

Frequently asked questions about academies

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How can I communicate my views about the school converting?

You can write to:

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Or email

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General Questions

What is an Academy?

The Government has invited all schools rated "Outstanding" by Ofsted to apply for Academy status. This is a new initiative and should not be confused with the previous system whereby Academies were created from failing schools. The main differences between a Foundation school (as we are now) and an Academy are as follows:

- The school will cease to be funded and maintained by the Local Authority but will instead be funded and maintained by the Department for Education. In addition to its current level of funding the school will also receive additional funding equivalent to that currently retained by the Local Authority to meet the costs of centrally provided support and development and other services which the school does not directly pay for. We are currently researching exactly how much this extra funding will amount to and how much of this we will have to spend on services that are currently provided by the local authority. Any additional funds will be used to directly benefit pupils in the school.
- The school becomes a Trust which is a company limited by guarantee and an "exempt" charity (which means it does not have to register with the Charity Commission). The school will be governed by an autonomous Governing body which we have every reason to believe will be very similar in composition to the current Governing body.
- The school staff will be employed by the Academy Trust. Under existing legislation all staff will transfer to the trust under exactly the same terms and conditions of employment as they currently enjoy. Pension rights and continuity of employment are also unaffected by the transfer. There will be a full consultation process with all staff and we will take professional advice to ensure that any concerns or issues are dealt with during the process.

Why does Claremont High School feel the Converter Academy route is the right one?

Our recent Ofsted report concluded that the 'senior leadership team works very effectively with middle leaders and staff to achieve an inclusive, harmonious community, drive up the quality of provision and improve outcomes. All staff who completed the inspection questionnaire indicated they were proud to work at the school, shared its sense of purpose and were involved in what it is trying to achieve'. We believe that this is a terrific foundation on which to make the most of the **significant advantages** to be gained for our pupils and the wider school community by the school becoming a Converter Academy.

In the current educational, economic and social climate, it will provide the school with the stability and freedom to:

- Create the momentum from which we will apply to become a Training School 'one of the highest accolades that a modern school can have' so that we can build on the excellent teacher training programmes that we have successfully developed at Claremont;
- Build on our current strengths as an 'outstanding', high performing comprehensive school, preserving the legacy of our specialisms in Performing Arts, Mathematics and Computing and Applied Learning so that we are able to decide the agenda through which these will continue to add to our strengths as a multi specialist school and so that we can reaffirm our aims as a school fit for the 21st century.;
- Enable us to further strengthen the strategic financial management and planning that we will need to secure the continued success of the school in a locally and nationally shifting economic landscape;
- Ensure that we are able to make strategic decisions concerning the deployment of resources so that we can continue to employ teaching and support staff of the highest quality who continue to thrive in the best possible terms and conditions of employment;
- Focus on meeting the needs of all learners in our local and wider community across all key stages and with our partner primary and secondary schools ;
- Enable us to make informed and strategic decisions about how and where the resources that are intended for our learners are deployed so that they meet their needs and have the greatest impact now and in the future;
- Ensure that we remain in contact with what our local secondary schools see as the future of local educational provision and with whom we already have highly successful partnerships;
- To take full advantage of new and emerging educational agenda via the highly effective partnerships that we have within the family of schools, with the fast changing local authority, in the London and national arena;

- Share information and take advantage of the 'new' freedoms within the curriculum, school leadership and governance so that we can take the best advantage of what the white paper has to offer;
- To be forefront in understanding and developing the new style of freedoms and accountabilities that are enshrined in the White Paper so that we are best placed to influence what these will be and how they will impact on schools in the short and long term;
- To continue to lead from the front as befits an outstanding school committed to system wide leadership, development, change and influence.

Throughout Claremont High School's history as a comprehensive school we have embraced change and this is reflected in our school aims 'to enable our pupils to achieve their full potential' and it is our wish to ensure that together we can 'enable our school to achieve its full potential'. We have never done this simply by waiting for things to happen to us after others have benefited from opportunities to grow and develop. We wish to be pro-active within the emerging educational landscape and to make an informed decision about the future for our learners and of our school.

In many respects the move to Converter Academy status is an appropriate next step for us regarding strategic financial management and it builds on the outstanding value for money we have consistently delivered, formerly as a Grant Maintained School and for many years now as a Foundation School.

Furthermore, we are deeply committed to ensuring we can meet the needs of all of our learners by personalising our provision, building their learning power and providing high levels of support and guidance. Academy status will bring us greater autonomy and we will work closely with pupils, parents, staff, governors and other agencies to allocate resources judiciously to help us achieve our challenging objectives.

Will the school be rebranded and so change its name and its ethos and character?

NO. Claremont High Schools is an OUTSTANDING school and the Governors see no reason to make any changes to its ethos and character. The school's name will remain the same with the subtle addition of a line stating that Claremont High School is '**An Outstanding Academy School**'.

Will the school lose its contacts within the local family of schools and in so doing jeopardise the support that it currently gets from the Local Authority and from its partner schools?

