

## FAQ Website

<p>What is the position of the Local Authority?</p>	<p>Where a school converts to an academy, the Local Authority will seek to work in partnership with the school and regard it as part of the family of schools in Dorset. The LA will continue to make central services available to academies and trusts, on a trading basis and continues to have a responsibility for the performance of the schools.</p>
<p>Will the governing body in the future be made up in the same way?</p>	<p>It is hoped that many of the present governors would serve on the new local governing bodies for each school which will operate under a new scheme of delegation yet to be agreed.</p>
<p>Will the services currently paid for by the LA from the top slice still be provided?</p>	<p>Local Authorities are all reviewing the services they can offer schools in light of the funding cuts they have been required to make.</p> <p>The MAT will source services that are necessary for the good running of the school and it is highly likely that some services will continue to be provided by the Local Authority. However, increasingly there are other providers in the market (including the Diocese) and careful choices will be made to ensure we achieve best value from any contracts/service level agreements.</p> <p>The schools do not currently use all the services covered by the top slice and is therefore paying for things not used.</p> <p>Buying services that we do need from the Local Authority or another provider must make good budgetary sense.</p> <p>Being part of a Multi Academy Trust enables service costs to be shared and will potentially allow for cost benefit savings to be made.</p> <p>SEN funding follows pupils and is not part of the delegated share. Children with statements or Education and Health Care Plans would still be funded in the same way.</p>
<p>What about future funding – will there be a difference for different types of schools?</p>	<p>At the present time the future funding of schools is still being finalised. Government has repeatedly said that there is no additional money for Academies; it is just that the school decides how to spend the money it is allocated. Funding is likely to be very tight over the next few years and there is an ongoing review of the minimum funding guarantee.</p>
<p>Will Ofsted inspections continue?</p>	<p>The position is the same whether schools are Academies or not.</p>
<p>What is the legal status of the land the school occupies?</p>	<p>A Lease arrangement will be drawn up by solicitors for 125 years.</p>
<p>Would there be any changes to the admissions policy/criteria?</p>	<p>Schools will still be obliged to adhere to the Admissions Code. The LA would still have overall authority to ensure schools are complying with the Code.</p>
<p>Will the final decision be taken by the governors?</p>	<p>The governors have the final say but will consult with parents and staff, neighbouring schools, the Diocese and the LA.</p>
<p>What happens at the end of the 7 year agreement?</p>	<p>The Funding Agreement is expected to be renewed by the Secretary of State.</p>
<p>Will terms and conditions for staff change? Are their jobs secure? What might happen in the future?</p>	<p>At no point have the governing bodies or senior management teams considered that varying any staff contract would be in the interests of the school. No changes are envisaged.</p> <p>Existing staff will transfer to the Multi Academy Trust under the legal TUPE requirements. New staff, however, would be employed by the Trust and this would provide the opportunity to work in any or all of the schools in the Trust.</p> <p>The nationally agreed teacher's pay settlement would continue to be applied (though this is currently being reviewed by central government in any event).</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 seen as the bedrock to the continuing improvement of outcomes for children.</p> <p>If any changes were proposed in the future there would be a full consultation and discussion with staff about the reasons for any proposals and an opportunity for their opinions to be heard.</p>
Where will money for capital expenditure come from?	<p>All schools, including academies, will be able to apply for Government capital funding. Increasingly, capital funds are available exclusively to academies and multi academy trusts.</p> <p>At the present time as a maintained school capital funding for individual schools has all but dried up.</p>
What is the process for setting up the trust?	<p>There are specific Memorandum and Articles of Association which establish the Founding Members of the Trust.</p> <p>The Sir John Colfox Academy Trust is already an established company and is registered with Companies House. A new company will be required for the MAT. Solicitors will be appointed at the start of the conversion to support us in this process through a proper procurement process.</p> <p>The trustees enter into the funding agreement and do all the negotiation with the DfE.</p>
