



Holy Cross Multi-Academy Company

Friday 14th September

Dear Parents and Parishioners

As you may already be aware, the governing bodies of the following schools are considering applying to become a Multi-Academy Company (MAC) under the Academies Act 2010:

- Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School
- Cardinal Newman Catholic School
- St Thomas More Catholic Primary School
- St John Vianney Catholic Primary School
- St Augustine's Primary Catholic School
- Christ the King Primary Catholic School
- St Elizabeth's Primary Catholic School

The name of the proposed MAC will be **Holy Cross Multi-Academy Company**.

The governing bodies of all seven schools are now consulting on the proposed conversion to academy status and they will consider your responses when making their final decisions.

Further information about what becoming an academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below. **How you can find out more**

We are arranging consultation evenings in our schools on the following dates and we would encourage you to attend one of these meetings if you have any questions, or simply want to learn more.

School	Consultation Meeting Date
Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School	1 st October 2018 at 5pm
Cardinal Newman Catholic School	4 th October 2018 at 5pm
St Thomas More Catholic Primary School	1 st October 2018 at 6pm
St John Vianney Catholic Primary School	1 st October 2018 at 6pm
St Augustine's Primary Catholic School	4 th October 2018 at 5.30
Christ the King Primary Catholic School	1 st October 2018 at 6.30
St Elizabeth's Primary Catholic School	4 th October 2018 at 3.15

There is also more information about academies on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

and the Birmingham Diocese Education Service website <https://www.bdes.org.uk>

If you can't find the answer to your question here, or on the DfE website, and you are unable to attend one of the meetings, please email admin@hcmac.co.uk and we will try to assist.

You can also make representations in writing to: Dr

Jocelyn Parry
c/o Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School
Leasowes Avenue
Coventry
CV3 6BH

How you can comment.

If you would like to comment on our proposals you can do so by email to admin@hcmac.co.uk or in writing to the above address.

Closing date for comments.

The closing date for feedback on our proposals is **Friday 19th October 2018**

Frequently Asked Questions

Will the schools definitely become academies?

The governing bodies will submit an application to convert to academy status and are currently working towards the conversion on 1st October 2019. However, schools are not obligated to become an academy until the contract between the academy trust and the Department for Education (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed. The governing body has not begun to negotiate the Funding Agreement with the DfE yet. The academy trust will not sign the Funding Agreement until parents and carers of pupils at the school, staff at the school, and pupils themselves have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. We have written to all parents and carers and have also invited them to meetings to learn more about the proposals to become an academy, or to comment on the proposals.

We have also held meetings with staff and will be keeping pupils informed throughout the process. Any comments or representations which are made about the proposals will be considered by the governing body before a decision is taken to sign the Funding Agreement.

The governing body will not sign the Funding Agreement unless they are content that conversion would be in the best interests of the school taking account of all the legal and practical ramifications.

What is an academy?

An academy is essentially an independent school which is funded by the state. It is independent of the local authority and receives its funding direct from central government. Under the Academies Act 2010, all schools are able to become academies. Schools can apply individually or as a group of schools who wish to form a Multi-Academy Company.

What are the benefits of becoming a Multi-Academy Company?

We believe there are many benefits of coming together as a MAC including:

- Sharing outstanding teaching practice across schools, improving the educational outcomes for our children
- Closer working relationships between schools and the opportunities which that brings (for example, inter-school competitions and collaborative working between children)
- Greater collaboration between all stages of our children's education, leading to easier transition processes, especially from primary to secondary school
- Greater potential for recruitment and retention of high-quality staff through MAC-wide CPD and career opportunities in a Catholic setting
- Safeguarding the distinctive Catholic ethos of our schools
- Economies of scale afforded by joint commissioning of services (utilities, IT equipment and maintenance services).

In addition:

- Academies are independent of local authority control – this means that academies have more freedom about how they conduct themselves.
- Academies receive their funding direct from central government – this means that academies receive more funding because none is retained by the local authority for the provision of central services
- Academies have more freedom over the curriculum taught – this means that academies do not need to teach parts of the national curriculum which they do not consider is appropriate for their pupils
- Academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects – academies are companies and so have more freedom to undertake innovative projects, such as setting up and utilising trading subsidiaries

Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?

As an academy we will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety, and, property maintenance. However, as mentioned above, academies receive more funding from central government to help them meet these additional costs.

Will the admissions arrangements change?

The admissions process for our schools is part of the Coventry City Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme. As academies, all schools would remain as part of the co-ordinated admissions scheme and would also still be bound by the national admissions code, and Admissions Appeals Code. If an academy wanted to change its admission arrangements in the future, further consultation would be required.

Will staff leave?

If the schools convert to academies and form a Multi-Academy Company, all staff currently employed by the schools will automatically transfer to the new Company on their current pay and conditions. Although the MAC will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, there is no intention of doing so in the foreseeable future. Any change to pay and conditions would need to be formally consulted upon with staff representatives.

Will the schools change?

We want all of our schools to continue to provide excellent education for all of our pupils. We therefore do not intend to change except in ways which we think will improve the school even further. For students, it is unlikely that they will see much, if any, change in their day to day school lives. Academies do have the power to vary their curriculums and vary the length of the school day, however, we do not intend to take any such steps at this stage and would engage with parents/carers, staff and students if we did intend to make such changes in the future.