

PERRYFIELDS JUNIOR SCHOOL

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Introduction

Over the last few years it has become clear that academies are here to stay and many other schools in Essex have already converted from local authority maintained to independent academies. Nearly all secondary schools have already converted to academies as have some primary schools, and the number of local primary schools converting is gathering pace. The governors of Perryfields Junior School have been considering our position very carefully and have concluded that it is important for us to engage in this change. In common with many other local primary schools we have been discussing the potential advantages and routes towards Academy status. We have registered an interest with the Department for Education (DfE), met with existing Academy trusts, attended expert seminars, visited schools that have converted to Academy status, and sought information from numerous sources. Following receiving confirmation from Tim Coulson, Regional Schools Commissioner, that Perryfields Junior School have an Academy order that allows the school to convert to Academy status the Governors have now decided that we should consult formally on whether we should proceed with an application to the DfE to convert to Academy status.

Consultation Process

The consultation will be carried out with as many stakeholders, staff, parents and pupils as possible to provide the Governors with a clear picture of the school community's views about this potential change. The final decision on whether or not to convert to Academy status lies entirely with the Governing Body once they have consulted with and considered the views of all the stakeholders mentioned above. Please note that the formal consultation process is now open and will be so until 12pm 22.07.2016 and we encourage you to present your support, views, questions and concerns. All submissions received by this date will be considered at a meeting of the full Governing Body in the Autumn term. Please submit your views either by email to admin@perryfields-jun.essex.sch.uk or in writing to the school's address. Please mark letters and emails 'Academy Consultation' so that they can be quickly forwarded.

What is an Academy?

Academies are schools that are funded directly by the DfE. That means that they have greater freedoms and flexibilities as they are independent from their local authority (LA). Schools that are performing well can apply to become academies.

- Freedom from LA control
- Flexibility in delivering the curriculum
- Greater control of their budget as they are funded directly by the DfE. In particular academies are able to receive and spend money currently held back by the LA for management and services.



Each Academy or group of schools within a single Academy usually takes the legal form of a charitable Academy Trust which holds the ownership of the school's site, and is the conduit for funding. The Trust does not 'own' the school and it cannot make a profit from the wider Academy. The Academy Trust appoints the governing body of each school. Academy Trustees have a legal duty to act in the interests of the Academy. The freedoms, rights and responsibilities of the Trust are set out in a Funding Agreement between the Trust and the Secretary of State. Academy Trusts are 'exempt' charities and are not required to register with the Charity Commission.

Why should our school become an Academy?

As many other schools locally have become Academies so the LA's funding and resources to support those still LA maintained has reduced. Many of the support mechanisms we might benefit from have either been greatly reduced or simply no longer exist. This means that "do nothing" is not an option.

The Governors share a vision for Perryfields Junior School and we believe converting to Academy status will provide the greatest chance of allowing us to continue with our current values and ethos. Our aim is to provide a stimulating learning environment in which children are excited to learn and are given the confidence to achieve their potential. There are a dwindling number of schools that have yet to convert to Academy status, and we judge that if we do not take action on this issue now we may well lose control over our future destiny as current government policy is that all schools are being encouraged to become academies. We have concluded that the best chance of preserving all that is special about us is to embrace the opportunity of converting to an Academy as part of a Multi Academy Trust, enabling us to form partnerships in the future with other like-minded schools.

The advantages to PEAT ENTERPRISING ACADEMY TRUST

In addition to preserving as much of our independence as possible, there are a number of practical advantages:

- Perryfields Junior School would continue to function with the same leadership structure as it does currently.
- As an Academy we would be required to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, as we do now, including Maths, English and Science. We would not be required to adopt the National Curriculum. Although we are likely to continue to use the National Curriculum as our guiding document, there may be benefits in this flexibility that we would wish to explore in the future. These flexibilities may allow teachers to exercise more fully their professional judgment in the topics and context in which they teach their subjects and may allow children access to more personalised routes and opportunities.
- Academies have control of all of their finances. We would be better able to ensure our focus and investment in the core business of the school – teaching and learning.
- Managing budgets becomes more transparent as the funding becomes aligned to an academic year rather than the financial year.
- Importantly, as more and more local schools have become academies we have seen the support provided centrally by the LA dwindle and we believe that this trend will continue and accelerate. To be one of the very last schools depending on LA support, which by then may be minimal, would pose a real threat to our schools.

What would not change?

Very little, if anything will change in the day to day running of Perryfields. Keeping all that is special about us is one of the drivers for conversion. Children and staff should not notice any differences.



We intend to keep with the current arrangements for admissions which are determined by the local authority. That means being very inclusive by welcoming children with disabilities and special needs, and giving preferential admission to siblings.

Initially there will be no immediate or significant changes in our curriculum delivery. We would expect any changes that come about because of Academy freedoms to be gradual and evolutionary.

The governors are committed to retaining the existing name – Perryfields Junior School - and there are no plans to alter the school uniforms or anything else concerned with the day to day delivery of what we do.

There will still be a Governing Body – with governors drawn, as now, from a range of backgrounds. There will still be an opportunity for elected parents to join the governing body. Academies have a range of explicit freedoms not available to LA schools including setting the pay and conditions of staff and term dates of students. However, our Governors are committed to adhering to national agreements on pay and conditions.

It should also be noted that the employment rights of all current members of staff will be protected by TUPE, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations. This means that these employment rights will transfer to the Academy Trust under the same terms and conditions of employment. Pension rights and continuity of service record will be preserved.

The schools will be subject to the exact same regime and cycle of Ofsted inspections.

The Local Authority retains a monitoring role for all maintained schools in their area including academies.

Please submit your views by 12.00 noon on 22nd July 2016. Email: admin@Perryfields-jun.essex.sch.uk Post: In writing to the Chair of Governors

