



# Learning Accord Multi Academy Trust

## Helme CE (VA) J & I School

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### 1. What is an Academy?

An Academy is a state school that is run by an Academy Trust. The Academy Trust enters into an agreement with the Secretary of State for Education that sets out its responsibilities and accountabilities for the effective running of the Academy. Academies are funded directly by the Government; not through the Local Authority. The Trust is given charitable exemption, which means it must operate much like a charity. Academies are still subject to Ofsted inspection.

#### 2. What is a Multi-Academy Trust?

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is when 2 or more Academies come together in partnership. IN a Multi Academy Trust each has converted to an Academy. In the future, it will be possible for other schools/Academies to join the Trust.

#### 3. Would we keep our current community and Church of England status?

Yes. Helme CE, as a church school, is required to obtain the consent of the Anglican Diocese of Leeds before converting and would become a Church of England Academy. Because Helme CE has an Ofsted judgement of inadequate it **must** convert and become a member of a multi academy trust. The Learning Accord MAT will sponsor the school and work with staff to help it to improve.

Each school within the trust is very proud of its existing ethos and values and is able to preserve and protect this, whether it is a Church or a community school. The Multi Academy Trust will ensure that the Church of England Foundation is always represented within the Board of Trustees.

#### 4. How would converting to an Academy benefit our Schools?

These changes are about enhancing teaching and learning for all children. Helme CE will be able to continue as the school for our community. Helme CE will be able to work with the other MAT schools to share expertise and skills and operate more effectively. Converting to an Academy within a Multi Academy Trust will allow the school to make financial savings through joint purchase of resources over time. The MAT has greater freedom around the delivery of the curriculum, using its budget to work with the best partners available. Helme CE has worked very hard at creating a curriculum which is relevant to our children and our community, which meets the needs of our children. Academies have the freedom to continue to developing the curriculum whilst taking on board the best parts of the National Curriculum. At present, Academies can apply for capital grants to support building projects. Governors believe that the greater flexibility and the ability to innovate would mean that over time there would be more money to invest in our school for the benefit of our children.

#### 5. Who will be responsible for running our schools?

Each school within the MAT will retain a head teacher on conversion and will continue to have their own local governing body. Each school continues to function in much the same way as at present. The Multi Academy Trust has a Board of Trustees who oversees the governance of the trust and monitors the performance of all of its schools. The Trust Board delegates powers to the local governing body which is a similar role that they currently have.

## **6. What is involved in becoming an Academy?**

The Multi Academy Trust has been working with Helme CE to check the financial circumstances, support improvement and look at the condition of the buildings. The Regional School Commissioner has matched Helme CE to the Learning Accord Multi Academy Trust. The Trust will work with the staff and governors, with the local authority, the diocese and DfE to support the conversion process. The Multi Academy Trust receives a grant which enables the conversion to take place. This pays for solicitor's fees and for the work to progress the conversion.

## **7. Would the school have to change its name, logo or uniform?**

The Governors at Helme CE have no plans to change the logo, uniform or individual identity of each School. Each school may change its name to include the title Academy. The logo may be amended to incorporate a new name if the name changes.

## **8. How will being an Academy affect staff?**

Currently, the governors are the employers for staff at Helme CE. After conversion all staff at Helme CE will be employed by the Multi Academy Trust. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. Their continuity of service is protected, and all staff will be consulted in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations.

## **9. How are the children affected?**

In many ways the children will not notice any immediate difference; they will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. Helme CE will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all our children. However, in time the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the pupils' learning.

## **10. Will we get more money as an Academy?**

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. All funding comes direct from Government to the Multi Academy Trust which controls the overall budget. Each school does not necessarily have more money, but as a group the schools are better able to control their part of the budget.

## **11. What are the risks of becoming an Academy?**

The change to Academy takes a school out of Local Authority control, but does not exclude the school from Local Authority support. For example, Academies can continue to receive finance, HR, behavioural support and other services from the Local Authority and where these represent 'best value' the MAT uses these services. Where the MAT feels that others can provide better services or better value the change to Academy increases the freedom to make these changes. There are risks to not becoming an Academy within the current educational climate. Currently the Learning Accord Multi Academy Trust buys back all of the services from the local authority that they did before conversion on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

## **12. How will admissions to the school be affected?**

In a MAT, each school becomes its own admissions authority (as they already are at Helme CE) but will be required to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The Local Authority will continue to have responsibility for making sure there are sufficient places locally and will coordinate the admissions process for all schools. This means parents will still only have to complete one application per child. Applications will still be via the coordinated process.

**13. Does becoming an Academy change the relationship with other schools and the community?**

No, Academies must ensure that they continue to be at the heart of their community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other schools and the wider community. Regardless of any MAT arrangements, we remain committed to working in partnership with other schools within the Honley Partnership of Schools.

**14. Will our responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and exclusions change?**

No, responsibilities as an Academy in relation to SEND and exclusions will be just the same as they are now. Our 'Additional Needs Partnership' will continue.

**15. Can a child with a statement nominate an Academy as his or her school of choice?**

Yes, schools converting to Academy status can retain the admissions criteria they currently use. These arrangements and related processes must at all times comply with the School Admissions Code.