Gilbert Colvin Primary
Parents and Carers Frequently Asked Questions
Joining Strive4 Academy

As Gilbert Colvin Primary School starts to consider joining Strive4 Academy Trust, we understand that parents and carers may have questions about what this means for their children and the school. This FAQ document aims to provide clear and reassuring information.

When might this happen?

There has to be many statutory things that happen, including lots of checks and due diligence work and a formal consultation at the end of the Summer/Autumn term before any 'joining' can occur. February 1st 2027 is the provisional planned time-frame for joining.

Will there be any changes to the school uniform?

No. The school uniform will remain the same. There is no expectation for families to purchase new items, and there are no plans to change the current uniform.

Will the curriculum change?

No. The curriculum will continue to be broad, balanced, and tailored to the needs of our pupils. The Trust will work in partnership with us to ensure that we provide the best possible curriculum offer to our children.

Will the school day times change?

No. The current times of the day will continue as they are. If there is any need to reconsider these over time, a separate consultation will take place.

Will there be any changes to the school staff?

No. All staff will be retained. They will become employees of Strive4 but will continue to be based at Gilbert Colvin Primary School.

Will breakfast and after school club continue to operate?

Yes. Breakfast and after school club is a very important part of school and the offer to our parents.

Will there be any redundancies?

No. There are no planned redundancies as a result of joining the Trust.

Will the school leadership or management change?

No. The current leadership team will continue to manage the school, with additional support from the Trust's wider network.

What are the benefits of joining Strive4 Academy Trust?

Joining a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) brings several benefits, including:

- Greater collaboration and sharing of best practice across schools

- Enhanced professional development for staff
- Improved support services (e.g., HR, finance)
- Increased focus on improving pupil outcomes
- More ownership over admissions and inclusion
- Fewer distractions from teaching and learning

Will teachers be moved to other schools in the Trust?

No. Staff will remain based at Gilbert Colvin Primary unless they choose to apply for or undertake a role at another school within the Trust. However, cross-Trust working takes place in a number of different areas.

Will the school lose its identity?

No. Gilbert Colvin Primary School will keep its name, ethos, and unique character. The Trust values and promotes the distinctiveness and the individuality of all of its schools.

Will school policies change?

Some policies may be changed to promote alignment and in recognition of being part of a single employer e.g. with HR policies.

How about the length of the school day, or school holidays?

There will be no changes to term dates and the school holidays.

Will the school name change?

No. There are no plans to change the name of the school.

About being an academy

What is an academy?

An Academy is an independent state school, funded directly from central government rather than through a local authority. A charitable company limited by guarantee (the Academy Trust) is responsible for the academy, and the Academy Trust signs the Funding Agreement (the contract) with the Secretary of State as part of the establishment of the academy.

Legislation requires that academies:

• offer a balanced and broadly based curriculum;

• provide education for pupils of different abilities; and

• provide education for pupils who are wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which the school is situated

How is an academy different from a community school?

An academy has several differences to a community school, including:

• Admissions – The Trust Board is responsible for setting and implementing its admissions policy and for prioritising applications. An academy must continue to operate within the requirements of the national School Admissions Code in the same way as maintained schools, including full participation in the local coordinated admissions scheme administered by the local authority;

- Curriculum – an academy has to offer a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils of differing abilities, including Maths, English, and Science, it now follows the National Curriculum; the Funding Agreement requires that an academy teach Religious Education;

- Employment – the Trust Board becomes the employer of school staff, rather than the local authority. Trustees also have freedom to set new terms and conditions for future staff;

- Funding – the academy receives its existing school budget and also its share of the funding that is retained by the local authority for maintained schools; and,

- Land and Buildings – the land and buildings of the school are leased to the Academy Trust for 125 years at a peppercorn rent from the Local Authority and the academy would be responsible for the land and buildings (and reliant on the Secretary of State for capital funding);

- Governance – The Academy Trust (which is a charitable company) would be responsible for all the schools within the Trust. Local Governing Bodies facilitate local governance, and support and challenge to the Headteacher and leadership team, and include parents and staff. For Gilbert Colvin Primary, the LGB would be formed from the current Governing Body, in the first instance.

Does Ofsted inspect academies?

Yes, in exactly the same way as for maintained schools.

Academy governance - How are academies governed?

The Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees who are accountable directly to the Department for Education (DfE). At school level, there is a Local Governing Body who oversees the school and hold the leaders to account, providing oversight and scrutiny of the management and governance. They are responsible for safeguarding, education standards and communication with all stakeholders.

The Trust itself is accountable and responsible to the DfE and is highly regulated with a full financial audit each year.

What financial benefit does Strive4 get with Gilbert Colvin joining the MAT? Is there extra money from the government for the Trust?

There is no extra money from the government for Strive4 for Gilbert Colvin Primary School joining. The Trust works as a specialist Charity and does not make a profit. The Trust's mission is to transform lives and build the futures of all. The Trust is compelled by a strong moral purpose to ensure support and develop all children to make rapid progress and achieve success. The Trust does not 'make a profit' from schools.

Does school keep its own funding or does the trust keep it and share it out?

Gilbert Colvin would still receive its own General Annual Grant (GAG) funding with – leaders making sure Gilbert Colvin can meet the needs of pupils and the local community.

Will Gilbert Colvin have to change its values and use Strive4 values instead?

No. Our school values align very well with Strive 4's values. Gilbert Colvin would keep its values.

Will there be changes to our behaviour policy and expectations?

There may be minor changes to policies to align with Strive4 Behaviour Principles. These would be fully shared with staff and parents. The behaviour policy at Gilbert Colvin would continue to meet the needs of our pupils, as it does currently.

Will school communication to parents change as part of moving to an academy?

No. The Leadership team at Gilbert Colvin will continue to communicate to parents as they do now. Any changes in the future would be made by the Gilbert Colvin leadership team.

The FAQ mentions that the funding agreement requires that the academy teaches Religious Education - will that be a different level of religious education than is already taught?

The level of Religious Education delivered will not change from what is planned in our curriculum currently.

If the academy take the place of the Local Authority, where would we address any concerns and how might this affect the way in which the school is run if it is no longer regulated in the same way as a school under a local authority would?

Parents would raise concerns in the same way as now: through the school to begin with then to the academy trust, through the published complaints policy. OFSTED still inspects academies just like Local Authority schools. The complaints policy will outline the steps that parents can take in escalating a complaint beyond the Trust, as applicable.

There will still be a Local Governing Board who will oversee school and hold leaders to account, providing oversight and scrutiny of the management and governance – they are responsible for the safeguarding, standards and all stakeholders.

The Trust itself is accountable and responsible to the DfE and is highly regulated with a full financial audit each year.