

Academy Question responses for Pupil Voice. November 2011

Question(s)	Leadership Group Response.
<p>Will the school day change? (LCL)</p> <p>Will becoming an Academy change the hours of the school day? (RRT)</p>	<p>This is highly unlikely. The leadership Group reviewed the timings of the school day, and in fact the early finish that we enjoy on Fridays, in 2010. We considered that the working day that we presently have in place is the one that we will keep for the foreseeable future.</p>
<p>Will the holidays change? (LCL)</p> <p>If we become an academy can we have longer Xmas holidays? (HB)</p> <p>Do we get to chose the school holidays (MJL)</p> <p>How will we change the school holidays?(KJC)</p> <p>How will the school day and school terms, holidays be affected? (DW)</p>	<p>It is unlikely that there will be any radical change to the holiday arrangement throughout the year. We recognise that many of you have brothers and sisters in other schools in our local area which may not have the same freedom to change the dates as we would enjoy. Therefore to allow families to experience holiday time together we do not envisage changing the allocation of holidays in the near future.</p> <p>SO...No the Christmas holiday will not get longer!</p>
<p>What other subjects would be available? (LCL)</p>	<p>The school is facing an overall budget cut, whether it is an Academy or not. It is unlikely that the school will introduce a range of other subjects.</p>
<p>What are the different funding methods (LCL)</p>	<p>In the past the school has received funding via the local education Authority (Herts CC). The local Authority has retained a proportion of our (and all school budget) to fund some central services that it provides. We have also received money for our Specialist schools status, with smaller amounts also being raised from other funding bodies.</p> <p>As of 2010- 2011 all of these funds were brought together in one lump sum, with Herts still retaining an amount of money to fund central service.</p> <p>If we became an Academy the main change would be that all of our funding would come directly from the Department for Education, and we would receive all of our allocation (ie Herts would not retain anything)</p>

Question(s)	Leadership Group Response.
<p>Will there be more applicants to the school(HB) Would this mean more people would come into the school?(HB)</p>	<p>The school is not looking to increase the number of students in the school beyond what is already in place. In every year the school admits a number of additional students through the appeals process (some of you may have experienced this system and be here as a result of it) . These “Independent Appeals” are not run by the school, but by a panel of independent people who consider each case, on a one to one basis.</p>
<p>What kind of extra-curricular classes would we get? (HB) What other subjects might be considered?(AWM) eg. single science Would there be more choice at GCSE? (AWM) What new subjects may be introduced to the curriculum?(KJC) Would there be any changes to the curriculum? (RRT)</p>	<p>The school already has a rich programme of extra curricular activities. We are always reviewing what activities are on offer both through the extra-curricular programme and the Interhouse competition programme.</p> <p>The school undertook a comprehensive subject review in 2010. If it moved to be an Academy it has proposed that it would retain the specialisms in MFL and Technology. We review on a regular basis the curriculum on offer and how we administer the Options programmes at both GCSE and A level, and make changes as we see fit.</p>
<p>Swimming pool with the money?(HB)</p>	<p>In a word.....NO.</p>
<p>New teachers? (HB) Larger class sizes? (HB)</p>	<p>We are intending to try and keep the class sizes much as they are now, and staffing numbers as stable as we can. Pupils need to understand however that due to government cuts in the Education Budget, all schools will face a cut in funding year on year for the foreseeable future. The leadership Group of the school will regularly need to review what we can afford to do with the budget we have been given.</p>
<p>Can we have more Maths Challenges per Annum?(HB)</p>	<p>Much as we would like to be able to offer our students more opportunities to do additional things, the Leadership group has to try and balance the needs of all departments, as well as monitor the amount of time that students spend out of the normal curriculum pattern.</p>
<p>Will we be able to wear coloured tights? (HB) Would there be something on the uniform to show that we are an Academy?(CNC) Would the uniform change?(RRT)</p>	<p>We are not planning to change the uniform in any way for Academy Status. We review the uniform on a regular basis, and do ask for student input to that process.</p> <p>The badge and school name will remain the same, so there will be no specific indication that we are an Academy in the school uniform.</p>

