



SECTION 1: Academy Information

What is an Academy?

Academies are publicly funded independent schools that are not managed by a local authority but their funding and accountability is directly with the Department for Education (Department for Education).

Why is St Robert Southwell Primary School proposing to become an Academy and join the All Saints' Catholic Academy Trust?

In September 2017 the Diocese of Westminster published its strategy for Catholic Academy Trusts <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/academies-/>

The Strategy sets out the reasons, benefits and structure of the Catholic Academy Trusts across the Diocese. The aim of the Diocese's Strategy is "to protect, secure and develop the Church's mission in education."

The School has also been working with its partner schools for a number of years, building trust amongst school leaders and delivering improvements.

All schools regard converting to an Academy and joining the existing and successful All Saints' Catholic Academy Trust as a natural extension of the collaborative approach the schools have developed and a platform for enhancing this in the future, at a time of growing pressure on schools and threats to Catholic education.

Is St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School being forced to become an Academy?

No. The Governors of St Robert Southwell have responded to the Diocese of Westminster Catholic Academy Trust Strategy, completed the required due diligence exercise, and together with 5 other schools submitted an application to the Regional Schools Commission to join the All Saints' Catholic Academy Trust.

Which Schools are proposing to convert and join the existing All Saints' Catholic Academy Trust?

The 6 Schools who have been working together are;

- St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School
- St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School
- St Joseph's Catholic Infant School
- St Joseph's Catholic Junior School

- Our Lady of Grace Catholic Infant School; and
- Our Lady of Grace Catholic Junior School.

All schools are in close geographical proximity and have been working together to serve the Catholic community in North West Brent for a number of years,

What is the All Saints' Catholic Academy Trust?

The All Saints Catholic Academy Trust is a single charitable company, responsible for the running of 2 academies – St Gregory's Catholic Science College and St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School.

The Trust was formed in January 2016 when both Schools converted to Academies and established the Trust. Working as equal partners, St Gregory's Catholic Science College and St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School have acquired valuable knowledge in operating as an Academy Trust and improvements have been made from growing understanding of education across primary and secondary phases.

St Gregory's Catholic Science College and St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School welcome the proposal for the 6 schools to expand the Trust, and are keen to apply their learning and experience to the benefit of its wider group of partner schools.

The All Saints' Trust Board is responsible for the quality of education in both schools, as well as the use of public money the employer of all staff and for the use of all Trust sites under various leases.

How will St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School benefit from joining the All Saints' Catholic Academy Trust?

The aim of the Diocese's CAT Strategy is to protect, secure and develop the Church's mission in education.

We expect existing and prospective children in schools within the All Saints Trust will benefit in a number of ways, including;

- Enhanced collaboration and partnership bringing, educational benefits and increased attainment across the 8 Catholic schools
- Increased accountability and performance, through the challenge and support of a CEO
- Increased savings and efficiencies at a time of growing financial pressures
- Increased CPD opportunities and career pathways for staff
- Improved retention of the best Catholic teachers and Leaders
- No longer required or 10% of the cost of building projects and can reclaim VAT

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- Clear, robust and effective Governance at Trust and Local Advisory Council levels; and
- Secured Catholic education across North West Brent and the Diocese, for generations to come.

What are the Governance arrangements of the All Saints' Catholic Academy Trust?

The Diocese of Westminster has nominated 5 Members who will own the Memorandum and Articles and Association of the Trust, registered with Companies House.

The Members will include Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the Archbishop of the Diocese of Westminster, Bishop John Wilson, Auxiliary Bishop and Chair of the Education Commission of the Diocese of Westminster, Mr Paolo Camoletto, Chief Operating Officer/Financial Secretary of the Diocese of Westminster and JP Morrison, the Director of Education for the Diocese of Westminster.

The Members appointed a Board of Foundation Directors with strategic oversight for the Trust and schools.

There will be an opportunity for Foundation Governors from across the 6 schools who wish serve on the Trust Board to apply to be Foundation Directors.

Each school will retain a Local Governing Body which, with the Headteacher, will be responsible for the day to day running of the school.

The Local Governing Body will have powers delegated from the All Saints' CAT Board of Directors under an agreed Scheme of Delegation, and will be accountable to the Board.

The Headteachers of the existing schools are accountable to the CEO, who in turn is accountable to the Trust Board.

Most day to day operations of the School will be delegated to the Headteacher and the Local Governing Body, which will include staff, parent and community representatives.

Will the School retain its individual ethos?

Yes, the Diocese is very clear that the individual ethos, character and good practices of each school are retained and that all the schools operate as equals, supporting each other.

Each school is seen as central to its own community, with the skills of each being used in a supportive way for all the others.

When will St Robert Southwell become an Academy convert and join the Trust?

We would expect that the process will take 4-5 months; work is underway and the planned conversion date is 1st April 2019.

Why is there a consultation?

The Academies Act 2010 requires either the school to consult “such persons as they think appropriate” on whether the school should become an academy.

The Governing Body is working with the Governing Bodies of the other 5 Schools to consult with all key stakeholders about the proposed academy conversion including parents, staff, pupils and other schools over a 4 week period from 19th November to 17th December 2018.

Does the school need agreement from the Local Authority to become an Academy?

No. The Academies Act 2010 has removed the need for the Local Authority to approve plans for the school to become an Academy.

What form of relationship will exist between the Local Authority and the school?

This is for individual Academies or Catholic Academy Trusts to determine – there is no statutory requirement for any formal relationship between Local Authorities and Academies.