<p>The LA is there to offer support and guidance when needed.</p> <p>Who will provide this support if the school becomes an Academy?</p>	<p>We are aware that there are budgetary pressures on the Local Authority and we are aware that services are being reduced. It is unclear what services will remain and what availability there will be in the future.</p> <p>The present pooling of resources still does not mean that services are available on an 'on demand' basis, given that cuts that have already reduced the LA capacity to respond.</p> <p>The school needs either assurances from the LA about continued universal support or they need to be able to buy services from whoever is best placed to support the school as the need arises</p> <p>As a MAT, schools are still able to buy services from the local authority. However, as a MAT schools can choose services from the highest quality providers and ensure good value for money.</p> <p>As a Multi Academy Trust we benefit from sharing services and practices to also ensure good value for money. As the number of academies has grown, so has the extent of the expertise available from a variety of sources.</p>
What protection will there be from the interference of the Secretary of State (SoS)?	<p>There is no protection from interference from the Secretary of State – but he has the authority to be involved in schools' performance despite status i.e. as an LA school or as an Academy. Recent changes to education, for example (some of which are outlined in the most recent Education Act) demonstrate that the Secretary of State has taken on increasing amounts of authority and has moved powers away from local authorities e.g. Local Authorities do not have to provide School Improvement Partners for schools; complaints will not now be handled by local ombudsman but will go straight to the SoS;</p>
How will the Head Teachers be guided/supported to make decisions in the best interests of the students and not on the basis of financial constraints or other factors?	<p>The Head Teacher will be able to seek support from the Multi Academy Trust organisation that can give guidance and negotiate on their behalf to ensure the appropriate providers offer a high quality service and good value for money. In reality, the Head Teachers already use a large network of local and national Head Teacher colleagues for informal support, advice and guidance and the schools already have partnerships with the Jurassic Coast Teaching Alliance Schools and other groups/support networks.</p> <p>Schools have generally been good at sharing expertise with other</p>

	<p>schools.</p> <p>The Head Teachers will continue to be able to seek support from the Local Authority if this is appropriate. This would be a charged service even if the schools do not become a Multi Academy Trust. All services that the school uses have to be considered on a best value basis. Governors have a duty to review the services used by the school and the charges made for services to ensure that the budget can support the services planned and required. This will remain the case.</p>
<p>If parents/carers do not want schools to change to a Multi Academy Trust, would the schools proceed with a conversion?</p>	<p>One of the schools (The Sir John Colfox School) is already an academy and has extensive experience of the conversion process and consultation over many months.</p> <p>The aim of the consultation is to find out what all stakeholders, including parents/carers, think about the conversion. The Governors will take into account the views of all stakeholders. This is why there is a consultation period and all stakeholders are encouraged to ask questions, find out about what conversion and not converting means for the schools.</p> <p>Once all the feedback is in, the governors will meet to consider very carefully what stakeholders have said. If there was a very strong feedback from stakeholders that conversion was not right for the schools, then the governors would have to consider this very seriously.</p>
<p>Who will the trustees be?</p>	<p>The trustees for the Multi Academy Trust will be a group of people above the Governors of our schools. There are 5 levels: the school, the local Governing Body of each school, the Trust's Board of Trustees, the Trust's Members and finally the DfE. The Trustees will have specific skills such as finance, premises, education and will be drawn, in the first instance, from local governing bodies and wider stakeholder groups. If the skills needed are not available then it is possible to bring in someone from the local community to become a Trustee. All Trustees are volunteers and none receive a salary for carrying out their role.</p>
<p>What decisions will the trustees make?</p>	<p>They will be responsible for the policies that are shared between the 3 schools, e.g. staff pay, safeguarding, and for any shared services that the schools decide to buy into as a group, e.g. HR services. They are responsible for running things at the Trust level, with decisions about how individual schools are run being delegated to local governing bodies and headteachers. The Executive Principal will be one of the Trustees.</p>
