



Frequently Asked Questions for Archbishop Runcie Church of England First School ("ARFS")

The NEAT Central Team has compiled a list of questions that we expect parents/carers, governors and employees of ARFS would like to know the answers to. These FAQs focus on what would stay the same and what would be different if ARFS joins NEAT.

If you have any other questions that you would like to ask, please attend the consultation meetings for either staff or parents/carers at ARFS on Wednesday 9 January 2019 or e-mail admin@archbishop.newcastle.sch.uk who will liaise with us to provide a response.

Section A - Questions about education provision

A1 Will ARFS continue to be a Church of England school?

Yes, one of the reasons NEAT has been asked to consider ARFS joining our academy trust is because it is a "mixed" multi academy trust i.e. it includes schools with and without a religious character and we already have one Church of England school within NEAT. The trust's legal documents and governance arrangements protect the character of both types of school so ARFS will continue to be a Church of England school and retain its Christian character and values. However it will be an academy rather than a voluntary aided school.

A2 Will the vision and ethos of ARFS be decided by NEAT?

No, we feel strongly that each academy's ethos and vision needs to be determined locally as it is derived from the school community i.e. its pupils, parents, staff and governors and we value each academy's unique character and contribution to the trust. Setting the vision and ethos at school level will be decided by the local governors of each academy within the overarching common purpose and vision for NEAT (which are described in 'All about NEAT').

A3 Will ARFS's name change?

No, all the current NEAT schools kept their names when they became academies. We believe a school's name is part of its local history and it is important that this reflects the wishes of the school community.

A4 Will the school uniform change?

No, NEAT does not have a standard uniform policy that applies to all its schools and therefore uniform policy is decided by each individual academy. We understand that ARFS does not have any plans to change its uniform.

A5 Will ARFS's admissions arrangements change?

If ARFS joins NEAT, it will be the trust, rather than the school's governing body that will become the admissions authority for the school, but the trust is still subject to the same statutory School Admissions Code set by the Department for Education.

NEAT has no objection to including faith-based criteria in the admissions arrangements for a Church school as we believe that our academies should operate in ways that are locally relevant to their community. Any proposed changes to the school's admission policy in the future would involve consultation with the Diocese, governing body and local community.



A6 Will ARFS's published admission number (i.e. the number of children admitted to Reception) stay the same?

Yes, becoming an academy will not affect the school's PAN of 30.

A7 Will ARFS continue to be a first school for pupils aged 3-9?

Yes, the three-tier school system is well established in Gosforth and NEAT respects the importance of the local context of each of our schools.

A8 ARFS is currently a feeder school for Gosforth Central Middle School. Will this change?

No, becoming an academy will not change ARFS being a designated feeder school for GCMS. NEAT fully supports this approach and expects that ARFS will continue to foster good relationships with schools locally and co-ordinate transition arrangements.

A9 Will the timing of the school day or term dates change?

The timing of the school day will continue to be decided at school level by the governors and we understand there are no plans for this to change.

All NEAT schools follow the term dates set by Newcastle City Council and each school has flexibility to set some of its own training days. Currently NEAT schools participate in one joint training day each school year where the date is decided by the trust in consultation with headteachers. Any decision about term dates/training days that had already been made before ARFS joined NEAT would be honoured.

A10 Will ARFS still follow the National Curriculum?

Yes, all NEAT schools follow the National Curriculum. We believe that each of our schools should develop and implement a curriculum that is appropriate for its learners within overarching principles that apply across the trust.

A11 Will ARFS still follow the same RE curriculum?

Yes, NEAT expects its Church of England schools to follow the RE curriculum recommended by the relevant Diocesan Education Board, as is currently the situation at ARFS.

A12 Will ARFS's approach to behaviour and exclusions change?

NEAT believes that each school should decide its own approach to managing behaviour that is appropriate for its pupils, and the trust enables the strongest practice across its schools to be shared.

A13 Will ARFS's approach to attendance change?

No, NEAT believes that each school should decide how to encourage good attendance and manage poor attendance, although we are proactive in developing new evidence-based approaches and supporting schools to improve attendance where appropriate. NEAT's central team includes attendance and family welfare specialists and these services would be available to ARFS if it joins NEAT.

A14 Will ARFS still be inspected by Ofsted and have a SIAMS inspection if it is an academy?

Yes, Ofsted inspects academies in the same way as it inspects maintained schools. As a Church of England school ARFS will also continue to have a separate SIAMS inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) in the same way it



does currently.

Section B - Questions about partnerships

B1 To what extent will ARFS join in NEAT activities?

One of the benefits of NEAT for our schools is that collectively we can offer a wider range of opportunities for pupils and staff than an individual school can do alone. These will be offered to ARFS and the school will be able to decide which of these are suitable, however we expect ARFS to remain an active member of the Gosforth group of schools and for pupils to join in activities in the local area as they currently do.

