



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Academy conversion of Apley Wood Primary School**

#### **What is the REAch2 Academy Trust?**

Founded in 2012, REAch2 Academy Trust is the largest primary-only academy trust in the country. It is a growing charitable organisation currently supporting some 60 primary academies across England.

The Cornerstone of REAch2 is a solid, unshakeable foundation, defined by exceptional teaching experiences and shared Touchstone values of learning, leadership, enjoyment, inclusion, inspiration, responsibility and integrity.

These values are at the very core of the Trust, firmly embedded in all of our academies and embraced by our leaders, teachers, staff, parents and children alike.

Strong family values are a key component of the REAch2 vision. We believe that REAch2 is a family: connected by a common desire to learn from each other, share experiences and be mutually supportive across the entire academy community. Every school and every individual is included in this vision. We actively encourage collaboration – and work as a team to create and deliver the best possible educational experiences for every pupil within the REAch2 Trust.

To find out more about REAch2, its academies and to hear from some of our staff, parents, please visit our website – <http://reach2.org/about-us/>

#### **What is an Academy?**

Academies are state funded schools independent of Local Authority control – in other words the funding comes from Central Government straight to the school and the pupils, without first going via the Local Authority. This means that Head teachers have more control over what they spend their budgets on. Academies are also all-ability, non-selective (assuming there is no selection presently, as is the case with our school), non-fee paying schools in the same way that Apley Wood Primary currently is.

#### **Will the curriculum change?**

As an Academy, we have the freedom to develop an enriched and nourishing curriculum to best suit the needs of the pupils Apley Wood Primary.



### **Will admission arrangements change?**

The admissions criteria will be set by REAch2 Academy Trust who will become the admissions authority for Apley Wood Primary when it joins. REAch2 Academy Trust will endeavour to ensure the school's admission arrangements are consonant with the Local Authority's arrangements. The admission arrangements for Apley Wood Primary will be set in line with the National School Admissions Code and the National School Appeals Code.

You can find details about Apley Wood Primary's current admissions policy [here](#).

An example of a local REAch2 Primary Academy's Admissions policy is available [here](#).

### **Who sets the future term dates?**

School term dates are set centrally by REAch2 Academy Trust. REAch2 Academy Trust will endeavour to ensure that school term dates fall in line with the term dates set by Telford and Wrekin Local Authority. In practice, this decision is delegated to each individual school. REAch2 are national trust working with several local authorities up and down the country.

### **How will converting to an Academy affect children with Special Education Needs (SEN)?**

Apley Wood Primary has responsibility for assessing pupils and maintaining their Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans or Statements of SEN. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) of the school has a responsibility to identify pupils that might need additional support and then work with a range of school staff and outside agencies to develop an individual education programme, using the Graduated Response (assess, plan, do, review cycle).

Schools that convert to become academies have the same responsibilities as previously, including all statutory aspects of the SEND Code of Practice. In practical terms, this requires new academies to:

- inform parents that their child has SEN and the special educational provision being made. Ensuring that the Academy keeps the records of all pupils with SEN up to date.
- an unqualified obligation to admit a child to the school if the Academy is named in the Education Health Care Plan or Statement.
- appoint a qualified teacher as SEN Coordinator (SENCO) to oversee the day-to-day operation of the Academy's SEND policy and ensure that any new SENCO would undertake prescribed training.



- ensure that pupils with SEN engage in the activities of the Academy alongside pupils who do not have SEN.

Academies are required by their funding agreements to consent to being named in a child's Education Health Care Plan or Statement unless they can demonstrate that admitting the child would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children and that there are no reasonable steps they could take, together with the Local Authority, to prevent the incompatibility. Or the Academy is unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs ("SEN") of the child or young person.

If Apley Wood Primary becomes an academy, the Local Governing Body (LGB) would retain the ethos of inclusion. There will be a sustained commitment to providing the best possible education for the young people of all abilities and backgrounds from our community. Whilst the LGB are not aware that becoming an academy would discriminate against or disadvantage any group of children or staff, it will nevertheless be carrying out an equality impact assessment and would like to hear your views.

### **How do Academies receive funding?**

The Multi Academy Trust is funded for each of its academies by the DfE through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). If Apley Wood Primary becomes an Academy, the ESFA would provide the Trust with a General Allocation Grant (GAG). This is made up of

- school budget share – calculated on the same basis as for maintained schools in the same local authority. [Guidance](#) for 2023 to 2024 explains how the ESFA calculate the school budget share.
- The minimum funding guarantee (MFG) is a protection against changes in per pupil school budget share (SBS) funding between the 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024 academic years. The amount of protection will vary according to the impact of local changes in the funding formula and the effect of these on individual per pupil rates.

In 2023 to 2024, local authorities have the flexibility to set local MFG between +0.0% and +0.5% per pupil in order to offer higher levels of protection locally.

The Trust then delegates a budget to the academy so that it can successfully carry out the functions it is responsible for.

In addition, the trust will apply for an academy conversion grant to support with the costs of conversion. The Local Authority also continues to fund support for children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and looked after children (LAC). Pupil Premium is passed on directly to the academy in its entirety.



### **What will happen to the Local Governing Body?**

REAch2 understand the importance of local governance, and although the maintained school LGB will be disbanded in accordance with the DfE's academy conversion process, the Trust will work with the school to put in place a Transition Board to support the leadership and direction of the school through the conversion itself and first term as a new academy. The Transition Board will then look to form a new local governing body for the primary academy which is effectively a committee of our board of Trustees.

### **How will the new Local Governing Body look like and operate?**

The local governing body will be made up of 4 Trust appointed (community) governors, 2 parent governors, 2 staff governors and the head teacher and the chair is appointed from within this group. We often retain governors from the LGB of the maintained school to ensure continuity for the school in a transition period.

The broad duties of the Local Governing Body will be:

- Holding regular meetings to monitor the school development plan, focussing on areas such as educational performance, school improvement, safeguarding and SEND provision;
- Acting as a critical friend to the school's senior leadership team, being ready to challenge and hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the Academy's performance;
- Promoting collaboration with other academies in the cluster and supporting opportunities for all members of the school community to improve efficiency and implement good practice;
- Developing effective links within the Academy's community, communicating openly and frequently as appropriate and ensuring that the Academy meets its responsibilities to the community and serves the community's needs in relation to the safeguarding and education of its pupils;
- Engaging fully and openly with any inspection of the Academy by Ofsted

**If you have any further questions, please email us at [A2190@taw.org.uk](mailto:A2190@taw.org.uk)**

**If you would like to contact REAch2 Academy Trust directly, please email [info@reach2.org](mailto:info@reach2.org)**