<p>Will the Trustees be like you would get in a company business? Will we be able to see the minutes of the meetings?</p>	<p>The members have similar legal responsibilities to company directors. The trustees as a whole are like a governing body for the Trust. Minutes of trustees' meetings will be available on the MAT website, so you will be able to read them and find out what is happening at trustee level. Governing body meeting minutes are available for parents now and will continue to be so.</p>
<p>What if there is a conflict of interest?</p>	<p>Trustees are legally obliged to declare any conflicts of interests and would not take part in any discussions or decisions in which they have a conflict of interests.</p>
<p>If the Government changes what will happen to academies?</p>	<p>There is always the possibility of change however a lot of work has been put in place by both the most recent government and the previous government, which introduced academies in 2002. All three main parties have stated that they are committed to the academy model for schools. While no-one can predict the future for certain, we think it very likely that this approach will continue in future. In the event that a new model is introduced we will consider our options at that stage</p>

<p>What happens to the budget?</p>	<p>Each school will have its own budget. The DfE will pay the money into the MAT and then it will be divided up according to a similar funding formula to that currently used in Dorset. The budget will be the schools' to spend as they see fit. At present, if we have a healthy budget the LA can claim back any excess at the end of the year. This will not happen if we have our own budget so all monies will be spent on the education of the children.</p>
<p>What will the curriculum for the school be?</p>	<p>As a multi academy trust the schools are not required to follow the new National Curriculum. However, we are aware that our children will be assessed against national standards and we will continue to follow key aspects of the National Curriculum so they are ready for their Year 6 tests and for their secondary education and GCSE/A level exams. We will still teach literacy and maths, science and all the other subjects we teach now. What it does provide is the freedom to work more creatively in a topic based way and teach our children about their place in the wider world in a way that we feel will give them the best possible education. The National Curriculum is on line for anyone who wants to look at what the children should be taught.</p>
<p>Who determines the curriculum?</p>	<p>The content of the curriculum will not be decided by the Trust. The staff at each school will be able to determine what will be taught using the national curriculum as guidance. The schools have creative, talented staff who know the children and what interests them well. There will not be a sudden change – parents will not notice any great differences. The curriculum will carry on as it is now, engaging the children to fulfil their potential. Each school curriculum is displayed on the school's website and parents have information regularly. The children will continue to work in a creative way where we bring in experts in their field to share their skills, knowledge and expertise. We want all our children to have a wide range of experiences so they can be ambitious and able to pursue their chosen interests and skills.</p>
<p>If one school is finding an area of the curriculum difficult will they borrow staff from other schools in the MAT?</p>	<p>Not as a general rule. Current practice is that staff from other schools or advisers visit and observe that subject being taught and then discuss it with the class teacher. They may look at planning or organisation. A teacher from one school may go and lead a staff meeting in another school. Each school is already seen and used as a good role model for other schools in particular aspects of work and this will continue. One of the reasons for forming a multi-academy trust is to protect, formalise and enhance this kind of collaborative professional development in future to the benefit of all our schools.</p>
<p>If we are not happy with being part of the MAT can we pull out?</p>	<p>We will make sure that we have a robust set of articles with which everyone is in agreement when we set up the Trust. Once the Articles for the schools are signed then they are 'set in stone' and can only be changed by going to the DfE. Most of the Articles are already given by the Government and you can look at these on the DfE website; some can be personalised to suit the Trust. The board of trustees (a group of between 7 and 11 people) will vote on all decisions and the majority vote will count. At the moment becoming a multi-academy trust is irreversible. MATs are a relatively new introduction and there is currently no precedent for this. In future, when there are more MATs set up it may be possible to leave one and join another.</p>
<p>Can we see the articles before they are signed?</p>	<p>Yes. There are standard sets of articles that can be viewed on the DfE website already if you are interested.</p>
<p>Are there any negatives to becoming an academy?</p>	<p>There will be more work in the initial set up period. There will be changes to the financial systems so the office staff will be affected.</p>