NO. This is not our intention in becoming a converter academy. The school currently benefits from very well established partnerships with the LA and the family of schools. So far all of our conversations with the LA and the family of schools has focused on how we can maintain and in many cases strengthen these relationships within the framework of the academy system. The Claremont position is very strong in many partnerships and it is the wish of the Governors and the Leadership team to be able to lead in establishing even more productive links in the new landscape of education within Brent and across the London region.

What would be different if the School became an Academy?

There will very little evidence of any change visible to pupils, parents and staff. Some pupil support services may be provided by different agencies than now but the intention is to continue to provide outstanding education to our local community as now and where this is practicable and shows value for money to continue to buy services at the local level.

What wouldn't change if the school became an Academy?

We will still be known as Claremont High School (not Claremont Academy). Our school logo and letterhead won't change. Our admissions policy remains exactly as now. Our school day and school terms won't change in the short term (although Academy status does give us more flexibility to change these in the future).

Who is responsible for the performance of the Academy?

Just as now the responsibility for the following lies with the school/Academy's governing body:

- Ensuring the quality of educational provision
- Challenging and monitoring the performance of the school/Academy
- Managing the school/Academy's finances and property
- Employing staff

Will the school still work with Brent local authority and local schools who aren't Academies?

We value working in partnership with other schools and with the Local Authority and fully intend to continue existing arrangements for sharing information and best practice.

Will the school need an outside organisation sponsoring the Academy?

There is no requirement for a school which is currently judged Outstanding to involve any external organisation in the running of the Academy unless they chose to do so. We are not intending to do so.

Will there be any significant change in direction as a result of becoming an Academy?

We don't envisage any major changes to the type or quality of education we provide for the local community of Brent.

Does becoming an Academy change the way in which exclusions are dealt with?

Academy status has no impact on the handling of exclusions or excluded pupils.

Will the school still be subject to Ofsted inspection as an Academy?

The Secretary of State for Education has already announced that schools previously judged Outstanding will no longer be subject to routine inspection. We may wish to buy in some form of external audit of the quality of education provided by the school as a form of quality assurance but we are not obliged to do so.

If you become an Academy can you change your mind at a later date?

Not for seven years which is the length of the initial "contract" with the Department for Education.

Finance Questions

Will the school receive more or less funding?

The school will receive slightly more money to cover the costs of services that are currently provided to the school by the Local Authority and which the school will need to procure for itself as an Academy.

Will school funds be used to pay the costs of the work involved in converting?

No. There is specific additional funding available from the Department for Education for the costs of conversion to an Academy.

I've heard that Academies are "Independent" schools. Does this mean you will be charging fees?

No. Technically Academies are classed as Independent schools but this does not mean that parents will have to pay anything for their child's education which will continue to be state-funded as now.

Consultation Questions

How can I support the school in becoming an Academy?

Let us know your views and the reasons why you support the school in becoming an Academy. All views for and against will be considered by the Governing body before making a final decision.

I am a parent/member of staff and don't want the school to become an Academy. What do I do?

Let us know your views and the reasons why you don't want the school to become an Academy. All views for and against will be considered by the Governing body before making a final decision.

How can I communicate my views about the school converting?

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Will there be an opportunity to meet with Governors to discuss any questions or concerns I may have?

There will be opportunities for all stake holders to express their views and or ask questions of the Governors and the Leadership Team and details of are shown in the Timeline.

As a member of staff can I speak to a Governor about the proposed conversion?

We will arrange for Zac Arif, Chairman of Governors, and other Governors to be available to meet with staff on an individual basis on two dates during the early part of the spring term. These dates will be notified to you in good time so that you can take advantage of the opportunity. Alternatively or in addition you can speak with one of the three staff governors.

Will the school be talking to trade union representatives about this proposed change?

We are consulting with staff representative bodies both over the general principles of conversion and, if conversion goes ahead, specifically about the transfer of staff to the new employer.

Admissions Questions

Will admissions procedures or catchment areas change as an Academy?

No. Admissions procedures will remain in line with the nationally agreed Admissions

Code of Practice and we have no plans to alter our feeder schools in the immediate future.

Do you intend to introduce academic selection?

No. We fully intend to remain an all-ability comprehensive serving our local community of Brent and the surrounding area.

Can a child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs nominate an Academy as their school of choice?

Yes

Staffing Questions



Will there be any changes to staff pay and conditions if the school becomes an Academy?

Under the Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Act (known as TUPE) staff will transfer to the Academy on exactly the same terms and conditions of employment as they currently have. Claremont High School is an outstanding school because of its teaching and non teaching staff as such Governors see no reason to alter the well established terms and conditions that they have worked to create within the local and national framework.

Will my terms and conditions remain unchanged forever?

Once the transfer has taken place the Academy may consult at any time with staff and their trade union representatives on changes to terms and conditions. However as an Outstanding school we do not anticipate the need to make any changes to terms and conditions in the immediate future. Governors see conversion as an opportunity to be able to respond strategically and for the good of the school and the community that it serves to any adverse changes that may be made in the national context.

Will pension arrangements change?

