

# Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

## **1. What is the main reason for converting to Academy status?**

Currently the proportion of schools which are academies or are converting into academies across the UK are 71% for secondary schools and 34% for primary schools (Source: DfE Aug 2018). Given that so many other schools have converted both nationally and locally, the governors consider that, if we do not initiate this change, it is increasingly likely that the future may be taken out of our hands. This could mean being allowed only to join other existing Academy Trusts rather than creating our own, on our terms. By working with other local Edmonton schools to set up our own Academy Trust we retain the control over the organisation, ethos and values of the Trust. Parents and children will see no change when we convert to an Academy.

## **2. Do schools need to consult before converting?**

Yes. All schools are required to carry out a consultation but it is up to each school to decide whom and how to consult. There is no legally specified length of time for the consultation and schools have flexibility in how it is conducted. Our consultation period will run from 21<sup>st</sup> January until 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019. After this point, we will continue to communicate through a variety of methods to ensure that everyone is kept up-to-date. These FAQs will be updated regularly on our website as necessary. If parents, staff and the community have additional questions to ask, they should email the school at [academyquestions@raynham.enfield.sch.uk](mailto:academyquestions@raynham.enfield.sch.uk).

## **3. Will the name of the school or its uniform change?**

No. We will still be known as Raynham Primary School and are proud to keep this name. We will continue to serve the community around the school. The uniform will not change - we will keep the same uniform and the other schools in the Trust will keep their own uniforms.

## **4. Is an Academy like a business?**

No. A business makes a profit for its shareholders. An academy is a charitable trust which cannot make a profit.

## **5. Are academies bound by the same rules and regulations as other schools?**

Academies are required to follow the law and guidance on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions

## **6. What does the conversion process involve?**

After carrying out its own due diligence the key steps we must take are to:

- The Governing Body formally agrees to consult on becoming an academy and within which MAT
- Obtain the Secretary of State's initial consent by securing an "Academy Order"
- Carry out the necessary consultation and decide to proceed
- Ensure all the legal aspects of the transfer are completed
- Transfer under TUPE all contract arrangements for staff. This is a formal legal consultation process which is separate from the consultation with all stakeholders. This would not start until after the vote by the Governing Body to apply for academy status.

## **TEACHING AND THE CURRICULUM**

## **7. Will the school be able to set its own curriculum?**

Academies are able to offer a more flexible curriculum but they are required to provide a 'balanced and broadly based curriculum'. There is no intention to change the curriculum we currently teach and the teaching of English, Maths and Science would, of course remain central as they are now.

#### **8. What would happen to SEN provision?**

We would continue to provide the same support for pupils with an Education Health Care Plan and indeed the funding for this element continues to be provided by the Local Authority. The Local Authority retains its responsibility for statutory duties, obligations and procedures remain in place when a school converts to academy status.

#### **9. Will academies be free from Ofsted inspections?**

No, academies remain fully under Ofsted's inspection arrangements.

### **EMPLOYMENT AND STAFFING**

#### **10. What happens to all of the staff?**

All staff are entitled to transfer, under TUPE regulations, to the Academy with their same terms and conditions as at present.

#### **11. Can academies alter the pay and conditions of employees?**

When a school converts to a new academy, employees are entitled to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions. There is a legal process to go through, which is called TUPE, whereby staff maintain existing pay, conditions and length of service. This position will continue unless and until the contract of employment is varied with the agreement of the employee. Any alterations can only be made as they would have been by the Council (for example, changes to pay and annual leave negotiated with the employees and their representatives).

It's important to note that there are no plans to alter the pay and conditions of staff. Of course, any changes made nationally would apply.

#### **12. How will union membership (NEU, NASUWT, Unison, etc) work?**

Union recognition would remain as it currently stands; all employees are entitled to be part of a union.

### **ADMISSIONS**

#### **13. What are the admission requirements for schools converting to become academies?**

No changes are proposed to the admissions criteria and we will continue to follow the Enfield admissions policy as we do now.

The Local Authority retains responsibility for co-ordination of admission arrangements.

As at present, the Academy could not refuse places to anyone, if there was a vacancy in that particular year group.

### **FINANCE**

#### **14. How are academies funded?**

Academies receive the same level of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school, so there is no longer a financial advantage of becoming an academy (as was the position a few years ago).

#### **15. Do we have to cover the full cost to convert to an academy?**

No. The Department for Education currently pay a flat-rate grant of £25,000 and the conversion is not expected to impact on the Academy's revenue budget.

**16. *Who would own the land and buildings?***

The land and buildings remain in their current ownership but are made available to the Academy via 125-year lease and/or a supplemental agreement.

**17. *Will we retain the existing financial systems?***

The financial system will change to better reflect the requirements of an Academy trust and meet the company accounts requirements. The funding the school receives remains based on the pupil numbers as it is now and each school will receive their entitlement, based on this.

**GOVERNANCE**

**18. *What are the expected changes to the Governing Body?***

The Multi-Academy Trust will have a central board of directors/trustees, which is responsible to the Secretary of State for overall standards for each school in the MAT and for maintaining a strategic oversight of the Trust. The local governing body will remain in place for each school and will be responsible for the day-to-day operational matters.

**19. *Becoming an academy will require a strong and effective Governing Body. How will we find the governors with the necessary skills, experience and time?***

Being part of Multi-academy Trust means that the board of directors will have the necessary range of skills required at a strategic level. The local governing body does not take on the additional requirements under the Companies Act and therefore, we feel it will be easier to fill the positions.

Recruiting and retaining governors with key skills and experience remains a key task for all schools.

**20. *What will happen to local links and partnerships that we already have?***

These will continue. By joining the MAT it does not preclude us from being part of local partnerships which are for the benefit of the school.