B2 Will ARFS become part of the Newcastle Teaching School Alliance?

Yes, all schools in NEAT are part of the Newcastle Teaching School Alliance. This will give ARFS and its staff access to an innovative learning organisation to support their development (further details about the NTSA are in 'All about NEAT').

B3 Will ARFS still be a member of the Gosforth Schools' Trust?

ARFS is an Associate Member of the Gosforth Schools' Trust. We are not aware at this stage of any reason why ARFS could not remain a member, subject to confirmation by the Gosforth Schools' Trust. NEAT would always expect ARFS to work closely with the other Gosforth schools.

B4 How does NEAT work with the Newcastle Diocesan Education Board?

As a mixed multi academy trust which already includes one Church of England school, we work closely with NDEB and their representatives. At a formal level we are required to consult the Diocese before making certain decisions (e.g. admissions arrangements) and we liaise closely about the performance of our Church schools. The Diocese is also involved in appointing foundation governors to our Church schools, the Church Ethos Director to our Board of Directors and our Members. We also liaise with the Diocese informally on a whole range of educational matters.

B5 What involvement will Newcastle City Council have in ARFS if it joins NEAT? How does NEAT engage with the local authority?

Becoming an academy means that ARFS would no longer be maintained by the local authority and the school would instead be accountable to the NEAT Board of Directors, and through them to the DfE's Regional Schools Commissioner. However NEAT is proactively engaged with the local authority and Debi Bailey, our Chief Executive Officer, is a member of/chairs numerous networks as we believe strongly that schools and academies need to work collectively for the benefit of all children and their families in Newcastle.

Section C - Questions about governance

C1 Will the role of ARFS's governing body be the same?

No, the governance structure in a MAT is different to that of a single maintained school. All MATs have members and a board of directors/trustees. Each MAT decides the committee structure below the level of the board and the role and delegated powers assigned to each committee. In NEAT every academy has a Local Governing Committee (LGC) reporting to the Trust Board, which will replace the school's governing body. Our governance structure is explained in more detail in 'All



About NEAT' available on the NEAT website at:
https://www.neat.org.uk/web/all_about_neat/277041

C2 Who else will be involved in making decisions that affect ARFS?

The NEAT standard Scheme of Delegation sets out the roles and decisions assigned by the Trust Board to each level of governance including the Board itself, its Committees (including the academy LGC), the NEAT CEO and the academy's Headteacher/Principal. The general principle is that the Board and its Committees focus on making strategic decisions about the trust and its academies and the CEO and the Headteacher are responsible for making decisions about the day-to-day running of the organisation.

C3 Will ARFS's governors still be responsible for agreeing policies that affect the school?

The NEAT standard scheme of delegation specifies which policies are agreed by the Board of Directors where commonality across the trust is important, and which are delegated to each academy's LGC where local approaches are important. Policies such as curriculum, behaviour management, attendance and uniform are delegated to each academy.

Section D - Questions about finance/resources

D1 Will ARFS receive more or less funding if it joins a multi academy trust?

Both academies and maintained schools receive the same level of per pupil funding, which is currently determined by the local authority. Looking forward the government is introducing a national funding formula in 2021, which will determine the per pupil funding for all schools across the country.

D2 Will ARFS incur more or less costs if it joins a multi academy trust?

ARFS will achieve some savings in expenditure if it becomes an academy because maintained schools currently pay the local authority for some central services. In addition maintained schools are increasingly being asked to pay for non-statutory services which previously were provided free of charge by the local authority. If ARFS joins a MAT it will pay a contribution to the trust for the support from its central services. NEAT provides a range of services to all of its schools, which is funded by a contribution from each school based on its core per pupil funding. The services provided include school improvement, governance, finance, attendance, welfare and operational support. ARFS will be able to make savings where it currently buys an SLA or third-party contract for these services. In addition the trust seeks to help its schools operate more efficiently and to make savings by buying more cost effectively as a group.

D3 Who will be responsible for the school's finances?

A MAT is accountable and responsible for the financial performance of all schools within the trust. We produce audited accounts each year and we are subject to termly internal assurance monitoring to ensure that we operate to the highest of financial standards. You can read our Annual Report and Accounts on the NEAT website at: https://www.neat.org.uk/web/annual_report_and_accounts/339800

Each school is responsible for its own annual budget, which is approved by the trust board. The central team supports the school's leadership team and local governors to



monitor its financial performance against its agreed budget by providing monthly management accounts and strategic financial planning.

D4 Will ARFS still receive capital funding?