No. Teachers will remain in the existing Teacher Pension Scheme. Support staff will also remain in the Local Government Pension Scheme although this would be a defined section of the Scheme specific to the Academy. It is not anticipated that this will mean any changes to employee contribution rates or benefits although all staff will need to keep a watching brief on the issue of pensions and national pension rights .

Which schools have already made the conversion to Academy status and what has been their experience so far?

This is a list of schools who have already either started the process of conversion or who have completed the conversion:

Outstanding Schools converting to Academies			Sponsor	LA	
65	Queen Elizabeth's School, Barnet	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Barnet
66	Kemnal Technology College (part of the Kemnal Trust)	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Bromley
67	Brine Leas High School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Cheshire East
68	Fallibroome High School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Cheshire East
69	St Buryan Primary School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Primary	N/A	Cornwall
70	Seaton Infant School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Primary	N/A	Cumbria
71	Broadclyst Community Primary School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Primary	N/A	Devon
72	Uffculme School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Devon
73	Cuckoo Hall Primary School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Primary	N/A	Enfield
74	The Cotswold School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Gloucestershire
75	Watford Grammar School for Boys	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Hertfordshire
76	Watford Grammar School for Girls	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Hertfordshire
77	Lampton School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Hounslow
78	The Westlands School (in federation with The Woodgrove Primary School)	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Kent
79	The Woodgrove Primary School (in federation with The Westlands School)	Conversion from maintained school	Primary	N/A	Kent
80	Heckmondwike Grammar School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Kirklees
81	Durand Primary School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Primary	N/A	Lambeth

82	The Giles School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Lincolnshire
83	Eaton Mill Foundation Primary School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Primary	N/A	Milton Keynes
84	Healing School, A Specialist Science and Foundation College	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	North East Lincolnshire
85	Tollbar Business Enterprise & Humanities College	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	North East Lincolnshire
86	Northampton School for Boys	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Northamptonshire
87	George Spencer Foundation School and Technology College	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Nottinghamshire
88	Arthur Mellows Village College	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Peterborough
89	The Chadwell Heath Foundation School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Redbridge
90	Holyrood Community School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Somerset
91	Huish Episcopi School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Somerset
92	Westcliff High School for Boys	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Southend-on-Sea
93	Hartismere School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Suffolk
94	Audenshaw School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Tameside
95	Urmston Grammar School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Trafford
96	Hardenhuish School	Conversion from Outstanding maintained school	Secondary	N/A	Wiltshire

This is what some schools have said about the conversion:

Patricia Sowter, Head of Cuckoo Hall Primary School, Edmonton, said:

With the new academy freedoms we will continue to develop our autonomy and take the school forward in what is an area of London that faces significant challenges and disadvantage. We will now have the flexibility to adapt and extend the curriculum, target resources more effectively, deploy specialist staff and above all build sustainable capacity to ensure continued and long term outstanding educational provision, to best meet the needs of our children and wider school community.

Cuckoo Hall remains committed to supporting and working with other schools to improve children's achievement. As an academy, Cuckoo Hall aims to build long term sustainable capacity to continue its effective work with other schools, and will seek to widen its impact on overall school improvement.

Greg Martin, Executive Head of Durand Academy, Lambeth, said:

Becoming an academy is so important for us at Durand. We are proud to deliver an outstanding education for our pupils, in an area with one of the highest levels of social deprivation in the UK. The freedom that academy status brings will allow us to deliver and develop a flexible curriculum to ensure that these children reach their full potential and achieve the very best. We look forward to using our academy freedoms to work with other schools to raise levels of attainment across the board.

David Hampson, Principal of Tollbar Business and Enterprise College, Grimbsy, said:

The benefits of becoming an academy will be enormous – less bureaucracy certainly but also more resources which we ourselves will be able to manage. We are very happy to embrace the requirement to associate ourselves with less successful schools and indeed we already have been working with a number of other schools locally and nationally, sharing our winning ways. In fact, Tollbar, as Tollbar Edge, are the sponsors of another academy which replaces a local school in special measures. We believe that we have already demonstrated our ability to run a highly successful establishment and this fantastic

Dr John Marincowitz Head of the Queen Elizabeth's School, Barnet, said:

We are delighted with our new status as an academy. Greater autonomy brings significant beneficial opportunities. For example, greater freedom to decide the curriculum will enable Queen Elizabeth's to secure a suitably academic curriculum that is geared more accurately to the needs of our pupils. Similarly, greater autonomy means we can now ensure that the resources and services we purchase are appropriate for the school and more closely aligned to the specific requirements of our pupils. We also look forward to bolstering the support we already provide to local schools as a specialist Training School and especially Northgate Hospital School with whom we have an established relationship.

Helen Hyde, Head of Watford Grammar School for Girls, Hertfordshire, and President of Foundation, Aided Schools and Academies National Association (FASNA), said:

I am very excited by the new challenges and opportunities that are created by becoming an academy. We will use the freedoms and autonomy to improve the educational provision for our students as well as form new partnerships with schools who would like to work with us both in the UK and abroad.

If the answer to your question is not here please e-mail us
admin@claremont-high.co.uk