



Dear Stakeholder

### **Consultation to convert to Academy status and join Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust**

In line with government policy, our Governing Body has been carefully reviewing its options to convert to Academy status and, in so doing, now wishes to consult with parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders, on whether All Hallows Catholic School should become an Academy and join Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust.

Schools can no longer convert to single academy trusts. Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust (MTCAT) is the most local diocesan Trust and shares our ethos and values. The Governing Body has therefore been working with MTCAT, exploring the benefits of joining as the first secondary school in the MAT (Multi Academy Trust) and now feels the time is right to formalise our relationship.

Underpinning the Governors' and Senior Leadership Team views is the desire and need to ensure the promotion, preservation, protection, and future development of Catholic education within the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth. The Catholic Trust model will ensure that the uniqueness of each individual school is celebrated and the unique contribution of each is recognised and appreciated. The aim is also to facilitate greater sharing, adding strength and capacity to the system and ensuring that all schools are supported.

Our Governing Body's priority remains to enable the school to deliver an outstanding Catholic education for our children, whilst continuing to be at the heart of our community. We are therefore commencing formal consultation on **Thursday 7 March 2024**, for a period of three school term weeks. Consultation will thus end at 3pm on **Thursday 28 March 2024**.

#### **What is an Academy?**

Academies are state schools, funded directly from central government, no longer under the control of the Local Authority. Academy status gives schools more freedom to be innovative and creative with the curriculum, timetabling, staffing and governance.

All academies continue to be inspected by Ofsted and comply with the same rules as other schools on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), exclusions and admissions.

#### **What is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)?**

A Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company and is responsible for overseeing the running of a number of academy schools. It has three layers of governance: the Members; the Directors; and the Local Governing Bodies.

The partnership established between all schools in the MAT ensures that the schools can share skills, best practice, and make optimum use of resources ensuring best value for money for each school.

#### **What will be the main benefits for All Hallows Catholic School joining Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust?**

- Educational benefits for students as a result of additional freedoms available to academies in terms of the curriculum we offer, and how we prioritise resources.
- Greater control over finances and the money due to schools.
- Building on Catholic ethos and protecting Catholic education.
- The opportunity to work in close and formalised partnership with other schools and share expertise and services that will benefit all of our students and staff, allowing us to target funding towards improving front line teaching and learning.
- Moderation of standards across the partnership of schools to ensure the highest quality provision.

- Develop our own solutions collaboratively.

### What responsibilities will the Multi Academy Trust adopt?

- Currently the Governing Body employs our staff. Going forward the Multi Academy Trust would be the employer, rather than the Governing Body.
- The Academy Trust would be responsible for admissions, rather than the Local Authority (although the LA would still co-ordinate and ensure the Trust adopts clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code).
- The Academy Trust would enter into a 125-year lease for the land, usually owned by the Local Authority. We already have responsibility for the cost of maintaining the land and buildings.

### Will any changes to the school be made as a result of conversion?

We do not intend to make any changes to the day-to-day work of the school following conversion, other than to adjust the governance arrangements and accountability that comes with working within a Multi Academy Trust and to bring closer working practices between the schools in the Trust.

In line with [Government Guidance on the length of a school week](#), released in July 2023 for implementation by September 2024, the school will be making changes to the school day. This will be communicated to families at the earliest opportunity and sits outside of this consultation

Our students will not notice any immediate difference: they will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. However, in time the children will perhaps notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn for example and have greater links with each school within the Trust.

### How do I learn more, and how do I respond to the consultation?

More information on the process and the answers to many of the questions you may have can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document attached to this letter. At this stage, we are not committing the school to conversion to academy status or to joining Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust. We are consulting with everyone associated with our school before governors meet again to make a final decision.

The Governing Body would very much like to hear your opinion. If you wish to respond in writing to the consultation, we ask that you let us have your views by emailing the attached feedback template to [consultation@allhallows.net](mailto:consultation@allhallows.net) by 3pm on **Thursday 28 March 2024**. Please include your name and contact details.

Whilst we do not anticipate responding to each and every communication, we will provide answers to questions via the FAQs, and we do welcome your views. Please be assured your views will be taken into consideration by our Governing Body.

Following the closure of the formal consultation period the Governing Body will meet to consider how to proceed and the outcome of the consultation process will be shared with you as soon as practicable following the meeting.

Yours faithfully



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