

ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of a meeting of the Governors of the above Governing Body (the “**Governing Body**”)
held at

on 04/10/2023 at 7pm

Present

John Mcdonald

Kevin Doogan

Peter Matthews

Colette Haig

Teresa Marnell

Lorraine Adamson

Brigid Gribbin Barlette

Jill Formston

Fr Ramesh

In attendance

Joanne Holmes

1 Apologies and preliminaries

- 1.1** It was confirmed that due notice of the meeting had been given and that a quorum was present. It was reported that apologies had been received from the following:

Charles Donnelly

2 Declaration of interest

- 2.1** Each Governor present declared the nature and extent of his interest in the business to be transacted at the meeting or confirmed he had no such interest which he was required to disclose.

- 2.2** The interests declared were as follows:

Headteacher

3 Minutes from previous meeting

- 3.1 The Governors considered the minutes of the previous meeting dated 18/09/2023 and **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Chair sign the minutes as a true record of such proceedings.

4 Purpose of this meeting

- 4.1 It was noted that on 31/08/2023 the Governing Body had resolved to undertake the work necessary to convert St Alban's Catholic Primary School (the "**School**") to academy status so that it could join Holy Family Catholic Multi Academy Trust (the "**Academy Trust**"). The proposed date of conversion is 1st November 2023 ("the **Conversion Date**")
- 4.2 The purpose of this meeting was specifically to consider and, if thought fit, to approve the following:
- 4.2.1 the conversion of the School to academy status and joining the Academy Trust; and
- 4.2.2 approval of the documentation relating to the School's conversion.

5 Consideration of conversion to academy status and joining the Academy Trust

Due diligence

- 5.1 John McDonald set out the outcome of the due diligence exercise that had been undertaken. Having regard to the information which had been provided, the Governors concluded that conversion to academy status and joining the Academy Trust appeared to be in the best interests of the School.

Consultation

- 5.2 It was noted that a consultation with stakeholders regarding the School's conversion to academy status had been carried out from 20/09/2023 to 03/10/2023.
- 5.3 The consultation was carried out with a face to face meeting
- 5.4 3 people responded to the consultation. The main themes raised by consultees were as follows:

1-What additional responsibilities will be taken on by the school by joining the MAT and how will this impact the time staff have to focus on the teaching and learning of the children?

The school will have no additional responsibilities. In joining the MAT, we aim to support staff so they can spend more time focussing on teaching and learning.

2-What will effectively change within the school? Will there be school trips?

As part of the academisation process, for parents and pupils, nothing will change apart from increased opportunities. School trips will continue as normal.

3-Will the subjects change?

Subjects will remain the same in school.

4-Will the children's progression be affected?

In joining the Trust, we will provide opportunities for staff to work together and share best practice. In doing so, we hope the progress of pupils will improve.

5-Will it become more religious and that take over other subjects?

RE is a core part of every Catholic school and will continue to be taught as it is currently.

6-Will the children be put under more pressure to perform? Will there be less support in classrooms?

Children won't be put under pressure in any way. With the support from across the Trust, we will be able to provide more support for teachers to help them achieve their potential.

7-Will there be any cuts in the school with funding?

Funding for schools is linked to pupil numbers and this will not change as the school moves into the Trust. If pupil numbers decrease, the school has to manage the impact of this but this would be the same if the school remained in the Local Authority. Staff within the Trust have experience of supporting schools through these situations where needed.

8-What will the benefits be for children?

In working with the Trust the main benefits will come from increased support and training that can be provided to teachers to help them give the best experiences possible. Other benefits include events for children to engage in, including working with other children across our family of schools. Over the last year, our pupils have come together to work with The Empire Theatre company and Royal Shakespeare Company to experience a wide range of arts. This year, our pupils will be working on Madagascar the Musical which will launch in the Empire next spring.

9-Will there be a new uniform and if yes can the children start wearing the new uniform in September?

The school uniform will remain the same. We know how expensive uniforms are for parents and families and so wouldn't suggest any changes.

10-Why does the website state that this was agreed on the 05.07.23 and the school will close on the 31.10.23 I am aware it will close due to conversion to an academy, so understand it won't actually close. But why have the parents and staff (as far as i am lead to believe) not been consulted of this earlier?

As part of the consultation process, the DFE provides a timeframe for discussions to be held before the school converts to an academy. This consultation remains open until the last day for views to be shared. Parents have been involved in informal discussions over the past 6 months and now the formal consultation is taking place.

11-Is this good for the current teachers or will it put more pressure on them to perform which may result in sickness and stress?

Being part of a Trust provides a supportive network of schools to help all teachers in theory and practice. From our work across other schools, staff have been positive about this network and this has helped reduce stress and share workloads.

12-Will the curriculum change through the year if the academy takes over mid term?

There will be no changes to the curriculum. The school will continue to plan and deliver their own curriculum as they always have done.

13-Does Multi Academy Trust have sponsors to help towards the budget and do they have any say in the running of the school?

There are unfortunately no sponsors so finance remains the same from the Department of Education. This is based on pupil numbers as explained earlier.

The Trust do have responsibilities in the running of the school and this is laid out in the scheme of delegation. This explains how the governors and Trust share the responsibility across areas of school.

14-What is the thought behind going to an academy?

The Bishop has very recently shared his vision for education with all governors across the diocese which involves all Catholic schools becoming academies. This is in line with all other Catholic dioceses across the country.

15-Is the CEO in control of everything in the academy or does the headteacher make the changes?

