

IMPORTANT CONSULTATION

Do you think Sudbourne should become an Academy or stay as a Local Authority School?

Schools that are performing well are being asked by the Government to think about becoming an Academy.

Sudbourne's governors have been researching what this would mean for the school but we have not made a decision yet. This consultation is important in helping us reach a decision. Whatever decision is made must be in the best interests of Sudbourne.

We need you to be involved in making the decision. We are genuinely committed to ensuring the views of the school community inform our own decision, and we are talking to staff, parents, carers, and local community. We've tried to make it as easy to understand as possible, but it can be quite complicated!

How can I have a say?

School governors will be on the school gate before and after school in the week beginning 12th December.

In the new year, we will be sending out a form to gather your views. If you want to comment before that please email us at consultation@sudbourne.lambeth.sch.uk or put comments in the consultation box at the school office.

The deadline for final comments is 16 February 2012.

In brief: What is an Academy?

At the moment, Sudbourne is a **State Maintained School**, but the school could become an **Academy**.

Academies are "Independent State Schools", funded directly from central government, outside of the control of Local Authorities, and managing many things by themselves.

Academies have more freedom in three key areas:

1. *Their curriculum* (including length of terms and school days)
2. *Over their finances* (including teachers' pay and conditions)
3. *In managing admissions* (the school would become its own admitting authority and could establish its own admissions criteria).

PLEASE NOTE: The kind of Academy Sudbourne could become is different to the kind of secondary school Academy you may have heard of over the past few years, which involves being funded by a company or charity. No private company would be involved in governing Sudbourne if it were to convert. Instead Sudbourne would become its own charity, governed and managed by a group similar to the school's current governors.

Advantages of becoming an Academy

- If Sudbourne became an Academy, it would be run like a company. This means we would have more say in what happens in the school than we do now
- If Sudbourne became an Academy, we would have more flexibility over the curriculum, finances, staff terms and conditions and admissions
- Academies have greater freedom on how they use their budgets. The school would receive extra funding to buy services, rather than have them provided by the local authority. We might be able to get better value for money on some of those services by buying them from the private sector.
- Academies give greater control to school leaders and governing bodies. This may be attractive to schools who do not have a good relationship with their local authority
- Many converting schools have had a positive experience of becoming an Academy as a result of new freedoms on curriculum, partnering with other schools and school management

Disadvantages of becoming an Academy

- The school would no longer be able to rely on the local authority if something went wrong in the future
- Sudbourne is an outstanding school so we already have a lot of flexibility on things like the curriculum. Becoming an Academy will not change this much
- Becoming an Academy does not necessarily mean more resources for the school. We would still get the same level of funding per pupil. The extra funding we receive might not lead to savings because we might end up paying more for services if we opt out from local authority provision
- Teaching unions and professional associations such as the NUT, NASUWT etc are worried about changes to terms and conditions for staff. For example, an Academy has the freedom to reduce pension contributions or change maternity leave
- Lots of schools opting out of the local authority could harm the local network that benefits all the children in our borough (though as an Academy we could continue to work with other schools and the local authority)