



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Firs Farm proposal for academisation and joining the Edact Academy Trust.

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SECTION 1: ACADEMY INFORMATION

What are the Governors of Firs Farm Primary School proposing?

The Governors believe the time is right to move forward, after careful consideration and a thoughtful journey, and are proposing that Firs Farm Primary School converts to an Academy and join the EdAct Trust.

Who is EdAct Trust?

EdAct is a local Trust based very close to Firs Farm school. The Trust currently comprises of Edmonton County Secondary School, Lea Valley Academy, Salmons Brook School (special school), the Konrad Halls Centre and Edmonton County Primary School. Each school is at the heart of their community. The current CEO of the Trust is Dr Susan Tranter. The Trust has a clear ethos and a shared vision for the education of children and young people.

Further information about EdAct can be found on their website: www.Edact.org.uk

What is an Academy?

Academies are publicly funded independent schools that are not managed by a Local Authority, but their funding and accountability is directly with and from the Department for Education (DfE).

Why is Firs Farm School proposing to join EdAct?

The Governors have been actively considering joining an academy and reviewing the best options for Firs Farm. Governors want to ensure the excellent and high-quality provision we are known for is protected and continues for many more years to come. We now believe that it is in the best interest of our school to join a Trust and feel EdAct is best placed and suited to protect, secure and develop even further Firs Farm vision, values and our educational commitment.

There are a number of reasons for this, including:

- The Headteacher and Governors believe that converting and joining EdAct will secure the best future for our school.
- The Headteacher and Governors believe joining EdAct will secure strategic support and help for areas such as: HR, Legal, Special Needs, Attendance/Education Welfare, IT, joint procurement. These are areas that have seen a notable decline in support from the Local Authority over recent years.
- There are declining rolls across all London schools which leads to increased financial pressures; joining a Trust will lead to efficiencies and a reduction in bureaucracy.
- There will be almost no changes for pupils, staff and parents. The day-to-day operation of the school will remain the same and under the control of the Headteacher. The changes will bring in closer working practices to Governance and back-office functions.

How will the School benefit from joining EdAct?

- Enhanced collaboration and partnership working across all the schools, for example extracurricular activities.
- Sharing of teaching resources across the trust i.e. potential use of specialised teaching equipment/ rooms/expertise at the secondary settings [science, PE, Music, DT]. Potential opportunities for secondary teachers to experience and understand primary school settings.
- Increased savings and efficiencies at a time of growing financial pressures; including the ability to procuring goods and services at a larger scale at Trust level.
- Increased staff CPD opportunities and career pathways within subjects and across phases.
- Clear, robust and effective Governance at Trust, CEO and Local Governing Body levels.

What work has been done by Governors to explore all options?

Governors have conducted a number of activities over the past two years to ensure we reach the best decision for our school's continue future.

These include:

- Discussions with other local schools to understand their strategy and journey.
- Attendance at specific training and information sessions for Governors.
- Research on other Trusts.
- Research on academisation based on information from a variety of sources.
- Presentations and Q&A from various Trusts on a number of different subjects.
- Presentation and discussion covering the pros and cons of all the options for the future of the school.
- Due diligence processes with EdAct.

Will the EdAct expand to include more schools over time?

There is a possibility that EdAct will expand further to embrace and welcome other local schools from both the primary and secondary sector.

How will the Governance arrangements of EdAct work?

EdAct has a Trust board that oversee the strategic direction of the Trust and its interests.

Firs Farm will retain a Local Governing Body (GB) with the Headteacher which has powers delegated from the Trust board under an agreed Scheme of Delegation and are accountable to the Board. The

Local GB will continue to oversee the curriculum, quality of education, attainment, wellbeing, safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, staffing and parental / community engagement.

The only function the Governing Body will not have control of will be the allocation of the budget. This will be undertaken at a different committee which the Headteacher will join and have an equal voice on. The Local Governing Body will still receive an over view of the budget.

Any fundraising undertaken by the FFA will remain within the spending control of Firs Farm and the FFA.

Will the School retain its individual ethos?

Yes, EdAct and Firs Farms Governors are very clear that the individual ethos, character, vision & values and good practices of Firs Farm will be retained and that the school operates as autonomously as possible and as an equal to the current existing schools in the Trust.

Each school is seen as central to its own community with the skills of each being used in a supportive way for all the others. Every school gives and receives support from one another.

Firs Farm will not be changing any parts of its current uniform as part of this proposal. Children will be expected to follow our current uniform standards.

There are no proposals to change the term dates; Firs Farm will continue to follow the same dates of those set by the Local Authority and other local schools.

What form of relationship will exist between the Local Authority, Haringey Education Partnership and the school?

The Local Authority retains statutory duties for aspects of Special Educational Needs, admissions co-ordination and provision of home-to-school transport. Local Authorities are also expected to play a key strategic role locally in areas such as pupil place planning, admissions and sharing good practice.

