

Dear Parents and Carers,

CONSULTATION TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS

You may well be aware that the Government is encouraging all schools to consider converting to Academy status. As I have already informed you, the Federation's Governing Body has decided that they wish to explore conversion to Academy status and, to join with St Benet's Multi Academy Trust (MAT). We are writing to consult with staff, parents and other local community partners to determine whether the Federation should proceed with conversion and we would like to invite your views on the matter.

What is an Academy?

Academies are publicly funded state schools that are independent of the Local Authority and receive funding directly from Central Government. Each school will still be a Church of England School under the authority of the Bishop of Norwich and its religious designation will not change.

Why is this being considered?

As successful Voluntary Aided Schools, gaining Academy status would give us the autonomy to continue to develop our Federation and to continue to achieve high standards. As part of a MAT, there will be greater opportunities for working more closely with other local Church of England schools and the wider community of schools.

What are the advantages of conversion?

The Government is clear that the greater freedoms enjoyed by Academies are designed to allow schools to develop and to build on individual strengths in response to the needs of the community. We feel that the additional freedoms and flexibilities would enable the Governors to better secure the long-term future of our Federation.

We believe that the formal partnership with St Benet's will have a number of benefits for our Federation. This includes a more targeted approach to the long-term future of both schools, strengthening our Church of England identity, pooling of resources which will improve teaching and management practice within the schools as well as a greater control of our finances and better management of these for the benefit of children attending our schools.

What are the disadvantages of conversion?

The Federation will no longer be maintained by the local authority. It will be managed by St Benet's MAT. St Benet's have statutory duties as an academy trust company, and the Federation is confident it can manage these.

Will any changes be made to our schools as a result of conversion?

We do not intend to make any changes on conversion. Please be assured that the essential character, distinctiveness, ethos and values of our schools would remain unchanged should Academy conversion take place.

How to take part in the consultation process:

At this stage we are not committing our schools to conversion to Academy status. We are consulting with everyone associated with our schools before Governors meet again to make a final decision.

A consultation event will be held at each school; dates to follow as soon as can be arranged with St Benet's. We will be maintaining social distancing as part of Covid 19 (C19) control restrictions.

We would ask that you let us have your views by emailing Mrs Charlotte Whyte: head@forncett.norfolk.sch.uk by 18th November 2021.

The consultation will close on 19th November 2021. The Governors will meet after this date to consider how to proceed.

Yours faithfully,

Sally Richards
Chair of Governors
Carleton Rode and Forncett St Peter CEVA Primary Federation