

Information on the proposal to convert Jarrow School from a Trust school to become part of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) with Harton Technology College.

Why convert to an Academy?

The Government White Paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere (March 2016), proposed that the vast majority of schools work in Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), allowing them to share resources, staff and expertise to continue to drive up standards. Whilst there has been a U- turn on directive policy by the Government in May 2016, they still maintain that their goal is for all schools to become Academies.

Academies are independent schools, established by an agreement with the Secretary of State, which receive their funding through a funding agreement drawn up at conversion. Academy conversion is part of the government's plans for a reformed system of strong, autonomous schools and a modernised role for local authorities. Academy status is intended to promote innovation and flair by giving school leaders more freedom to decide how best to meet the needs of their students, parents and wider communities. It enables greater control over school finances and offers an opportunity to save money by using greater economies of scale and by flexible staffing appointments across schools.

What is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)?

A Multi-Academy Trust is where two or more schools convert to academy status together. A single Academy Trust is formed to provide the strategic leadership and oversight of each school. Each school would then have a Local Governing Body (appointed by the Academy Trust).

The Local Governing Bodies of each school within the Trust, whilst largely autonomous, would be accountable to the Directors who are tasked with monitoring the performance of the schools within the Trust.

Within the Multi-Academy Trust, each school would retain its own identity, keeping their own Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. All parties would work to secure the kind of inter-school collaboration which would help to deliver high quality educational outcomes for all the children educated under the auspices of the Multi Academy Trust.

Current Situation

Jarrow School is currently a Trust school. The Governing Board employs the staff and sets the entrance criteria. The land is owned by the Trust Board (an educational trust set up in 2010). Currently funding is delegated to Governors who take full responsibility for the quality of expenditure.

If the School converts to Academy status, there would be three key differences:

1. The school would cease to be a Trust School and would instead receive funds from the Education Funding Agency through a Funding Agreement.
2. A charitable Academy Trust would be established through Harton Technology College which would oversee the management of the school's site and assets. As we are a PFI school, the

buildings would still be part of the current PFI contract although a new agreement would be made between the Academy Trust and the Local Authority.

3. School staff would move to the new Academy Trust. The employment rights of all members of staff would be protected by the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations, also known as 'TUPE'. This means that our employees would transfer to the Trust under the same terms and conditions of employment.

What would stay the same?

Some important matters would not change if Jarrow School becomes an Academy:

1. The school's ethos, aims and educational values will remain the same.
2. We will continue to be a non-selective school, serving our local community.
3. The Post 11 Autistic Centre would continue to be part of the school.
4. There are no planned changes to admissions as a direct result of Academy conversion. However, the Admissions Policy is reviewed every year and will continue to be reviewed in this same way.
5. The school would continue to provide education free of charge. There would be no charges beyond those already levied for additional items such as international trips.
6. We would continue to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, continuously reviewing our offer to ensure that it reflects the needs and aspirations of our students.

What are the advantages for Jarrow School?

Adopting the Multi-Academy Trust model with Harton Technology College brings with it significant advantages in terms of mutual support, curriculum innovation, professional development of staff and further economies of scale through the rationalisation of service provision. Harton Technology College is an outstanding school and we have worked extensively with them in recent years. Although the formal partnership is no longer in place, we still work with Harton Technology College on a regular basis through a range of Teaching School programmes and activities.

The school would continue to receive funding for students based on formulae set at a national level. This would include additional funding which represents the amount of funding currently retained by the Local Authority to provide central services. Although the school would need to use some of this funding to purchase services currently provided by the Local Authority, we believe that there would still be a net benefit.

Academy status is a key educational policy of the Government. A principal commitment is to "devolve as much power as possible to the front line, whilst retaining high levels of accountability"; the prime method of achieving this aim is the expansion of the academy programme. Three other secondary schools in South Tyneside have already converted.

Are there any disadvantages of becoming an Academy?

The change to Academy status takes the 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 and other services from the Local Authority and where these represent 'best value', services

could continue to be used. Where it is felt that others can provide better value or better services, the change to Academy status increases the freedom to make these changes.

There are risks also associated with not changing to Academy status. At some stage in the future, any school, might be influenced to become part of a larger national Academy chain. The ability to be part of a local Multi-Academy Trust, under local direction, offers Jarrow School the best opportunities.

What is the process of conversion?

The Governors have passed a resolution to consult with key stakeholders regarding conversion. If, following consultation, the decision to continue is made, an application for conversion to Academy status will be made to the Department of Education.

What would be the next steps?

After an application is submitted to the Department for Education, they will consider the school's application, and grant an Academy Order which gives permission for the school to begin the formal process of setting up the Academy.