



# St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Shrewsbury Diocese in Partnership with Tameside L.A

Headteacher: Miss M. Flynn

Dear Parents,

We are writing to inform you about an important and exciting step for the future of our school. The Bishop of Shrewsbury has recently shared his vision that all schools within the Diocese will join one of three academy trusts. The **Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust** has been identified by the Diocese of Shrewsbury as a suitable Trust to take forward this vision for Catholic education in Tameside.

After careful consideration and preliminary discussions, the Governing Board of St Paul's Catholic Primary School have decided that they wish to proceed with joining the Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust. The governing body is now consulting on whether the school's conversion to academy status should take place.

The rationale for the Bishop's vision is to ensure that we protect, preserve and promote Catholic education in the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The Catholic Academy Trust model will ensure that the uniqueness of each school is celebrated and the contribution of each is recognised and appreciated. It will also mean that no individual school will be left isolated in a rapidly changing and complex environment. The aim is also to enable greater collaboration, adding strength and capacity to the system and ensuring that all schools are supported.

You can find further information about the Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust on their website:- <https://www.corpuschristitrust.co.uk/>

Further information about what becoming an academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

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

The governing body has applied to convert to academy status and is working towards a conversion. However, the school is not obligated to become an academy until the contract between the multi academy trust and the Department for Education (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed.

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 a meeting on **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April at 5pm**, 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 it takes the final decision to convert to academy status. Details of how to provide comments and representations are set out below.

The governing body will not vote to proceed with academy conversion unless they are content that conversion would be in the best interests of the school, taking account of all of 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. We are proposing to become an academy as part of the Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust. This means that we will be part of an academy group comprising:-

- All Saints Catholic College, Dukinfield
- St Anthony's, Wythenshawe
- St Elizabeth's, Wythenshawe



SCHOOL  
MEMBER

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[admin@st-pauls-hyde.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-pauls-hyde.tameside.sch.uk)



Artsmark  
Silver Award  
Awarded by Arts  
Council England



- St John Fisher & St Thomas More, Wythenshawe
- St Joseph's Primary, Stockport
- St Joseph's Primary, Trafford
- St Paul's Catholic High School, Wythenshawe

### What are the benefits of being an academy?

In the school's opinion the benefits are numerous:

- **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 appropriate for their pupils
- **academies can set their own pay and conditions of service for their staff** – academies have the freedom to alter the pay and conditions of their staff (subject to normal employment law protections for staff) and so can provide staff with better pay and conditions than previously
- **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?

The Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust 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, and in any event, the Corpus Christi Academy Trust already deals with these matters for the other academies it supports.

Once the school has converted, there is currently no route to revert back to being a maintained school under local authority control – academy conversion is a permanent change. If the school was underperforming in the future, the Secretary of State may have the power to force the school (as an academy) to transfer to a different academy trust. However, in those circumstances, it is likely that the Secretary of State would have the power to intervene even if the school remained a local authority-maintained school.

### Will the admissions arrangements change?

As a voluntary aided school St Paul's Catholic Primary School already deals with its own admission arrangements. As an academy, the Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust will deal with admission arrangements and would also still be bound by the national School Admissions Code, and School Admission Appeals Code. The current admission arrangements will remain in place for the time being. If the academy wanted to change its admission arrangements consultation would be required.

### Will staff leave?

If the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by the school 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.

### Will St Paul's Catholic Primary School change?

We do not intend to change St Paul's Catholic Primary School except in ways which we think will improve the school even more. 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, it is not intended to take any such steps at this stage and would engage with parents/carers, staff and students if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future.

### How can I find out more?

A meeting will be held at the school on **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April at 5pm**. We would encourage you to attend if you have any questions, or simply want to learn more.

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

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

If you can't find the answer to your question here, or on the DfE website, and cannot attend the meeting on **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April at 5pm**, please email [admin@st-pauls-hyde.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-pauls-hyde.tameside.sch.uk) who will try to assist.

#### **How can I make representations?**

To respond to this consultation on whether the conversion of the school to academy status should take place:

Representations can be made in writing to:

The Governing Board of St Paul's Catholic Primary School, Turner Lane, Hyde, Stockport SK14 4AG or by completing the Google Feedback form by following this link: [Consultation Response Form](#)

The closing date for representations to be made is Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

We are looking to the future; by joining the Trust at this time we will be able to participate in the strategic direction, of not only our school, but other schools in the Corpus Christi Trust.

Yours sincerely



Mr Thomas Edwards  
Chair of the Governing Board



Miss M Flynn  
Headteacher