



Conversion to Academy

Further Information and Frequently Asked Questions



General Information

A Governing Body's priority is for the School to provide an excellent education for all pupils. The role of Local Authorities in supporting schools is diminishing and Government policy encourages improvement through school-to-school collaboration.

We believe the best way of raising standards and outcomes for all pupils, is for schools to work together as part a Multi Academy Trust. This provides exciting opportunities to improve the education for all children in the schools.

Through joining the Lime Trust, there will be:

- Support to implement proven and robust curriculum models.
- More opportunities for the children and staff to work together across the schools.
- Increased opportunities for the training and development of staff.
- Access to business and finance support and expertise.
- New and exciting opportunities for pupils and staff through school to school collaboration and support.

Schools converting to an Academy within our Trust will still remain an integral part of their local community and will retain many of their unique qualities and strengths.

About the Lime Trust

The Lime Trust, a Multi Academy Trust was established in February 2015. We are a not-for-profit organisation with a clear moral purpose 'Putting children first'. This is simply to place pupils' learning and well-being at the centre of all that we do.

We work collaboratively to provide opportunities that make a positive difference to the lives of the children, young people and adults within our schools and community.

The Trust is committed to:

- Setting the standard – for all pupils, staff, parents and stakeholders.
- Creating capacity rich schools.
- Supporting neighboring schools and working collaboratively.
- Recruiting and retaining the very best staff.
- Delivering rapid and sustained improvement in Schools.

The Lime Trust team has direct experience of taking a large primary school through from failure to being a high-quality, high-morale school that continues to improve.

We have structured proven approaches to teaching core subjects within a curriculum promoting wellbeing for all. Our experience of highly effective management models is transferable to other, similar school settings.

Converting To Academy FAQs

What are academies?

Academies are publicly funded schools, which are not controlled by the Local Authority and therefore have additional independence in a number of areas. This independence brings increased responsibilities and opportunities to build upon success and ensure that we continue to improve our service to families in our local community.

You can view further detail on academies at the Department for Education website at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies>

Is an academy like a business?

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

Who makes the decision to become an academy?

The governing body.

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. Academies are inspected by OFSTED in the same way as community schools.

What is a multi-academy trust?

A multi-academy Trust (MAT) is where a number of academies join together and form a single trust with a board of Trustees answerable to the Trust's members. Members of the trust are responsible for the strategic oversight of the academy. They appoint and work closely with the Trustees who determine the policies of the Trust, monitor the effectiveness of each academy within the MAT, manage central services where appropriate and report to the Secretary of State. They work to ensure that each academy is performing to the best of its ability and it gets the support it requires. The MAT enters into a supplemental funding agreement with the Secretary of State in respect of each academy within the MAT. Each of the academies in the Trust has its own local governing body called an Academy Council which has authority delegated to it by the Trustees.

Are other schools also creating/joining MATs?

Across the country there are MATs with many academies joined together working cohesively for the benefit of the children in a local area. Government policy promotes and encourages schools to join together and work collaboratively sharing resources and expertise.

'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.' Nelson Mandela

What are the benefits of joining an existing MAT?

- High quality established and robust governance with a clear focus on strategic development, teaching and learning and accountability.
- Capacity to support schools on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Tried and tested well established systems, procedures, policies and practice that enable school staff to focus on teaching and learning.
- Greater opportunities for teachers and support staff to share good practice and benefit from continuing professional development programmes that add real value to the education of all the children.
- Efficiencies in administrative functions and joint procurement.
- Increased opportunities for staff and pupils to meet and work as a part of a larger group.
- Greater professional development opportunities which will enable the school to retain and develop valued staff, securing and developing successful leaders for the future.
- Collaboration through the sharing of best practice at all levels by making full use of staff expertise in specialist areas.

Will other schools join us?

The Lime Trust's aim is to have 'hubs' of 5 to 10 schools in geographical clusters to effectively facilitate school to school collaboration and improvement. The Lime Trust is predicated on capacity rich schools and therefore the speed of growth of the Trust will be carefully managed to ensure that every school receives the support it needs to secure the very best outcomes for its pupils.

Will the school continue to be inspected by Ofsted after conversion?

Yes. Academies are inspected by Ofsted using the same framework and timescales as for maintained schools. All schools within the Trust will also be inspected by Ofsted as part of the process.

GOVERNANCE

How does governance work?

The Lime Trust has a board of Members and Trustees who are ultimately responsible for the work of the Trust, the academies and the attainment of pupils.

Each school during the conversion process will have a transition board, and will then establish an Academy Council.

The Academy Council manages the academy on behalf of the Trust in line with the Scheme of Delegation approved for each academy.

The Academy Council has delegated powers from the Trust Board including the management of finance and property and the raising of standards. The scheme of delegation is the same for each academy within the MAT.

The centralisation of a range of services and business functions can enable governors to concentrate on those aspects of their role that make a positive difference to teaching and learning in their own schools. Governors will still be expected to ensure that delegated spending is used prudently for the purposes intended.

