

QUESTION	RESPONSE
Has the decision to convert to an academy already been made?	Until the consultation has been completed and everyone's views have been obtained, a decision will not be made. The governing body have to weigh up the pros and cons of the academy conversion.
What is the position of the local authority (LA)?	The local authorities will support any school seeking to become an academy. They also made it clear that given the cuts, the services available to Derbyshire/Staffordshire schools from the County Council will be very limited in the future.
Will the governing body in the future be made up in the same way?	<p>The current governors would be encouraged to remain in place.</p> <p>The Board of Trustees would be for the whole Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), whilst local governors will be advocates for the school.</p>
Is the decision being driven by the financial implications?	<p>The governing body has to respond to challenges beyond the control of the school and the LA. Finances have always been tight, but lack of future funding needs to be carefully considered rather than wait for a crisis. There is also an attraction in having an increased freedom to do things differently.</p> <p>The government continually state that the actual money available for schools is the same whether or not they are maintained or academies. The difference is that, for special schools, some of the funding will come straight to the school, not via the LA.</p> <p>Financial flexibility would also mean that some things could be contracted out and resources in school targeted at the students' and school needs and not be part of the LA spending agenda.</p> <p>Also, academies are better placed than maintained schools to bid for funding from central government.</p>
Has the school considered the risk of final salary pensions becoming more of a burden if salaries increase?	Teaching staff will continue to be members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) funded by the government and pensions do not come out of the school budget. This situation could change regardless of a school's status.
What about pensions for support staff?	<p>This is provided by the LA. All staff in a school who are in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) will continue to stay in the LGPS.</p> <p>New starters are joined in to the LGPS (unless qualified teachers who would join in the TPS).</p> <p>Pensions are the same for staff in academies as they are in maintained schools.</p>

Will the services currently paid for by the LA from the top slice still be provided?	<p>LAs are reviewing the services they can offer schools in light of the funding cuts they have been required to make.</p> <p>Schools will have to 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 LA.</p> <p>The school does 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 LA or another provided must make good budgetary sense.</p> <p>EHCP funding follows students and it not part of the delegated share, those students would still be funded in the same way.</p>
What about future funding – will there be a difference for different types of schools?	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 a review of the minimum funding guarantee in the next 2 or 3 years.
Will Ofsted inspections continue?	The position is the same whether school are academies or not.
What is the legal status of the land the school occupies?	The MAT will get a 125-year lease from the LA. The land stays in public ownership.
Would there be any changes to the admissions policy/criteria?	Schools will still be obliged to adhere to the Admissions Code and any changes would have to comply. The LA administers this and would still have overall authority to ensure schools are complying with the Code.
Will the final decision be taken by governors?	The governors have the final say but will consult with parents/carers and staff, neighbouring schools and the LA.
What happens at the end of the 7 year agreement?	The Funding Agreement is expected to be renewed by the Secretary of State.
Is there a long transition period to take up academy status?	DfE will say three months, but the expected time is 4-5 months particularly if there are complex land issues to be resolved.
Who employs the staff in the academies?	<p>The academy itself and not the LA is the employer.</p> <p>It does give staff the opportunity to have direct discussions with their employer rather than, as can be perceived, a faceless LA department.</p>
Will terms and conditions for staff change?	At no point has the governing body or senior management team considered that varying any staff contract would be in the interests of the school. No changes are envisaged.
Are their jobs secure?	

What might happen in the future?	<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 bedrock to the continuing improvement of outcomes for students.</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>
Would the name of the school change?	In our case, this is very unlikely, but would be up to the governors/trustees.
Where will money for capital expenditure come from?	<p>All schools, including academies, will be able to apply for government capital funding.</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 MAT?	<p>A MAT is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is prohibited for such an organisation to make a profit.</p> <p>The Trust appoints the board of trustees/members as described in the Articles of Association. The trustees enter into the funding agreement and do all the negotiations with the DfE.</p> <p>The proposal is to join with other likeminded schools and to create an organisation that meets the needs of students and staff in all the schools.</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 LA 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 an academy, schools are still able to buy services from the LA. However, as an academy, schools can choose services from the highest quality providers and ensure good value for money. Neighbouring</p>

<p>What protection will there be from the interference of the Secretary of State?</p>	<p>LAs may also be able to provide support.</p> <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 a 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 LAs i.e. they 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 Secretary of State.</p>
<p>How will the headteacher 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>	<p>The headteacher can seek support from any service provider in order to ensure delivery of a high quality service and good value for money. The MAT will offer support and guidance previously provided by the LA.</p> <p>All services that the school uses have to be considered on a best value basis.</p> <p>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>It may be considered that some services shall be provided across all the schools in the MAT and this would be best value for money.</p>
<p>If parents/carers do not want to change to an academy, would the school proceed with the conversion?</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 the stakeholders about the conversion. 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 school.</p> <p>Once all 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 school, then the governors would have to consider this very carefully.</p>