



## ACADEMY SCHOOLS

### *Questions parents frequently ask*

**Q. What is an academy?**

**A.** An academy is a school with no local links to the community or the council, but funded by the taxpayer.

**Q. If a school becomes an academy and wants to change back, is that possible?**

**A.** No. A decision to become an academy is irreversible.

**Q. Will there be any changes to the catchment areas or admissions?**

**A.** Academies are their own admissions authority and, therefore, set their own admissions policies. They are at present required to abide by the admissions code. The government intends to remove the arrangements for monitoring admissions and there is already evidence that academies' intakes are not representative of their local community.

**Q. What impact does academy status have on special educational needs (SEN) provision?**

**A.** All academy funding agreements should include details of their obligations regarding provision for children with SEN. An academy is expected to behave as if it were a maintained school in meeting the needs of children with SEN. However, the record shows that academies have a higher exclusion rate than other types of school. In addition, further expansion of academies will undoubtedly reduce the coverage and effectiveness of local authority support for SEN provision as funding is reduced in order to divert funding for centralised services to the budgets of academies. The government is currently consulting on major changes to SEN provision, which will further weaken the role of local government support services in this area.

**Q. Once a school becomes an academy, what can parents do if they are not happy with any decisions made?**

**A.** In the first instance, as now, parents can complain to the school. However, there are often fewer parent governors to complain to. Academies are not part of the local authority and, therefore, if parents are not satisfied or are unhappy with the outcome, they cannot complain, as they can now, to the local council to ask them to intervene on their behalf. Effectively, when a school becomes an academy there are no local avenues of complaint.

**Q. Does becoming an academy mean that the school will get new buildings and facilities?**

**A.** The government is making no provision for academies to have new buildings or new facilities.

**Q. Will the academy have the same school term/school holiday dates and school day timings as all other local schools that continue to have links with the council?**

**A.** Academies can set their own term dates and school-day timings without consultation with parents or the local council.