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<p>Would the student body have any impact on what and where the money would go? (HB)</p> <p>What freedom does the school have with the extra finances it receives? (DW)</p>	<p>This is a little more complicated than us just getting “more money”. Due to an overall cut in budget (see question 4) it is likely that the additional money will be needed to just allow us to continue what we fund already.</p> <p>Pupils also need to recognise that although we get more money, we also need to pay for more things, for which we will need to use some of the additional money for.</p> <p>We do hope that with carefully planning we can “save” money that we can use for special projects, this would include continuing to update our Science Labs for example</p> <p>The changes in funding will allow us to have greater flexibility as to what services we purchase and where we purchase them from. This is the major “freedom” that this money gives us. This will allow us to focus our limited resources in areas that we feel are important to us as a school.</p>
<p>What would make us different to RWP and SJL?(HB)</p>	<p>We would maintain our Christian foundation, ethos, and our distinctive style. We are proud that we offer something different to RWP and SJL, just as they must be proud that they offer something different to us.</p>
<p>What happens if funds or money are mis-managed?(CNC)</p>	<p>If the school became an Academy it would have to send a set of financial reports to the Department for Education on an annual basis, (at year end for all you Economists and Business Studies students) The DfE reviews the accounts to ensure that our money has been spent appropriately etc, and would take action if they did not consider that they had been spent in this manner The DfE basically Audits the accounts for us.</p>

Question(s)	Leadership Group Response.
How can we ensure that essential equipment is replaced?(CNC)	We are always seeking to ensure that equipment is replaced as far as the budget of the school allows. This will not change if we become an Academy
What would we lose? (AWM)	We would lose being a VA school, and the overall protection of Herts County LEA. BUT being a VA school would have helped us prepare for being an Academy as we already shoulder some of this responsibility .
<p>What advantages/disadvantages will there be for students? (KJC)</p> <p>What are the practical advantages for pupils? (DW)</p> <p>How do pupils directly benefit? (TFW)</p>	<p>Pupils will benefit from the increased flexibility we have in spending our money. You may not ‘notice’ this to any great extent, but it will be happening. It may just result in us being able to continue with some of the things that we already offer, rather than provide anything new.</p> <p>To some extent the advantages of Academy status are “hidden” in that they are more to do with how the school is administered and financed. You will benefit directly from this, but it may not be that obvious to you in the first instance.</p>
Why would it be better than it is now? (TFW)	On the whole the outside face of the school will not change that much, if at all. The main benefit to the school is the flexibility it would have in spending the budget that it is given.
Can we revert back if it does not suit our school? (TFW)	NO, we cannot go back to being a VA school.

Academy Questions – Part two

Some of your questions have already been addressed in the initial set of responses that was sent out. I've tried to pick out the questions which are different and have given you a brief answer here.

Questions	Leadership group responses.
Would we be able to hire teachers who did not have QTS status like independent schools?(KNL)	The guidelines for the employment of staff would not change. We would still seek to provide the best qualified person that we have available to us, to teach you.
Are we definitely changing?(NJW)	Not at the moment. The process of asking for your questions and giving you a set of answers is part of a much larger consultation process. There are also a number of legal questions to be answered which we are exploring at the moment. Only when we are in possession of all of the facts, will we be able to make a final decisions as to whether this is the right move forward for our very unique school.
Barnfield South was a really bad school why did it change to an Academy? (NJW)	You need to consider that the reasons for offering schools the opportunities to become Academies, has changed. Under the Labour Government, Academy schools were created to try and raise attainment in school which were struggling. It was seen as an opportunity for a new start etc. The Coalition Government has changed the criteria for school becoming an Academy, and is now inviting those schools which are seen to be OUTSTANDING to take on Academy Status. We fall into the second category.
Would it affect Fees in the boarding house or the way it is run?(NJW)	We regularly review fees as part of an annual process, and this would not change. We are not expecting there to be a change in the way that the boarding houses are administered or run.
If any what rules are likely to change?(NJW)	The “rules” of the school are regularly reviewed and policies which govern those rules are sometimes up dated or amended, but this is an on going process and one that is not linked directly to Academy Status
Does this mean we will have to stay in school longer? (MD)	During the day? No (see previous sheet) Over 18? The government is bringing legislation that will mean that students will need to stay in some form of education until they are 19. This would not have to be at our school.
How will it affect sixth form and access to it? (LFH)	Sixth form will remain the same. We have a set of admissions criteria for sixth form as we do for the rest of the school. These are regularly reviewed and agreed by both our Governors and an external Ombudsman.
Will it be easier to be excluded? (MD)	No.