FUNDING

What will happen to our school's funding?

The Department for Education meets the running costs for an academy in full. Academy funding is calculated on a like-for-like basis with local authority schools. Therefore the academy will have a similar budget to that of its predecessor maintained school. With greater freedom to procure services from other providers and to realise cost efficiencies across the network, the academy will be able to make more efficient use of resources to support school improvement. Like other schools, an academy cannot run at a loss or agree a deficit budget, i.e. it has to break-even

How will the school be accountable financially?

The Multi Academy Trust is governed by the rules and regulations for Charitable Trusts, e.g. they are required to produce and file accounts and Trustees cannot be paid. There are robust systems and safeguards with an audit conducted by an external independent auditor.

How does academy status affect SEN funding?

SEN funding will come directly from the government through the Education Funding Agency. Funding allocated to a named child would continue to be funded directly by the local authority.

Does it cost to become an academy?

Yes. There are legal costs associated with becoming an academy. The government gives each converting academy £25,000 to contribute towards these costs.

Who will own the school building and land?

The local authority will be required to grant a 125 year lease to the academy trust.

STAFFING

Will the terms of employment for staff change?

The Trust is responsible for agreeing levels of pay, conditions of service, staffing structures, career development and appraisal. The Lime Trust follows national guidance of pay and conditions for teachers and other staff.

‘Education is all about igniting young minds and enabling them to attain their fullest potential.’ Nita Ambani

When a school converts from a local authority maintained school to a new academy, all permanent staff are entitled to transfer to it under the same employment terms and conditions (TUPE). However, it is essential that the academy is able to respond to the changing curriculum requirements and educational demands. This may therefore require consultation with staff and trade unions, on changes to terms and conditions of employment. This would be necessary if, for example, the Trust wished to introduce a particular organisational change to the academy's term dates, or if curriculum demands and the need for improved educational outcomes required a different leadership and organisational structure. The Trust approach to this will be based on its underlying values.

What will happen with regard to staff pensions?

If you are a teacher in a school, your pension will continue as part of the teacher's pension scheme, with the Trust continuing with the same employer responsibilities as the predecessor school. Non-teaching staff will usually be members of the local government pension scheme and the Trust has 'admitted body' status with the local pension authority to protect the pension rights of employees and take on employer responsibility, both for contributions and administration of the scheme. Staff can opt out of either if they wish to make alternative provision.

Will teachers work at different academies?

Generally all staff will remain in their own academy. Being part of the MAT will provide many professional development opportunities. Staff across the schools will attend joint training, skills will be shared and good practice will spread between the academies. There will be some exchange of staff on these occasions for training and professional development purposes.

PARTNERSHIP

Does becoming an academy change the relationship with local schools and the community?

No. Academy funding agreements state that they must ensure that the school will be at the heart of its community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other local schools and the wider community.

As an academy, will it still work with the local authority (LA)?

Academies are independent of the local authority. However, the Lime Trust actively promotes collaboration and encourages schools to continue working the LA, other local schools and local partners.

Can the academy still work with other schools?

Yes. The academy can work with any schools it wishes if this makes a difference to the education of the children.

CURRICULUM & SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Will there be any changes to the curriculum?

Within the MAT individual academies will follow the same structured curriculum model enabling sharing of best practice, resources and expertise. These models are tried and tested and proven. Each Academy will ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils.

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.

Who is responsible for deciding if a student needs a Statement of special educational needs?

The local authority would retain the legal responsibility for statementing. Every school, is required to have systems in place to identify children who are in need of support and to assess, monitor and secure appropriate support for any SEN pupils they may have.

ADMISSIONS

Will the school remain non-selective?

Yes - academies are non-selective schools. Academies are required to follow the law and guidance on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as if they were maintained schools. It is the aim of the Trust to ensure that our academies provide high quality, inclusive education for local children.

How does the admissions process work within the MAT?

The admissions arrangements for the school will not change as a result of joining the MAT. Details of the school's Admissions Policy can be found on the school website.

THE NEW ACADEMY

Will the school need to change its name?

It is unlikely that the school will change its name; unless there is a compelling reason for this. Usually the school will simply call itself 'academy' rather than 'school', e.g. 'Lime Academy CURRENT SCHOOL NAME.'

Will there be a new uniform?

This will be decided on a school-by-school basis. However, no costs will be incurred by parents if a change of uniform is deemed necessary.

'At the Lime Trust we believe that the key to any school's success is to be outward facing and continuously looking for ways to become brilliant.'



FURTHER INFORMATION

The information in this fact sheet is intended to help answer some of the questions which may arise when considering conversion to academy status.

This information cannot in any way replace the informal conversations and formal consultation that takes place during the conversion process.

During the conversion process a number of consultation events will be held, where members of the Lime Trust team and Governors of your school will be available to answer questions.

The Department for Education website contains a wide range of information about becoming an academy. In particular the website has a FAQ section which can be found at:
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies/primary/faqs>

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