Yes, ARFS will continue to receive devolved formula capital funding on the same basis as it currently does if it becomes an academy. In addition, NEAT is able to apply for condition improvement funding to support specific capital projects that the school may require going forward.

D5 Who will own the buildings and land?

As ARFS is a Church school, the school buildings and land are owned by the Diocese and the playing field is owned by the local authority. If ARFS becomes an academy the school will occupy the buildings via a Church Supplemental Agreement and the land will be leased to the trust under a 125 year lease.

D6 Will community organisations be able to use the school site?

Yes, the school will continue to control how the community uses its facilities for events or short term lettings, subject to the terms of the Church Supplemental Agreement and local authority lease.

D7 Will ARFS's Parents Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) still be able to raise and donate funds for the school?

Yes. NEAT will seek to support the work of the PTFA for the sole benefit of ARFS. Funds raised via the PTFA and donated to the school for specific purposes will be ring-fenced within the school's budget to be spent in the way specified by the PTFA.

Section E - Questions about employment

E1 Who will be the employer of staff if ARFS joins NEAT?

Every MAT is a single employer for staff in all of its academies. Staff will transfer to NEAT as their new employer at the same time the school transfers to the trust.

E2 Will all staff transfer to NEAT?

The transfer of staff to a MAT comes within employment law, specifically the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (known as TUPE). All **employees**, whether full or part-time, permanent or on fixed-term contracts (whose contracts expire after the transfer date), who work either all or the majority of their time in the service of ARFS, will be included in the transfer to NEAT. Agency staff, casual workers, contractors, and consultants will **not** transfer, however it is important that there is minimum disruption to educational provision so discussions will be held about how ARFS transferring to NEAT may affect these individuals.

E3 Will pay and other terms and conditions be the same?

Yes, current contractual terms and conditions of employment will continue to apply after the TUPE transfer, such as pay, continuous service, sick pay etc, subject to any measures that NEAT specifies in connection with the transfer. "Measures" are proposed changes to working practices that would occur at the time of transfer. As the due diligence process has not begun yet, it is not possible to say at this stage whether there will be any changes proposed. In the event that any are identified, NEAT will consult with the recognised trade unions and all affected staff.



E4 Will staff receive the same pay award as teachers and support staff in maintained schools?

NEAT negotiates its own pay and conditions with the recognised trade unions, however to date we have implemented the same pay award and Living Wage as maintained schools in Newcastle and we are committed to attracting, retaining and rewarding staff for their work and contribution.

E5 Will the school's HR policies and procedures change?

It will be necessary to review HR policies and procedures to reflect NEAT as the employer of staff and to ensure there is a fair and consistent approach across the trust's academies. As the due diligence process has not yet begun, it is not possible to say at this stage which policies will change, however any significant changes will be subject to consultation with staff and the recognised trades unions.

E6 Does the trust recognise unions and can employees remain a member of their current union?

NEAT formally recognises the following unions for collective bargaining purposes:

- For teachers - Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) and National Education Union (NEU);
- For support staff – GMB, Unison and Unite.

As the due diligence process has not yet begun, we are not aware yet at this stage if the same unions are recognised by ARFS although we expect that to be the case. Staff can remain a member of their current union and can be represented on individual matters by any union even if it is not formally recognised.

E7 Who is NEAT's payroll provider? Will employees be paid at the same time?

NEAT's payroll is run by Newcastle City Council. NEAT staff are paid on the last banking day of the month. We believe this is the same as ARFS's current pay date, although if it is different then we are likely to consult on this as a proposed change during the TUPE process.

E8 Can employees still be a member of the Teachers' Pension Scheme or Local Government Pension Scheme?

Yes, academy trusts are automatically members of both schemes and this is a requirement of the DfE's funding agreement with the trust.

E9 Will employees be required to work at any school within NEAT?

No, employees will still only be required to work at ARFS. There may be opportunities to work at other schools within NEAT or in a trust-wide role as a development opportunity or by applying for a new post but if the employee agrees.

E10 Who will appoint new employees?

NEAT has delegated the appointment to all posts, apart from head teacher and deputy headteacher, to the headteacher of each academy. Headteachers and deputy headteachers are appointed by an Appointment Committee that is made up of Directors and members of the academy's Local Governing Committee.



E11 Who will carry out appraisals for employees and decide whether teachers should be awarded performance pay progression?

The head teacher, or whichever member of staff they have delegated this to, will carry out the appraisal of staff within ARFS. The appraisal for the headteacher will be carried out by NEAT's Chief Executive Officer who will involve the Chair and Vice Chair of the academy's Local Governing Committee in the process. In all cases recommendations about pay progression for teachers and headteachers in all our academies are submitted to the NEAT Remuneration Committee to ensure a fair and consistent application of the trust's Pay Policy.

Debi Bailey
NEAT Chief Executive Officer
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