Academies are directly funded and accountable to central government (Department for Education and the Education Skills Funding Agency).

The Local Authority retains statutory duties for aspects of Special Educational Needs, admissions co-ordination and provision of home-to-school transport. Local Authorities are also expected to play a key strategic role locally in areas such as pupil place planning admissions and sharing good practice.

The schools have good relationships with Brent Council and will seek to maintain this in the future.

Are Academies subject to the same Ofsted inspection regime?

Schools converting to Academies will continue to be inspected in the normal way.

What is the process for St Robert Southwell to join the All Saints

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Trust?

The conversion process includes the following key legal processes:

- Consulting with school stakeholders on the proposal
- Putting in place a Supplementary Funding Agreement (SFA) between the All Saints Trust and the Secretary of State for Education for each School
- Transferring the employment of the staff from the Governing Board to the All Saints Trust following a statutory process (TUPE)
- Agreeing a Commercial Transfer Agreement for the transfer of assets and contracts from the local authority to the All Saints' Trust, and
- Arranging a 125 year lease for the land and buildings with the Diocese and/or local authority.

Who will make the final decision?

It is a decision for the Governing Body. Governors are inviting views from parents and staff on the proposal. The findings from the consultation exercise will be reported to Governors and subsequently made available on the school's website.

The findings from the consultation are one of a number of factors the Governors will consider.

SECTION 2: Staff Issues

Does the school have to hold a consultation with staff?

Under employment legislation the Governing Body, which is the current employer will need to conduct a TUPE* consultation with all staff (both teaching and non - teaching) and the relevant unions, as part of the staff transfer process.

(*TUPE = *Transfer of Undertaking – Protection of Employment*)

Can the school alter teachers' pay and conditions?

The terms and conditions of staff are protected on transfer under by the TUPE regulations. Academies do have the freedom to vary terms and conditions from national ones but the Diocese Strategy commits the Trust to abiding by Teachers' pay and conditions and Support Staff pay and conditions.

The Diocese, All Saints' Trust and the schools are committed to maintaining national terms and conditions for teaching and support staff, in

order to continue to attract and retain the very best teachers.

If the school becomes an Academy, who takes responsibility for the pension arrangements?

Teachers working in an academy fall within the scope of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), just as if they were employed in a Local Authority maintained school.

Non-teaching staff at schools are able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This is administered by Brent Council, as at present.

Employees will pay the same rate as at present, under both schemes, subject to any nationally imposed changes.

How will the TUPE process work and what specific responsibilities does the Governing Body have?

As the current employer the Governing Body is responsible for informing and consulting with staff. The Governing Body is responsible for informing the All Saints Trust as the new employer, of any 'measures' which will impact on their employment.

There are none planned in this case. The All Saints' Trust, will write to each member of staff confirming that they will transfer under existing terms and conditions

SECTION 3: Finance

Will we get more money as an Academy?

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. The Government is clear that becoming an Academy should not bring about a financial advantage or disadvantage to a school. However, academies do have greater freedom to decide how they use their entire budget, and Multi Academy Trusts are able to identify efficiency savings from enhanced partnership working.

SECTION 4: Admissions

Will becoming an Academy affect our admissions arrangements?

When a school becomes an Academy it also becomes an admission authority responsible for its own admission arrangements. As the school is joining a Multi Academy Trust – the All Saints Trust will become the admissions authority.

In the same way as Voluntary-aided schools, all academies and their

schools are required to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements, in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code.

Will Academies have to be a part of the annual coordinated admissions scheme? E.g. when the LA needs to find places for families relocating to the area, etc.

Yes - Academy Funding Agreements require them to be in local coordination. That means although the academy will apply its own admission arrangements, the LA will send out offers of places. The Local Authority in Brent also coordinates admissions for in-year applications and applications for year groups other than the normal point(s) of entry. This will not affect the Academy's right to determine which applicants have priority for admission. Academies are also required through their Funding Agreements to participate in local fair-access protocols, which help to ensure that no child is without a school place.

Will the Academies decide to bring in academic selection?

No, there will be no introduction of selection. Schools which already select some or all of their pupils may continue to do so when they become Academies, but schools becoming Academies cannot decide to become newly selective schools.

SECTION 5: Special Education Needs

Will our responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs and exclusions change?

No. Responsibilities as an Academy in relation to Special Educational Needs and exclusions will be just the same as they are now as a maintained school.

Can a child with a statement of Special Educational Needs nominate an academy as their school of choice?

Yes. These arrangements and related processes must at all times comply with the School Admissions Code and responsibilities as an Academy in relation to Special Educational Needs will be just the same as they are now as a maintained school.

Does becoming an Academy change the way in which exclusions are dealt with?

Academies are required by their Funding Agreement to follow the law and guidance on exclusions as if they were maintained schools. This includes reporting exclusions to the Local authority. However, Academies do not have to consult the Local Authority before deciding to exclude a pupil and

they can arrange their own independent appeals panel.

SECTION 6: Further Information

How do I find out more about the proposals?

St Margret Clitherow Primary School and St Robert Southwell Primary School are holding joint consultation events as part of the conversion process.

Come along to the consultation meeting being held for parents of pupils at both Schools at 6pm on Monday 3rd December at St Robert Southwell School

A separate joint meeting is being held for staff on both schools.

Please complete and return the questionnaire page below to the School office by 17th December, 2018.

If you would prefer to complete it and return it by email to consultation@robsouth.org or in person or by post to the School Office.

***Peter Manning
Chair of Governors
St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School
November 2018***