



Q&A around moving schools to another Trust

Why has this decision been taken?

The restructured board of trustees of Silver Birch Academy Trust has initiated a series of steps to address the very serious allegations raised against the Trust and concerns voiced by parents/carers. The board has reviewed what actions need to be taken in the best interest of staff and children and, given the current situation, it believes that moving the schools to one or more trusts is the best decision. The Board will continue to lead the work across the trust to take the right steps to create the most stable and productive environment possible.

Will the schools be under a new trust by the start of the autumn term?

It is impossible to say at the moment. If the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) agrees to the rebrokerage of all four schools to one or more trusts, their office will manage the process. Once a trust has requested rebrokerage, the next steps, including identification of one or more new trusts, is decided by the RSC with the best interests of the children being paramount.

What will happen to staff at the schools?

In trust transfer cases a TUPE process will need to be followed. The schools will continue to function as normal and the identified trust/s will consult with staff so that the transition is as seamless as possible.

What will happen to the leaders of the schools – head teachers etc?

In trust transfer cases a TUPE process will need to be followed. The identified trust/s will consult with them so that the transition is as seamless as possible.

Will Silver Birch have any say in where the schools go?

The trust which requested the re-brokering cannot influence either the process or the choice of trust to which the school(s) is/are transferred. Clearly, all parties work as quickly as possible to minimise any disruption to the school(s) involved.

Will different schools go to different trusts?

It is possible. The RSC will identify trusts which have a proven track record and capacity to support the schools. The RSC may take the view that it is in the best interests of the pupils that more than one trust is involved.

What happens to Silver Birch once the schools are transferred?

If the RSC agrees to the rebrokerage, once all academies have been moved to one or more new trusts, all of the income, assets, contracts and staff of the Silver Birch Academy Trust will have been transferred to the new Trust(s) and the company will be dissolved.

However, in the interim a comprehensive independent investigation will be carried out by a major audit firm, which will also share its findings, in full, with the Department for Education. The investigation will examine:

-) The trust's management and its financial conduct
-) The decisions, actions and events that led the Trust to its current position

How long will the investigation take?

While the board recognises the urgency of the situation, it must also be thorough and take the right steps. Bearing in mind the complexity of the issues being reviewed, the investigation will be phased but is unlikely to conclude before September this year. The board cannot pre-empt the final report of the investigation but will act on findings as or when relevant.

ENDS

