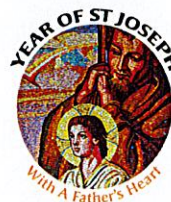




**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School**  
**Diocese of Clifton**

**Inspiring everyone to REACH through**  
**Faith, Hope, Love**



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**Acting Headteacher: Mrs Clare Howells**

July 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Governing Body decision to explore conversion to Academy status and establishing a Catholic Multi Academy Trust**

Since 2016 the Clifton Diocesan Schools Strategy has focused on the seven school partnerships working together collaboratively with an aim of forming future Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). This approach was reiterated in 2019 when the partnerships were asked to work together and to undertake a due diligence exercise to enable schools to move forward with the formation of Catholic MATs to ensure the long-term future of Catholic Education in the Diocese given the significant challenges that our schools face.

All of the Catholic schools in Gloucestershire belong to the Little Way Partnership and as the group began the due diligence exercise, partnership schools were invited to join a working party to explore a Partnership Trust and this working party has been actively involved in this for the last year. Following a key partnership presentation meeting, the Governing Body of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has agreed to explore conversion to an Academy and working with the other Catholic Schools in our Partnership to establish a Catholic Multi Academy Trust.

A Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company whose Trust Board will oversee the educational and financial performance of a group of our Catholic schools. An Academy is a school run independently so it receives its funding directly from central government rather from the Local Authority. Our school would remain a Catholic School under the authority of Bishop of Clifton.

Multi Academy Trusts are designed to enable greater freedom for our Catholic leaders to oversee and lead a group of schools and create opportunities to build and share best practice that benefits all our children and young people.

The key benefits seen by Catholic Multi Academy Trusts in other Dioceses across the country include:

- Protecting the Catholic vision, ethos and education which aims to enable all children and young people to fulfil their potential and live life to the full.
- Increasing opportunities for expert teachers and specialist staff to innovate, share knowledge and best practice across families of schools.
- Providing new leadership and career progression opportunities that will develop and retain great Catholic leaders and continue to benefit from the enormous contribution made by those of other faiths or none in schools.





- Promoting greater job security for all staff when unforeseen circumstances occur such as pupil numbers falling, long term staff absences. By being part of a bigger organisation we can absorb these changes.
- Creating financial savings and consistency in service provision. These savings can be directed back and invested in the children.
- Avoiding duplication of work for Leaders. As a single legal entity with a common vision, the trust could establish common systems, practices and policies.
- Access to additional funding for Trust growth and development of buildings to improve the learning environment for children and young people.

Governors are aware that with greater freedoms it also brings additional responsibilities as Governors become responsible for the performance and fulfilment of statutory duties for a group of schools not just a single school or college.

If the School were to proceed with conversion to an academy and join the partnership trust the main changes would be:

- The status of the school would change upon conversion from a school overseen by the Local Authority to an independent charitable company.
- The Trust would receive its funding directly from the Department of Education rather than a Local Authority.
- All staff would be employed by the Trust and not by an individual Governing Body.
- The Trust would be governed by a single Trust Board and would be responsible for overseeing the performance of all schools and ensuring compliance with the statutory duties. However, each school would have a Local Governing Body which sits below the Trust Board and works in accordance with the Trust Board's scheme of delegation which usually includes scrutiny of each school's educational data and its allocated budget, holding the Headteacher of the school to account for performance.

The Governors do not intend to make any changes on conversion to the name of our school, its unique identity, pupil uniform or its Catholic ethos and values.

A formal engagement process will be undertaken by the Governors which will invite everyone associated with our school to ask questions and/or share feedback. Following the completion of due diligence and careful consideration of the formal feedback the Governors will then meet to make a final decision.

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document can be found on the Diocesan website  
<https://schools.cliftdiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Working-Document-FAQ-August-2020.pdf>

Your sincerely

*Cathy Sydney Guyer*

Co-Chairs of Governors

Headteacher

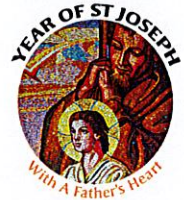






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**Acting Headteacher: Mrs Clare Howells**

7<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Please take a moment to read the attached letter which is about the future of our schools within the Clifton Diocese. It is the policy of the government and the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales that all schools become part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). We are taking the first tentative steps towards achieving this aim.

As you will see from the letter, the move to a MAT is likely to bring many advantages to the whole school community. The process which has attached funding will start in the Autumn term. We will try to keep you fully informed at each stage in the process. All the schools involved are releasing the same letter today. If you wish to become more involved in shaping the future of our school, we still have vacancies on the governing board.

What a busy year we have had! We sincerely thank the PTA, OOSC and Preschool for their tremendous contributions towards the log trail and their continued hard work to benefit the children. In response to the whole school petition, we are now recycling our waste and the Eco Committee monitor our energy use and care of the environment. The main entrance looks so welcoming with the planters provided by the gardening club. Our Chaplaincy team have expanded the prayer life of the school during this year, as we have returned to normal activities.

It has been wonderful to see the children taking part in district sports, music concerts, plays and parents coming back into school to see their children's work. After school clubs have returned and are very popular. Our staff continue to go the extra mile and stay calm, always with a smile!

Now that restrictions are fully lifted, in September we will be starting the process of appointing a permanent headteacher. We are delighted that Mrs Howells will continue to lead the school, at least until the end of August 2023.

As we come to the end of the academic year, we would like to thank everyone for their commitment and contributions, doing the very best for our children during what has been another difficult year living with COVID. We hope you all have a relaxing holiday, wish our Year 6 leavers every success as they move on to their secondary schools and look forward to welcoming everyone, including our new Reception Class, at the beginning of a new academic year in September.

With best wishes  
The St Joseph's governors

