

## Frequently Asked Questions about Multi-Academy Trusts

Question	Answer
<b>What is an Academy?</b>	Academies are state schools which are free from local authority control and directly funded by the Department for Education. They have greater freedoms to determine how the schools funding is utilised to optimise the educational outcomes for their pupils.
<b>How will our school change if it becomes an academy?</b>	To our students, families and our staff, the school will seem unchanged immediately after conversion. We expect that over time however, teaching in the classroom will improve further as best practice and innovative ideas are shared across the trust. The school will continue to focus on the needs of our children and provide a caring, safe and stimulating environment where your child is encouraged to reach their full potential.
<b>Has the decision to convert to an Academy already been made?</b>	No - until the consultation has been completed and everyone's views have been obtained, a decision will not be made. The governing board must weigh up the pros and cons of academy conversion.
<b>What is in it for our children?</b>	Children have been at the centre of our discussions when considering forming a multi-academy trust. We will look to offer our children the best possible teaching and learning and are committed to providing a wider offer of opportunities for our children and an improved quality of education through better support for staff.
<b>What is in it for the staff?</b>	Embark Federation is committed to its staff and has recently been chosen to showcase this for a national case study on staff workload and well-being. Staff will have opportunities to develop their careers within the trust rather than having to seek promotions elsewhere. Working together as a group of schools mean that we can provide even better quality professional development for staff.  Terms and conditions remain the same and indeed we will be looking to enhance these for staff when possible.
<b>Would the name of the school change?</b>	No - the school has a unique identity within the community and the trust will not enforce a change to the school name or uniform.
<b>Why is our school considering becoming an academy?</b>	Given the changes to the local and national educational landscape, the recent government white paper outlining the national changes with all schools becoming academies by 2030 and the governors feel that now is the time to take control of our own future.  Governors made the decision to become an academy and be part of the set-up of the Embark Federation Multi-Academy Trust (subject to consultation) because of the benefits for the students and staff as well as because government policy is clearly directing schools towards academy status.
<b>Will the curriculum change?</b>	All the schools within the trust will continue to provide a balanced curriculum and will be judged against national standards, which to a large extent, are based on the National Curriculum. We will have the freedoms to develop personalised curriculums for our children where appropriate and valuable.
<b>Will children with additional funding for SEND be affected by the proposed changes</b>	No - EHCP and other SEND funding follows pupils and children with additional or special needs, so they will continue to receive the same levels of support as they do now. High needs funding will still be provided by the local authority even if we are an academy. Our view is that we will be able to enhance provision for all groups of students as the trust will be able to develop its own structures to support more effectively.

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<b>How will this affect the relationships between local schools?</b>	The schools have strong collaborative working relationships within their clusters and this will continue. We will work together with local schools and Embark will work closely with other trusts sharing ideas and best practice.
<b>Will Ofsted inspections continue?</b>	The position is the same whether schools are academies and inspections will continue in the same way.
<b>What is the legal status of the land the school occupies?</b>	The land will be leased from the local authority for 125 years initially. The land stays in public ownership and subject to the same protections.
<b>Would there be any changes to the admissions policy/criteria?</b>	Schools will still be obliged to adhere to the Admissions Code and any changes would have to comply. The local authority administers this and would still have overall authority to ensure schools are complying with the code.
<b>Will the final decision be taken by the governors?</b>	The governors have the final say but will consult with parents, staff and the LA. The governors' role is to act in the best interests of their school, children and community.
<b>Who employs the staff in an academy?</b>	The trust itself is the employer, not the local authority as it is currently.
<b>Will terms and conditions for staff change? Are their jobs secure?</b>	<p>At no point has the governing board considered that varying any staff contract would be in the interests of the school. No changes are envisaged, the nationally agreed teacher's pay settlement would continue to be applied and local government support staff agreements have been honoured in the same way.</p> <p>Embark Federation wishes to become an employer of choice and enhance terms and conditions for staff.</p> <p>The school recognises the importance of all staff to the life and ethos of the school. Staff are valued, their opinions are important and good employee relationships are the bedrock to the continuing improvement of outcomes for children.</p>
<b>Can we afford the set up costs of becoming an academy?</b>	Yes - each school is awarded a £25,000 by the Department for Education to cover the costs of setting up. The governors have carefully assessed the costs and concluded that the transfer can be met without using any of its current budget for running the school.
<b>How is an academy funded?</b>	<p>Academies are funded directly by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (part of the Department for Education).</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency</a></p> <p>This means that each school will receive 100% of their grant rather than some of this being diverted to the local authority.</p>

If you have any further questions, please direct them on email to:  
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