

# Academy status – What it would mean for Greenshaw

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## What is an academy

An academy is a state-funded school that is independent of the local authority, that is required to follow the same regulations and serve its community in the same way as other state-funded schools.

An academy is established by a formal funding agreement (or contract) agreed between the school's Governing Body and the Department for Education (DfE).

## The Government's academies programme

The Government says that it wants all schools to become academies over the next few years, and is encouraging schools to become academies as part of a group of schools working together in partnership.

Any school that is outstanding or good with outstanding features (as Greenshaw is) may apply to become an academy; plus any school can apply as part of a group of schools where at least one is good with outstanding features. To become an academy a school is required to support another school (or schools) to raise standards.

An academy no longer requires a 'sponsor', and the application for academy status is a decision solely of the Governing Body of the school and does not require local authority approval.

## Partnership

Sutton's 14 secondary schools are considering seeking collective academy status as a group of schools working in partnership. The aim of this approach is to help maintain and build on the strong partnership working between schools and facilitate collaboration and joint commissioning of services.

If schools become academies individually the local authority have said it could undermine their ability to support individual schools; under the proposed partnership between academies, all the schools would be more likely to continue to work with, and purchase services from, the local authority.

## Freedom and control

As an academy Greenshaw would have greater freedom from local authority control: the Governing Body would have greater control over how the allocated budget is used; additional freedoms around the nature and delivery of the curriculum; and the ability to take certain decisions such as setting the lengths of terms and school day without the need for local authority approval.

Whether or not Greenshaw becomes an academy it would continue to collaborate with other secondary schools in Sutton, for example to coordinate term dates, and with the local authority over provision for special educational needs and place planning.

As an academy Greenshaw would still have to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, and would want a curriculum that gives all students the best start in their lives. The school would continue, as now, to be subject to Ofsted monitoring and inspections. In addition, we would work in partnership with other local academy schools to support each other and ensure standards are maintained.

## Character

If Greenshaw becomes an academy there would be no changes to the character of the school: it would continue to look, feel and be the way it is now. There would be no changes to the school's name or logos, and the school would not need to use the word academy or apply an academy logo to its signage and documents.

Whether or not Greenshaw becomes an academy it would continue to operate as a comprehensive school, at the heart of our local community, providing high quality education for local children of all abilities and maintaining our high profile in the local community, working with other schools and community groups.

## Admissions

If Greenshaw becomes an academy there would be no changes to the school's admissions criteria – the same

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pupils would come to Greenshaw as would come if it were not an academy.

Each academy will manage its own admissions process and must abide by the Admissions Code and participate in the coordination of place planning with the local authority. An academy cannot introduce selection, but Greenshaw's existing 60 selective places would continue.

### Inclusion

The responsibilities of an academy towards students with special needs would remain the same as for a non-academy school.

If Greenshaw becomes an academy its commitment to all students including those with special education needs would continue; the specialist SEN facilities at Greenshaw and its inclusive and comprehensive nature defines the school.

### Exclusions

As an academy, Greenshaw would have to follow the law and guidance on exclusions in the same way it does now; but it would not have to consult the local authority before deciding to exclude a pupil and could arrange its own independent appeals panel.

### Funding

Academies should receive the same level of per-pupil funding as a maintained school, but will have greater freedom in how the budget is used.

If Greenshaw becomes an academy it would receive an additional grant equal to the sum of money currently 'top sliced' from the education budget by the local authority to provide services to the school. As an academy it could choose to buy some or all of these services from the local authority; or it could choose to provide or buy in some of these services from elsewhere and to vary the detail of the services based on the school's needs. The school may be able to secure better value for money and free up money to use for the school's own priorities.

The reality is that all schools, regardless of whether they are academies or not, face reductions in funding in the coming years. The additional money that Greenshaw would receive as an academy would help to offset this reduction and could help to preserve the curriculum and

services that Greenshaw provides for its students and safeguard jobs.

### Land and buildings

If Greenshaw becomes an academy the land and buildings currently used by the school would continue to be available to it and would transfer to the academy trust on a long lease.

### Staff pay and conditions

If a school becomes an academy, then the academy trust becomes the employer of the staff, not the local authority, and the academy trust would determine staff pay and conditions in line with national pay and conditions documents. All current staff would transfer to the academy under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) regulations, retaining current pay and conditions.

If Greenshaw becomes an academy, the governors have committed to maintaining the current, nationally agreed pay and conditions for all existing and future staff. Teachers would remain in the Teachers' Pension Scheme and support staff would remain in the Local Government Pension Scheme as they are now; the employers' contributions would be maintained by the academy.

### Who runs an academy?

An academy is formally run by an academy Trust that is set up as a charitable company and can delegate functions to a Governing Body. It will take decisions about how the school operates and spends its budget in the same way that the school's Governing Body does now. Academy Trustees have a legal duty to operate in the interests of the school.

If Greenshaw becomes an academy the composition of the Trust and the Governing Body would be determined by the current Governing Body and agreed as part of the 'agreement' or 'contract' with the DfE. The school would continue to have 4 parent governors and two staff governors and other governors representing specific stakeholders and the local community, as it does now.

An academy cannot charge fees or make a profit. If Greenshaw becomes an academy we would ask for parental contributions, eg for school, trips, in line with government regulations, as we do now.

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Further information about the consideration of academy status can be found on the school website, [www.greenshaw.co.uk](http://www.greenshaw.co.uk); and information from the Department for Education can be found at: [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies)

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