



Frithville Primary School
federated with
New York Primary School

Frequently Asked Questions regarding conversion from a Local Authority maintained school to an academy within a Multi-Academy Trust.

What is an Academy?

Academies are independent state-funded schools, which have the freedom to determine their own policies on such things as the curriculum taught, school hours, term dates and staff pay and conditions. Academies are managed by their own academy trust and are not the responsibility of the Council. Academy Trusts are directly given the money that would have been given to the Council, so academies can choose how best to spend that money on the provision of education.

What is a multi-academy trust (MAT)?

A MAT is a single charitable company which operates a group of schools. In this case, each school would continue to have a local governing body to which certain functions would be delegated. The MAT will ultimately be accountable and responsible for the performance of all schools in the trust. Funding for the schools within the MAT continues to be allocated on an individual school basis.

Why would a school want to convert as part of a multi-academy trust?

A MAT, as a single legal entity, allows schools to achieve strong collaboration and to use this collaboration and accountability to drive up school standards. Having the MAT as employer of staff also allows flexibility around sharing resources to meet the needs of the individual schools involved. The MAT can also provide a clear, consistent strategy and vision across a group of schools working together. MATs can often negotiate contracts and services that achieve much better value for money than if each school was to negotiate individually. By concentrating some of these decisions in the central team of the MAT, Heads and Governors are able to focus more closely on educational standards and provision in their schools.

Which MAT do we intend to join?

Governors have chosen the Horncastle Education Trust as the MAT that they wish to work with. Current members of the HET are Banovallum Secondary School and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School.

What are the benefits for our students?

The Trust will bring effective resources in many areas and will enable us to make sure that every student has their needs met through a widening of provision and opportunity. Professional development for staff will be sourced widely and best practice shared amongst all the schools in the Trust ensuring our teachers receive the best possible opportunities to deliver quality first teaching. The formation of the trust enables students to have an even more effective transition as we focus on education from four to eighteen years. We are already working closely with the other schools to see how best to secure outstanding provision for the young people in the community we serve.

Will the name of the school change?

We will not be changing the school name.

Will the school change its uniform?

We do not currently have plans to change the school uniform.

Will the staffing change?

All staff currently employed by both schools/local authority will automatically transfer to the new academy on their current pay and conditions?

Will the admissions policy and criteria change?

Academies are bound by the School Admissions Code.

Will term dates and school day times change?

We will consult with the other schools in the partnership to align some of our INSET days in future years to make it easier for parents/carers. There are no current plans to change the school day.

Will the curriculum change?

We will have greater freedom and autonomy over our curriculum. This will enable us to continue to develop our curriculum over the next few years should we so wish and have the freedom to review any proposed changes by government and to decide whether they are right for the children at our school. We may also choose to work with some or all of the other schools in the partnership on joint curriculum projects.

Will the school receive more money from the government?

At present the Local Authority retains a proportion of our funding to provide some central LA services. As an academy the LA will no longer retain a proportion of our funding and we will instead pay a 'top slice' to the trust who will be able to choose who to buy services from and how they should be best deployed for the specific benefit of children at our school. By becoming part of a Multi-Academy Trust, we will be able to take advantages of economies of scale to maximise our resources.

Will school leaders spend more time running the business side of the academy instead of focusing on the teaching and learning?

Setting up and running an academy will require extra administrative work particularly in the early stages. We will be using start-up funding from the government to project manage this process and to get the partnership up and running. One of the many benefits of a MAT is that the central team take care of much of the business operation, freeing all staff and Governors to focus on educational and welfare priorities.

How will the school be accountable financially?

We will be governed by the rules and regulations for charitable trusts and will be required to produce and file annual accounts with Companies House, as part of the Multi-Academy Trust.

Will the school get support towards the expenses of academy conversion?

All costs of the conversion process, including legal expenses, are covered by an academy conversion grant. There is no additional cost to the school.

What is the Local Authority view on academies?

The LA understands the reasons for our decision and is assisting us through the process. Lincolnshire are no longer able to provide the services schools require but will retain any statutory duties such as the safeguarding of vulnerable pupils, and we envisage a continued close working relationship with the LA as appropriate.

Does withdrawing from the Local Authority control leave us on our own?

We will still be in a position to buy services from the local authority as and when required, but will also look elsewhere to ensure we get the best, most cost effective services available. In addition, we will continue to work in close collaboration with other schools in the cluster and be supported by the MAT and wider education providers in the region. We will definitely not be on our own but part of a close community of schools.

Will the structure of the Governing Body change?

There are no current plans to alter the structure of the Governing Body although this will be subject to review in the future.

What will be the future responsibility of the Governors?

The Trust Board will now have overall responsibility for educational standards and the business operations of the partnership, however we will be operating a model of earned autonomy so in practice much of the

work of overseeing standards in each school will be delegated to the school Governors. The responsibility for planning and spending funds at school level will also remain with Governors. The most important responsibility of the Governing Body will be to closely monitor educational standards in the school and to ensure continual improvement.

Can you revert to LA control once you have become an academy?

There is no current mechanism for an academy to return to local authority control.