



St. Peter's Catholic Primary School

Hough Hill Road

Stalybridge

SK152HB

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Headteacher: Mrs K Ryan

15 March, 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to you today to let you know that the Bishop of Shrewsbury Diocese has announced his strategy for all schools within the Diocese of Shrewsbury to become academies. As a Catholic school within this diocese, we would like to be at the forefront of this change. We envisage St. Peter's, in the near future, as being part of a family of Catholic schools who all work together to ensure the very best spiritual, academic, social, moral and physical development for the children in our care.

The governing body of St Peter's has therefore recently applied for an academy order and is considering joining the Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust. We have made this application at the same time as two other Catholic primary schools within Tameside Local Authority. From today until 26 April, the governing body is now consulting on whether the school's conversion to academy status should take place. Further information about what becoming an academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

Will St Peter's Catholic Primary School definitely become an academy?

The governing body has submitted an application to convert to academy status and is working towards a conversion in September 2024. However, the school is not obligated to become an academy until the contract between the Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust (CCCAT) and the Department for Education (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed.

The CCCAT will not sign the Funding Agreement until the following groups of people have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals:

- parents and carers of children at the school
- parents of incoming Reception and Nursery children
- staff at the school

We will also be writing to local primary schools and to the Parish of St Peter's, inviting them to join our consultation. A meeting for parents and carers will be held on 15 April to discuss the academisation consultation and process. You are all most welcome to attend this meeting, which will be held at 2.45pm (just before school pick-up time) and repeated at 5.00pm, for those parents who may find this time more convenient.

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 directly from central government.

What are the benefits of being an academy?

- As academies are independent of local authority control, they have more freedom about how they conduct themselves
- Academies receive their funding direct from central government which means schools receive more funding
- Academies have more freedom over the curriculum taught
- Academies can set their own pay and conditions of service for their staff, subject to normal employment law protections for staff
- Academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects

Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?

- Once the school has converted there is currently no route to revert back to being a maintained school. Academy conversion is a permanent change.

Will the admissions arrangements change?

As a voluntary aided school, the governing body of St Peter's deals with its own admissions arrangements. As an academy, CCCAT will delegate responsibility for admissions arrangements to the governing body, who would still be bound by the national School Admission Code, and School Admission Appeals Code. The current admissions arrangements will remain in place for the time being. If the academy wanted to change its admissions arrangements then a full consultation would be required. As a Catholic academy, priority would continue to be given to children of the faith in accordance with the rules in the School Admission Code.

Will there be staffing changes?

If the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by St Peter's will automatically transfer to the new academy on their current pay and conditions. Although the academy will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, the governing body does not intend to take such a step in the foreseeable future and in any event, any change to pay and conditions would need to be consulted upon with staff representatives. CCCAT does, and will continue to, follow the Catholic Education Service's policies and guidance on employment matters.

Will St Peter's Catholic Primary School change?

We are very proud of our wonderful school. We are passionate about retaining our school's ethos and the feeling of belonging to a school family. For children, it is unlikely that they will see many (if any) changes in their daily school lives. **We do not intend to change the school except in ways which we think will improve the school even more.**

Academies do have the power to vary their curriculum and to vary the length of the school day. However, it is not intended that St. Peter's will take such steps at this stage, and we would engage with parents, carers, staff and pupils if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future.

How can I find out more?

If you wish to find out more information, please attend our meeting in the school hall on Monday, 15 April at 2.45pm or at 5.00pm.

More information about academies can be found on the DfE website:

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

More information about the Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust can be found at:

[Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust | We are His body, living and learning as one. \(corpuschristitrust.co.uk\)](http://corpuschristitrust.co.uk)

How can I respond to the consultation?

To respond to the consultation on whether the conversion of the school to academy status should take place representations can be made in writing to:

The Governing Body

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Hough Hill Road

Stalybridge

SK15 2HB

Or by email to: admin@st-peters.tameside.sch.uk

If you wish to email your response, please ensure the subject of the email reads: '**Response to Academy Consultation.**'

The closing date for representations to be made is 5pm on 26 April 2024.

Kindest regards,

Mrs Ryan

Headteacher