

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an Academy?

Academies are charitable companies funded by the Government to provide state education free of charge. Multi academy trusts bring together several academies under a single board of trustees, who are accountable for the academies within the Trust. They are funded at the same level as schools maintained by local authorities; and have the same responsibilities for children with special educational needs, pupils in receipt of pupil premium and for admissions.

So why make the change?

In common with all schools Parkwood is keen to work in partnership with other schools and to give and receive support. This helps us to ensure that we can provide the best education for your child that we can. Some parents will remember that we explored another partnership 2 or 3 years ago. PFT have been very supportive of the school in the last year, without any expectation that we would join them. They have the same ethos as Parkwood focused on inclusivity with high expectations of all children. Other schools, all of which are primary, in the Trust have retained their individual identity, which is important to us - and they have been welcoming and open to us. We know that PFT can provide the improvement support we need.

What about the staff?

If we convert to academy status within The PFT all our staff will transfer on their existing terms and conditions protected under the TUPE regulations. The PFT is committed to employing qualified teachers and to paying all its staff on national terms and conditions. Staff will benefit from the support and professional development that The PFT will provide and from opportunities to work with colleagues in other PFT academies.

Who will be the members of the local governing body?

On conversion, current governors will remain as the local governing body (LGB) for the school, but over time governors will be appointed by The PFT, seeking to ensure a balance of appropriate skills. Our LGB will continue to include two elected parents and up to two elected members of staff.

Doesn't joining an academy trust mean that everything will change?

No! The PFT is committed to working with its schools and supporting them to develop. The PFT will make *no* changes to staffing in the school and all pupils remain on roll. The school name, term dates, school times and uniform will not change.

We know that is not always the case when schools become academies. Other Trusts make more changes when schools convert. But The PFT is not like that. When other schools have converted to academy status within The PFT parents confirm that they have noticed very little difference day to day and we are confident this will also be true for Parkwood Primary School.

Academies: Some key facts

Curriculum

Academies are required to have a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. For pupils below Key Stage 1 (i.e. reception and nursery), academies are required to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The curriculum must include:

- English, maths and science;
- Religious Education; and
- Relationships education and health education.
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Academies are required to take part in the same pupil assessment arrangements and to report on the achievement and attainment of pupils in the same way as all other state-funded schools.

Inspection

Academies continue to be subject to Ofsted inspections.

Staffing

The regulations that place requirements on maintained schools do not directly apply to academies. General employment law applies to academies in the same way as to other organisations. Teachers must be suitably qualified. The Academy Trust has responsibility for setting pay and conditions. The PFT employs all its staff on national terms and conditions so there is no change for staff.

All teachers employed at an academy have access to the Teachers Pensions Scheme and all other employees at an academy have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Funding

The academy trust will receive General Annual Grant from the Secretary of State calculated as the equivalent to that which would be received by a maintained school taking account of the number of pupils at the academy. Capital funding is also available, channelled through the Academy Trust.

Every academy trust must abide by the requirements of and have regard to the guidance in the Academies Financial Handbook.

SEND

Academies should be fully inclusive local schools and in common with all other schools have a clear legal duty to do their best to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Admissions

Academies are required to provide education for pupils wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which the academy is situated.

Academies must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than available places.

Academies are required to provide education for pupils of different abilities (i.e. they may not select pupils by ability).

The conversion process:

The conversion process begins with an application to the Secretary of State for Education for an academy order. This is a permission to convert – and confirms that the Government is happy for us to go ahead. Beyond that there are several key steps to make the change, including:

- Consulting parents and staff
- Agreeing a contract with the Secretary of State to run Parkwood Primary School as an academy within The PFT as a state-maintained school, free to all pupils and students;
- Consulting staff and their unions on the transfer to a new employer;
- Working with the owners of our sites to ensure that they can be used by the Academy;
- Transferring contracts for goods and services.

A grant from the DfE will support the costs incurred, including expertise in managing the process so that your child's education is not disrupted.

How can I find out more?

There is a page on the school website on which we will place information from the school and links to The PFT's website. It will also include answers to frequently asked questions which will be updated regularly.

You can use the form [here](#) to ask questions and we encourage you to do so. Those questions will feed into the FAQ document but you can also use the form to request a conversation about the proposal and how it affects your child.

How can I make my views known?

You will have the opportunity to make your views known by completing an online survey which will be sent to you next week. We will also be holding a parent meeting shortly and further details will follow.

Governors will take all views into account when deciding whether to proceed to academy status within The PFT.