADVANTAGES**

Increased freedom regarding budgetary decisions.

An academy is not subject to LA regulations regarding finances.

With the increased freedom over finance, it may become easier to balance the budget, particularly in regards to national budget cuts in the education sector.

Extra revenue from the Education Services Grant enables academies to invest more in relation to their own priorities.

Academies receive £25,000 towards conversion costs from the DfE and can potentially top up their budget by as much as 10 percent.

Existing staff's pay and conditions will initially remain the same due to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.

Schools will be responsible for how they deploy their financial resources.

Academies can draft new terms and conditions for new staff because academy status means that employees are not bound by their LA or the national pay and conditions framework – this can also be seen as a negative.

## **DISADVANTAGES**

If the governing body does not have the skills and knowledge needed, a business manager with the relevant financial and personnel experience may be required, meaning more usage of the budget for recruitment.

Academies, in particular small academies, could face serious financial problems as the budget is based on pupil numbers and academies have no back up from the LA which could lead to closure of the academy.

An academy will no longer have the safety net that the LA provided schools, particularly when schools encounter deficit problems with their budgets.

They do not follow the national pay and conditions for teachers which can lead to staff becoming worried about pay security.

Following conversion to academy status, once existing staff agree to change their contract they would be bound by any new contract the academy has devised – this can result in negative aspects, such as less maternity pay.

The grant for conversion is only payable after the school has converted to academy status, and is unlikely to cover the financial costs of conversion.

## **STAFFING AND WORKLOAD**

### **Advantages**

Greater freedom in regards to the running of the school.

More flexibility in terms of staffing and recruiting decisions.

Greater freedom in terms of the teaching of the national curriculum.

The school may appear more popular as an academy due to the increased freedom.

### **Disadvantages**

Staff may fear the lack of security regarding future pay and conditions.

Extra workload due to curriculum development.

Not teaching the national curriculum may effect future job opportunities for teaching staff.

Due to the lack of security and LA support, an academy may be less attractive to potential school leaders.

Teachers bound by the new academy contract could result in having no provisions for planning, preparation and assessment, as well as the need for teachers to undertake additional administrative duties on top of their primary role.

## **THE GOVERNING BODY**

### **Advantages**

Due to no longer being under the LA's control, governing bodies have more power and responsibility.

Greater cohesion with other governing bodies leads to the sharing of good practice.

### **Disadvantages**

The governing body has greater responsibility, resulting in an increased workload.

Before gaining academy status, the governing body will have an increased workload due to undertaking necessary consultations and gathering information.

The governing body must prepare a viable business plan, which may result in the need to buy in services.

Due to the lack of LA involvement, the governing body must monitor standards and trends in detail, ensuring that all issues and concerns are addressed immediately.

It may become difficult to recruit governors due to the extra workload and responsibility attached to the role.

The governing body must identify any training requirements and source appropriate training, which could be expensive.

Conversion could lead to the possible dismissal of additional parent governors, though academies must still retain at least two.

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LA and OTHERS SCHOOLS**

### **Advantages**

Academies are not tied to LA services and processes, which means that they can use other companies in order to receive best value for money.

Outstanding schools may be expected to support less successful schools, which could lead to greater cohesion in the area.

The every day running of the academy will not be under the control of any external parties; this includes the LA. However, sponsors of an academy and the board of trustees of an MAT are still involved in the running of a school.

### **Disadvantages**

Researching services will result in an increased workload, including undertaking the 'value for money' process which the LA would previously do.

Third party services may cost more.

Due to the lack of LA involvement, schools may not have a common group in which to work together.

Neighbouring schools may resent the change in status, consequently leading to relationships becoming fragmented.