**FAQs**

**RE: Academy conversion of Marlborough Primary School**

**What is the Reach South Academy Trust?**

Reach South Academy Trust is a Multi-Academy Trust set up to serve the south west of England. Reach South Academy Trust is part of the REACH family, building on the success of its sister Trusts, REAch2 & Reach4.

The Chief Executive of Reach South is Dean Ashton, who lives and worked in the South West region for much of his career- initially as a secondary school teacher, and latterly as the Director of Children’s Services for Cornwall County Council.

**What is an Academy?**

Academies are state funded schools independent of Local Authority control – in other words the funding comes from Central Government straight to the school and the pupils, without first going via the Local Authority. This means that Head teachers have more control over what they spend their budgets on. Academies are also all-ability, non-selective (assuming there is no selection presently, as is the case with our school), non-fee paying schools in the same way that **Marlborough Primary School** currently is.

**Will the curriculum change?**

As an Academy, we have the freedom to develop an enriched and nourishing curriculum to best suit the needs of the pupils **Marlborough Primary School.**

**Will admission arrangements change?**

The admissions criteria will be set by Reach South Academy Trust who are the admissions authority for Marlborough Primary School**.** Reach South Academy Trust will endeavour to ensure the school’s admission arrangements are consonant with the Local Authority’s arrangements. The admission arrangements for Marlborough Primary Schoolwill be set in line with the National School Admissions Code and the National School Appeals Code.

You can find the school admissions policy at:http://marlboroughprimary.eschools.co.uk/website

**Who sets the future term dates?**

School term dates are set centrally by Reach South Academy Trust. Reach South Academy Trust will endeavour to ensure that school term dates fall in line with the term dates set by **Plymouth Local Authority.** In practice, this decision is delegated to each individual school.

**How will converting to an Academy affect children with Special Education Needs (SEN)?**

**Marlborough Primary School** has responsibility for assessing pupils and maintaining their Statements of SEN or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) of the school has a responsibility to identify pupils that might need additional help and then work with a range of school staff and outside agencies to develop an individual education programme that will help.

Schools that convert to become academies have the same responsibilities as previously. In practical terms, this requires new academies to:

* inform parents that their child has SEN and the special educational provision being made
* an unqualified obligation to admit a child to the school if the school is named in the Statement or EHC plan
* appoint a qualified teacher as SEN Coordinator (SENCO) and ensure that any new SENCO would undertake prescribed training.

Academies are required by their funding agreements to consent to being named in a child’s Statement unless they can demonstrate that admitting the child would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children and that there are no reasonable steps they could take, together with the Local Authority, to prevent the incompatibility.

If **Marlborough Primary School** becomes an academy, the Local Governing Body (LGB) members would retain the ethos of inclusion. There will be a sustained commitment to providing the best possible education for the young people of all abilities and backgrounds from our community. Whilst the LGB members are not aware that becoming an academy would discriminate against or disadvantage any group of children or staff, it will nevertheless be carrying out an equality impact assessment and would like to hear your views.

If **Marlborough Primary School** was an academy, it would receive the appropriate statement funding for individual children and a share of funding for other provision in relation to SEN including: behaviour support services; licences and subscriptions (for instance for software); therapies and other health related, education and welfare services.

**How do Academies receive funding?**

The Multi Academy Trust is funded for each of its academies by the DfE through the Education Funding Agency (EFA). If **Marlborough Primary School** becomes an Academy, the EFA would provide the Trust with a General Allocation Grant (GAG) made up of two components:

* Core funding, which is exactly the same as the funding that school would have received from the Local Authority using its funding formula
* Educational Services Grant (ESG) which would be {ENTER SCHOOL NAME} share of the money, based on pupil numbers, which the Local Authority currently retains a share of, to spend centrally on those services that the academy would be responsible for going forward.

The Trust then delegates a budget to the academy so that it can successfully carry out the functions it is responsible for.

In addition, the academy would receive School Standards Grants and School Development Grant in the same way as a maintained school. The Local Authority also continues to fund support for children with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. Pupil Premium is passed on directly to the academy in its entirety.

**What will happen to the Local Governing Body?**

Reach South understands the importance of local governance. The broad duties of the Local Governing Body are summarised as:

* To contribute to, and fulfil, the vision and ethos of Reach South in so far as it relates to the Academy, ensuring that the Academy achieves the aims and ambitions it has for its pupils, having regard in particular to the benefits of being part of a family of schools which stresses the importance of collaboration and mutual support;
* To implement and review from time to time the strategic plan for the Academy, focussing on the Academy’s performance and achieving sustained school improvement and having regard to any locally agreed priorities identified by the Trust Board;
* To act as a critical friend to the Academy’s senior leadership team, being ready to challenge and hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the Academy’s performance;
* To oversee the management of the finances of the Academy, assessing the annual budget prepared by the Academy’ Headteacher (with the support of the Academy’s senior leadership team) and submitting such for approval by the Regional Board and the Trust Board, ensuring that the Academy works within its budget and the Academy’s senior leadership team adopts and implements appropriate risk and financial management policies and practices;
* To support the Trust Board in ensuring that insurance or equivalent risk protection is put in place and maintained for all risk areas including damage to property, employer liability, public and third party liability and director liability in accordance with any policy issued by the Trust Board from time to time;
* To support the Academy’s Headteacher in the development and review (from time to time) of an appropriate staffing structure for the Academy, ensuring there is robust and accountable monitoring of the performance of staff and implementing all and any policies relating to staff adopted by the Trust Board;
* To support the Trust Board in its monitoring and evaluation of the delivery of any central services and functions provided or procured by the Academy Trust for the Academies, reporting any issues or concerns to the Regional Director of Education and, if necessary, the CEO, the Chair of the Regional Board or the Chair of the Trust Board;
* To promote within the organisation and externally the benefits of collaboration with the other Academies and to actively seek opportunities to work together either with the aim of improving economic efficiencies within the Academies or identifying and implementing best practice;
* To develop effective links within the Academy’s community, communicating openly and frequently as appropriate and ensuring that the Academy meets its responsibilities to the community and serves the community’s needs in relation to the safeguarding and education of its pupils;
* To engage fully and openly with any inspection of the Academy, whether by the Trust Board, Ofsted or any other appropriate public body to whom the Academy is accountable.

**What happens if there is a serious building issue when we are an Academy?**

There would be a General Annual Grant that would be paid by the Government to the Academy Trust. This would cover the normal running costs of the academy including: repairs; servicing and maintenance of buildings (including redecoration, heating, plumbing, lighting, etc); maintenance of grounds (including boundary fences and walls); cleaning materials and contract cleaning; water and sewage; fuel and light (including fuel oil, solid and other fuel, electricity and gas); rents and rates; purchase, maintenance, repairs and replacement of furniture and fittings; and insurance.

**By becoming an Academy, is the school building more or less likely to be upgraded?**

In the same way that Local Authorities have a capital building programme, there will be an academies building programme. If **Marlborough Primary School’s** need for capital investment was prioritised and met agreed criteria, it could be earmarked for investment. However, becoming an academy does not guarantee capital investment.

**If you have any further questions, please email us at: marlborough.primary.school@plymouth.gov.uk**

**If you would like to contact Reach South Academy Trust directly, please email** **info@reachsouth.org**