**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)?**

A MAT is the structure that allows more than one academy to work together under an academy trust. The MAT gives opportunities to share knowledge and teaching and learning between schools. It gives the schools within the Trust the opportunity to make collective decisions about contracts with strategic partners thereby releasing more money for teaching and learning.

**What is an Academy?**

An Academy is an independent state school, funded directly from central government rather than through Birmingham City Council. Becoming an academy means that we would have greater freedom to innovate and raise standards. We would have much greater freedom around the delivery of the curriculum, using our budget to work with the best partners available.

**Would we receive more money?**

Academies receive the same level of per-pupil funding as maintained schools receive from the LA, but they also receive an additional amount called the education service grant which is currently retained by the LA to pay for some services which the LA provide. However, out of this money we would have to purchase some services which are currently provided by the LA.

**Why should we consider setting up a MAT?**

In addition to the greater freedoms and flexibilities will enable us to raise educational standards, there are other factors which are pointing towards setting up a MAT. As central services provided by the LA are considerably reduced the services which we receive are much more limited than they were a few years ago, so all schools are being urged by the Government to give serious consideration to pursuing conversion to academy status. The Government’s policy is to encourage conversion and they are currently providing funding to assist schools with the costs of doing so.

In the next financial year schools in Birmingham will have a significant cut to their budgets, and for a small school like Cromwell this will be significant. A MAT will provide financial benefits and financial security, through access to wider funding and opportunities to bulk buy resources, and share other resources. Also to buy in services jointly so saving money e.g. HR, payroll, legal services and SEN support. An academy does not have to follow the National Curriculum and therefore able to meet the needs of the pupils better. A MAT can offer more wider professional development opportunities for staff. A small school can only offer a small number of extra curriculum opportunities, creating a MAT will increase opportunities for all pupils.

**How are academies held to account?**

Academies are subject to inspections by the schools’ inspectorate, Ofsted, in the same way as other schools are. SATs results will continue to be published as at present. Academies are accountable directly to the Secretary of State for Education.

**Would conversion to academy status affect our admissions policy?**

Academies are subject to the same admissions code as other state schools. This sets the rules for fair admissions. We would continue to use the authority admissions team to administer the process as we do now but we would be able to represent ourselves at appeals.

**What about the way in which the school is governed? Would that change?**

A new ‘Academy Trust’ would be established with a small number of Members (only 3 to 5) who have a substantial interest in and knowledge of the school and its local community. In addition, there would be a committee of Directors who would be a group made up of people with specific skills to provide the overall strategic direction of the MAT. Each school in the MAT would then have a Local Governing Body to oversee the day to day running of the school in the same way as they do now.

**Would staff remain the same after conversion?**

All current school staff would transfer to employment with the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) on the same conditions of employment and into the same the staffing structure.

**Would staff pay and conditions change?**

When a school converts to academy status, members of staff transfer to the academy trust with their existing employment terms and conditions under the TUPE regulations which means that their terms and conditions of employment and pension arrangements, including continuity of service, are protected on conversion.

**Do schools have to cover the costs of conversion to academy status?**

No. The DfE pays a flat-rate grant of £25,000 into each school's bank account after an application has been approved and academy order has been issued. This grant is provided for the detailed exploration of academy status and, if the school decides to proceed, the implementation costs.

**What else would not change?**

There will be very few changes in the day to day running of our school. Keeping all that is special about our school whilst allowing us to grow.

**Would the school day and school year change?**

No.

**Would the school name change?**

No

**Would the school uniform change?**

No.

**Where can I get further information?**

The Department for Education website has information about academies, including an extensive set of themed questions and answers: www.education.gov.uk/academies