

Questions and Answers for the website:

What is an academy?

Academies are still state schools, but they're funded and operated a little differently than maintained schools. Instead of being funded by the local authority, academy trusts are paid directly by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This means that academies have more control over how they do things than schools that aren't academies. Academies don't charge fees.

What is a multi-academy trust?

We're proposing to join an existing multi-academy trust. This means that we'll be part of a community of schools that are governed by one board of trustees. Each school in the trust will also have its own local governing body, with some delegated governance responsibilities for that particular school. The trust will also employ a team of central staff to support the group of schools and drive school improvement. As part of a trust with multiple schools, our school will have the opportunity to collaborate and share resources with the other schools across the trust.

What are the main reasons behind the decision to join the Fallibroome Multi Academy Trust?

The decision to join the Fallibroome Multi Academy Trust was made following a thorough needs analysis conducted by Lower Park Governing Body, with the primary aim of ensuring the best possible educational outcomes and support for our pupils while reducing administrative burdens on our staff. The Fallibroome Trust was chosen for its track record of excellence and the high-quality support services it offers, including staff training, health and safety expertise, facilities management, IT and budgetary support.

How will joining the Fallibroome Trust impact our school's relationship with other educational institutions, such as Poynton High School?

Joining the Fallibroome Trust will have no adverse effect on our existing relationships with other educational institutions. We will maintain our strong partnership with Poynton High School and continue to be one of their largest feeder primary schools. We will continue to work closely with other schools in the PDA group (Poynton, Disley, Adlington) through the Headteacher meetings, subject leadership groups and transition team.

What opportunities will joining the Fallibroome Trust provide for staff development and training?

Joining the Fallibroome Trust will provide enhanced opportunities for staff development and additional training aimed at improving pupil outcomes. The trust offers comprehensive training programs tailored to the needs of individual staff members, ensuring continuous professional development and growth.

How can parents and carers participate in the consultation process regarding the school's conversion to academy status?

Parents and carers can participate in the consultation process by submitting their views, comments, and questions via email academisationquestions@lowerpark.cheshire.sch.uk or attending the scheduled meetings. Additionally, you can refer to the FAQs section on the school website for further information and updates on the consultation process.

<https://www.lowerpark.cheshire.sch.uk/page/academisation/136544>

What are the benefits of academisation for our school?

The benefits for our school will include:

Improved teaching and learning for our pupils, because teaching expertise and resources can be shared across the trust and there will be more training opportunities for our staff.

Greater freedom in deciding how to spend government funding.

The opportunity to collaborate, so we can have more or better extra-curricular activities, for example.

Greater financial efficiency by procuring goods and services at a larger scale across the trust and sharing staff, including specialist staff who work centrally for the trust, like a school improvement team or pastoral team.

Will the trust or trustees make a profit from the school?

No. Academy trusts are charities, and any surplus or other income must be used to benefit pupils.

Will the trust take any money away from our school?

The Trust takes a topslice off each school's mainstream funding to pay for central services. As a process, this is similar to the way the local authority "de-delegates" a portion of school funding from non-Academy schools for the same purpose. The current topslice is 5% of mainstream funding, which is the national average for multi academy Trusts. It is not applied to school-generated income or SEN high needs income.

Will our school get more money as an academy?

The amount of funding allocated per pupil at our school won't change. We'll get the same funds that we would have done as a maintained school. However, we'll be able to negotiate our own contracts for products and services, which means we'll have the opportunity to find better services and prices.

How much is academy conversion going to cost?

There is a £25,000 grant to cover the costs of conversion.

As an academy, will our school still be inspected by Ofsted?

Academies are inspected by Ofsted and are held to the same standards as other state-run schools.

As an academy, will our school follow the National Curriculum?

Academies don't have to follow the National Curriculum but the Lower Park Curriculum will remain as it is.

As an academy, will our school change our name/logo/uniform?

No. All of these remain at the discretion of the Headteacher. There may be some additions to signage.

As an academy, will our school term times change?

The Head teachers and Governors will continue to set term times to support our families with children at feeder schools as we do currently.

As an academy, will our school provision for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) change?

We will still have a regional SEND case worker at the local authority but we will have additional resources from the Trust through CPD and supervision.