	<p>There will be more meetings to attend. The Local Authority is becoming smaller and this is causing problems with support – if we are a multi academy trust we will have money available to buy in the support we need when we need it rather than rely on a shrinking Local Authority. There should be no negatives for the children or for parents. What happens now in school will happen in the future; we continually strive to do the best for the children in our care and to improve the education that they receive.</p>
<p>Would financial experts need to be employed to manage budgets?</p>	<p>There is already considerable expertise in the schools and especially at The Sir John Colfox Academy and Bridport Primary School.</p>
<p>Who will schools be accountable to instead of the Local Authority?</p>	<p>All schools are accountable in a number of different ways and different bodies will hold us to account in their own specific ways (as they do already) and this won't change.</p> <p>e.g. For teaching and learning etc. schools are accountable to Ofsted  Church Status brings accountability to the Salisbury Diocese and SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools)  For Safeguarding &amp; LAC schools are accountable to Dorset Children's Services</p> <p>For Finance, the MAT will be accountable to Companies House  All of which will be reported to the DfE via the board of trustees.  The board's job is to ensure that we are able to do this and that what we're providing is valid and 'at least good' - the SEP will support this as would accountants, the Diocese etc. The LA have a duty to monitor the schools and would be accountable inasmuch that they will need to be seen to be monitoring and then brokering any support we might need.</p>
<p>Won't teachers and governors be distracted from teaching by having to handle the various things local authorities normally do?</p>	<p>The teachers will not be distracted from their teaching. The governor's role will change but we will decide on the format of this as group of schools but at no time will it have any adverse effect on teaching and learning in the schools. We will continue teaching as we do now, there will not be any change to the basic role of schools and teachers. We hope that the additional freedom and creativity will enable us to do it even better.</p>
<p>What happens if one school fails – either in terms of a poor Ofsted rating or runs into financial difficulties?</p>	<p>Before a school joins the MAT, there will be a due diligence process whereby the performance of each school will be scrutinised as well as the financial history. This will involve scrutiny of the school's current performance as well as Ofsted rating and year of inspection, state of the school infrastructure (whether capital works are needed), financial performance and implications of TUPE.</p>
<p>Will a poor Ofsted rating in one of the schools affect the others within the MAT?</p>	<p>Schools within the MAT will be supporting each other to raise standards, so this shouldn't happen. However, if it does happen, then there will be a network of support already in place to support those colleagues.</p>
<p>Will the staff be expected to work in other schools or provide cover in other schools?</p>	<p>Nobody would be asked to work in a partner school if they did not wish to do so, although having the ability to move staff between schools could provide a great opportunity for career development if it was needed.</p>
<p>What happens to the individual PTA's/Friends Groups?</p>	<p>Each school can retain their own PTA and fundraising ideas.</p>
<p>Will working with other schools mean lowering our own standards or possibly detracting resources from our own school?</p>	<p>All the schools within our proposed MAT are good committed, local schools. Sharing expertise can only improve this further. Also, because we are all part of the same local community, we share the same families, and most would welcome closer</p>

	collaboration.
How many schools have become academies?	Well over 50% of Church of England secondary and primary schools have become academies and many of them are within MATs. This is in line with the national average. Smaller schools are being encouraged by the Secretary of State to become academies as part of MATs or chains of schools to protect them from closure or financial difficulties in the future. Becoming an academy and/or joining a MAT is now seen as the 'normal' next step for schools to take in their drive to sustain excellent school standards.
What about SEN and exclusions?	Our responsibilities as an academy in relation to SEN and exclusions will be just the same as they are now. We do however believe that the schools working together will be able to develop higher quality support for SEN students. We would be able to pool our resources in order to gain access to high quality advice or support in this area as in others.
Aren't the schools in competition?	No – we are not in competition now and would not be in the future. We are all fully committed to providing a high quality education for the young people of Bridport