



**Ashton  
Community  
Science  
College**

*'a school to be proud of'*

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **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. The Academy is funded directly by the Government and is no longer run by the Local Authority. The Trust is charitable, which means it must operate much like a charity and not for the profit of individuals or businesses.

### **What is a Multi-Academy Trust?**

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) allows academies to come together in partnership and work to improve the quality of provision for all students in the MAT.

### **What is The Bay Learning Trust?**

The Bay Learning Trust was set up in 2016 by Ripley St Thomas in Lancaster, which is an Ofsted graded Outstanding school. It is an open trust, accessible to both Church schools and community schools. The legal Articles of Association of the Trust guarantee that the ethos of each individual school will be maintained and supported. The Trust is aiming to build a family of schools who will work together and generate benefits for all schools and all students. There is no lead school in the Trust, all schools will be treated equally and work together as a family. All the schools that have opted to join The Bay Learning Trust are Ofsted graded Good and they share many similarities with Ashton in terms of ethos, aspiration and moral imperative.

### **What will our school gain?**

The real strength of the Trust will be in partnership working to improve staff training and development in all its schools, improving teaching and learning for the students. In addition, there are many economies of scale in being part of a larger organisation in terms of sharing expertise and resources. All schools will benefit financially from these, enabling us to spend more on the students.

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

The Governing Body has voted for this proposal in principle and is now following all the processes involved. The school must complete a consultation with parents, staff and the wider community which the Governors will take into account in reaching its decision.



### **Will the school have to change its name, logo or uniform?**

No. The school will not need to make any such changes.

### **How will being an academy affect staff?**

Currently, the employer for staff at our school is Lancashire Education Authority. After conversion all staff will be employed by the Bay Learning Trust. Staff members 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.

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

The day to day running of the school will not be affected and children will not notice any immediate difference. The school will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all students. 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 students' experience.

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

We believe that joining a local outstanding MAT offers the best opportunity to sustain vibrant, successful local schools such as ours. We have worked with the Ripley Teaching School Alliance since 2007 and so already enjoy a well-established, successful relationship with schools within the Trust.

The change to Academy status takes a school out of Local Authority control, but does not exclude the school from Local Authority support. For example, Academies can continue to buy in services from the Local Authority where these represent "best value". Where the MAT or the school feels that others can provide better services or better value, the change to Academy increases the freedom to make these changes.

There are risks associated with not changing to Academy status. At some stage in the future any school might be directed to become part of a broader Academy Chain. Should this be the case here, it may result in Ashton losing its unique identity.

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

The Trust is its own admissions authority but will be required to adopt clear and fair admissions arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admission Code. The Local Authority continues to have statutory responsibility for making sure that there are sufficient places locally and will co-ordinate the admissions process for all schools. This means parents will still have to complete only one application form.