Firs Farm has a good relationship with the London Borough of Enfield and will seek to maintain and cultivate this in the future.

Firs Farm is part of Haringey Learning Partnership; there are no plans to change this arrangement. Firs Farm will continue to participate within all current and possible future network and learning opportunities for staff.

When will the school become an Academy?

We would expect that the process will take 4-6 months, work is underway and the planned conversion date is 1st April 2026.

Why is there a consultation?

The Academies Act 2010 requires the school to consult “such persons as they think appropriate” on whether the school should become an academy.

The Governing Body of Firs Farm School is consulting with all key stakeholders about the proposed academy conversion including parents, staff, pupils and other schools over a 6-week period commencing 6 October 2025 and closing on 14 November 2025.

The Governing Body will meet in December and make a final decision on whether Firs Farm will become an academy and join EdAct.

Does the school need agreement from the Local Authority to become an Academy?

No. The Academies Act 2010 has removed the need for the Local Authority to approve plans for the school to become an Academy.

Are Academies subject to the same Ofsted inspection regime?

Schools converting to Academies will continue to be inspected in the normal way.

What is the process for the school to join EdAct?

The conversion process includes the following key legal processes:

- Putting in place a Supplementary Funding Agreement (SFA) for the school
- Transferring the employment of the staff from the local authority to EdAct following a statutory process (TUPE*)
- Agreeing a Commercial Transfer Agreement for the transfer of assets and contracts from the local authority to EdAct

(*TUPE = Transfer of Undertaking – Protection of Employment)

SECTION 2: STAFF

Does the school have to hold consultation with staff?

Under employment legislation the Governing Body which is the current employer will need to conduct a TUPE consultation with all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) and the relevant unions as part of the staff transfer process. This will happen once the Governing Body makes its final decision following the consultation outcome.

Will teachers' pay and conditions change?

No. Whilst Academy Trusts do have the freedom to vary terms and conditions from national ones, EdAct is committed to abiding by teachers' pay and conditions and pensions. This will also mean there will be no break in service.

If the school becomes an Academy, who takes responsibility for the pension arrangements?

Teachers working in an academy fall within the scope of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), just as if they were employed in a Local Authority maintained school.

Non-teaching staff at schools are able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This is administered by the London Borough of Enfield as at present.

Employees will pay the same rate as at present under both schemes, subject to any nationally imposed changes.

How will the TUPE process work and what specific responsibilities does the Governing Body have?

As the current employer, the Governing Body is responsible for informing and consulting with staff.

The Governing Body is responsible for informing EdAct, as the new employer, of any 'measures' which will impact on their employment. There are none planned in this case and EdAct will write to each member of staff confirming that they will transfer under existing terms and conditions.

SECTION 3: FINANCE

Will we get more money as an Academy?

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority (LA) as a maintained school. However, the LA withhold a portion of the school's funds as a contribution to council budgets. That would not happen as an Academy, so the total overall funding for the MAT would be higher than the sum total of present funding distributed to each school. There are other financial advantages, for example VAT is recoverable on normal business activities and capital works.

The Government is clear that becoming an Academy should not bring about a financial advantage or disadvantage to a school. However, academies do have greater freedom to decide how they use their entire budget, and Multi Academy Trusts are able to identify efficiency savings from enhanced partnership working.

SECTION 4: ADMISSIONS

Will becoming an Academy affect our admissions arrangements?

There is no proposal to change the current arrangements in place for Firs Farm. We will still serve our local community and welcome everyone that wants to join us.

For children in Year 6 applying for a Year 7 secondary school place; they will continue to enjoy the same freedom in applying to any secondary school of their choice.

There is no automatic transition into either Edmonton Country or Lea Valley School. Families will indicate their choices in the same way they do now e.g. via the LA portal.

Will Academies have to be a part of the annual coordinated admissions scheme? E.g. when the LA needs to find places for families relocating to the area etc.

Yes - Academy Funding Agreements require them to be in local coordination. That means although the academy will apply its own admission arrangements, the LA will send out offers of places. The Local Authority also coordinates admissions for in-year applications and applications for year groups other than the normal point(s) of entry. This will not affect the Academy's right to determine which applicants have priority for admission. Academies are also required through their Funding Agreements to participate in local fair access protocols which help to ensure that no child is without a school place.

SECTION 5: SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

Will our responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs and exclusions change?

No. Responsibilities as an Academy in relation to Special Educational Needs and exclusions will be just the same as they are now as a maintained school.

Can a child with a statement of Special Educational Needs nominate an academy as their school of choice?

Yes. These arrangements and related processes must at all times comply with the School Admissions Code, and responsibilities as an Academy in relation to Special Educational Needs will be just the same as they are now as a maintained school.

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

Academies are required by their Funding Agreement to follow the law and guidance on exclusions as if they were maintained schools.