



Executive Head teacher – Mr M Crawford
National Leader of Education

Embark Federation – Frequently Asked Questions about Multi-Academy Trusts

Question	Answer
What is an Academy?	Academies are state schools that are free from local authority control and directly funded by the Department for Education. They have greater freedoms to determine how the school's funding is utilised to optimise the educational outcomes for their pupils.
How will our school change if it becomes an academy?	To our pupils, 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.
Has the decision to convert to an Academy already been made?	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.
What are the advantages for our children?	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 through the exciting Embark Award. The Embark Award gives every child an opportunity to achieve many extra curricular targets.
What are the advantages for our staff?	Howitt Primary Community School is committed to its staff who have recently been able to discuss 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.

	<p>Terms and conditions remain the same and indeed we will be looking to enhance these for staff when possible.</p>
<p>Would the name of the school change?</p>	<p>No!</p> <p>The school has a unique identity within the community and the trust will not change the school name or uniform.</p>
<p>Why is our school considering becoming an academy?</p>	<p>Given the uncertain educational landscape, governors feel that now is the time to take control of our own destiny.</p> <p>Governors have made the decision to consult its stakeholders and be part of the set-up of the Embark Federation Multi-Academy Trust as government policy is clearly directing schools towards academy status.</p>
<p>Will the curriculum change?</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Will children with additional funding for SEND be affected by the proposed changes</p>	<p>No. Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) and other SEND funding follows pupils 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.</p>
<p>How will this affect the relationships between local schools?</p>	<p>The schools have strong collaborative working relationships within their clusters and this will continue. We will work together with local schools and indeed the Embark Federation will work closely with other trusts sharing ideas and best practice.</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>The land will be leased from the local authority for 125 years initially. The land stays in public ownership.</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 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.</p>

Will the final decision be taken by the governors?	The governors have the final say but will consult with parents, staff and the Local Authority. The governors' role is to act in the best interests of their school, children and community.
Who employs the staff in an academy?	The trust itself is the employer, not the local authority.
Will terms and conditions for staff change? Are their jobs secure?	<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 (though this is currently being reviewed by central government in any event).</p> <p>The 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>
Can we afford the setting up costs of becoming an academy?	<p>Yes!</p> <p>Each school is awarded £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.</p>
How is an academy funded?	<p>Academies are funded directly by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (part of the Department for Education). https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency</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 consultation@embarkfed.derbyshire.sch.uk