As explained in the question earlier, the senior executive team in the Trust do have some responsibilities as part of an Academy Trust however the Headteacher will continue to lead the school in the same way they have previously.

Roles and responsibilities of all leaders including governors are set out in the scheme of delegation.

16-Will the children be taught by non teaching staff or teachers without QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) as they can be in secondary school?

All teachers will continue to have QTS and this is the same in secondary schools across the Trust.

**17-Will there be job losses at the school not including the staff losses this year?
There are no job losses planned at school as a result of conversion.**

All schools have to manage their budget based on income and expenditure and so where funding decreases due to pupil numbers, staffing structures may need to be reviewed. This however would be the case if the school was an academy or not.

18-Can the parents have a vote if they want the school to go ahead?

The period of consultation that we are in provides an opportunity for parents to share their views. These will all be taken into account as part of the process. The decision to convert however is taken by the governors in consultation with the diocese.

**19-Are there any other major changes to the school in the next following years?
Will the class sizes change?**

As part of the academisation process, there will be no immediate changes. The school is however looking at how classes are organised in future years alongside pupil numbers. Pupil recruitment will be a key strategy for the school and Trust to work on together. To that end, we will be exploring the potential of nursery provision to attract pupils into the school.

20-If the school wants to leave the academy for any reason can they go back to the local authority?

Once the school converts to an academy, they are bound for a period of at least seven years. It is very unusual for a school to revert to the local authority once it has converted.

21-Are academy trusts about profit rather than education?

MATs are non-profit entities and operate under the oversight of the Department for Education. Trusts are subject to strict regulations and accountability measures to ensure that public funds are used for educational purposes and that the interests of students come first.

22-Will the school attract and retain teachers as a result of becoming an academy?

On conversion, teachers and support staff stay on the same terms and conditions as they are now.

We recognise that staff are our greatest resource and as such, our strategic plan aims to secure HFC as the employer of choice in the locality. We hope this means that we not only retain teachers but attract the best teachers to provide the best experiences for your children.

Along with the benefits of high quality training, support and subject networks, staff will also have employment benefits that include an employee assistance programme, health vouchers and access to car saving schemes.

23-Is there a cost?

Schools do pay for services provided by the Trust however these would have been bought in from elsewhere prior to conversion.

The Trust will ensure that any service that is paid for is high quality and value for money against any previous benchmarks.

24-What support will be available for SEND pupils?

The Trust has significant skills and resources around SEND provision and will be able to provide extensive support for SEND needs. We have recently appointed a Director of Inclusion and are developing support for young people with social and emotional needs. We also have provision for those with autistic spectrum disorders and have been highly praised by the local authority for this over the last year.

We are also working with speech and language UK to develop specialist support in communication and language.

SENDCOs across the Trust work together and learn from cutting edge practitioners locally and nationally.

Impact assessment

- 5.5 The Governors acknowledged their legal obligation to have due regard to the need to:
- 5.5.1 eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
 - 5.5.2 advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it - this includes having due regard to the need to:
 - (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of those who do not share it;
 - (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low; and
 - (d) foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it - this includes having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice;
 - 5.5.3 promote understanding with regard to the relevant protected characteristics of age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.
- 5.6 The Governors considered the likely impact of the conversion to academy status and joining the Academy Trust on equality issues in general, and the matters which they were required to have due regard to, in particular, and concluded that the proposal was unlikely to have any equality impacts.

6 Resolution to proceed with conversion to academy status and joining the Academy Trust

- 6.1 Having considered all relevant factors and their duties generally, **IT WAS RESOLVED** by the Governors to proceed with the conversion of the School to academy status and to join the Academy Trust with effect from the Conversion Date.

7 Conversion documents for the School

- 7.1 It was noted that with effect from the Conversion Date the Academy Trust would take responsibility for running the School and accordingly it was proposed that:
- 7.1.1 the contracts and assets (and liabilities) used (or incurred) in the running of the School are transferred to the Academy Trust under a

commercial transfer agreement to be entered into between the Academy Trust and the Governing Body (the “**Commercial Transfer Agreement**”), a draft of which was produced to the meeting and which had been agreed by the parties; and

7.1.2 all employees employed at the School immediately before the conversion will transfer to the Academy Trust on their existing terms and conditions of employment with full continuity of service. In accordance with the TUPE Regulations, the Chair explained that appropriate letters had been circulated to trade union representatives and staff.

7.2 It was further noted that the Academy Trust would enter into the following documents relating to the School’s conversion:

7.2.1 a Supplemental Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education setting out the terms of the funding of the School going forward, the agreed form of which was produced the meeting;

7.2.2 a Church Supplemental Agreement for the School in relation to the Diocese owned land and ongoing obligations to maintain the religious ethos of the church school, the agreed form of which (along with a supporting plan) was produced to the meeting.

7.3 The Governors considered the terms of the Commercial Transfer Agreement and IT WAS RESOLVED that:

7.3.1 the conversion be approved;

7.3.2 the terms of the Commercial Transfer Agreement be approved;

7.3.3 any Governor of the School be authorised to approve any amendments to the Commercial Transfer Agreement;

7.3.4 any Governor be authorised to sign the Commercial Transfer Agreement on behalf of the School; and

7.3.5 any Governor be authorised to execute any other ancillary documentation in connection with the conversion on behalf of the School.

8 AOB

9 Close

There being no further business the meeting then closed.

.....Governor

