



St Peter's Church of England (Controlled) Primary School  
Reservoir Road, Hednesford, Cannock, WS12 1BE

**Headteacher:** Miss S Price

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13<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Dear Parents

### **St Peter's CE Primary School Conversion to Academy Status**

#### **Introduction**

Over the last few months the governors have been looking to the future and considering how we can best meet the learning needs of our children going forward. There are a number of factors that have been taken into account but the overriding desire has been to secure quality educational experiences and outcomes for all of our pupils.

It has been necessary to evaluate the rapidly changing economic and political situation at both local authority and national level that impact upon the work of schools, including St Peter's.

Whilst the political pressure to have all schools operating as academies has lessened of late, we have concluded that this is still the direction of travel. Indeed the local authority have already indicated that there will come a point in the not too distant future when it will be fiscally impossible for them to continue to support maintained schools such as St Peter's, and therefore all schools in Staffordshire will have to become academies. We believe that it is better to take control of, and shape our own destiny whilst we have the opportunity to do so, rather than wait and perhaps have to settle for a solution that is not of our own making later on. As St Peter's C.E. (C) Primary School is an Ofsted rated good school we can apply to join our own choice of academy trust.

St Peter's governors have examined the situation in depth, looking at different models and solutions and have arrived at a position that they feel best meets the learning needs of our pupils, maintains the Christian distinctiveness of the school and resonates with the ethos of St Peter's as a school that serves its community.

#### **Future Generation Trust**

The governors of St Peter's have voted to approach the Trust board of Future Generation Trust (FGT), with a view to joining them as part of the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). FGT is a small local trust, currently consisting of 2 other academies located in Staffordshire. One of the academies in FGT is a church school, like St Peter's.

#### **Next Steps**

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that we are considering converting to an academy and to get your thoughts on the matter. The school governors are unanimously in favour of pursuing an application to convert and have informed the Department for Education (DfE) accordingly. We have also informed the Local Authority and the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education of our plans. The DfE has appointed a project lead who will help us through the conversion and as part of the consultation process we would like to have your views.

There are a number of ways that you can contribute:

- A meeting will be held at school on **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 7pm** which you can attend if you have any questions, or simply want to learn more. There is also more information about academies on the DfE website: <https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/academies>
- If you cannot attend the meeting, representations regarding the proposal, or any questions you may have, can be made in writing to:  
**Gail Velasquez, Chair of Governors**  
**c/o St Peter's Primary School**  
**Reservoir Road**  
**Hednesford**  
**Staffs**  
**WS12 1BE**
- Or by email to: **consultation@st-peters-hednesford.staffs.sch.uk**

The closing date for representations to be made is **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

Governors aim for the school to convert to an academy and join FGT early in 2018, subject to considerations arising from the consultation process, approval of government and being able to process all the required paperwork and legal work by that time.  
Some frequently asked questions are attached to this letter, which you may find useful.

Yours sincerely



Miss S. Price  
Headteacher



Mrs G. Velasquez  
Chair of Governors

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **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. Previously academies have tended to replace schools which have poor results or otherwise needed to improve. Under the Academies Act 2010, all schools are able to become academies. As St Peter's C.E. (C) Primary School is an Ofsted rated good school we can apply to join our own choice of academy trust.

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

- **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 is 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?**

As an academy we 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.

### **Will the admissions arrangements change?**

We are not intending to change the admissions arrangements.

### **Will St Peter's change?**

We want to continue to work towards being an outstanding school. We therefore do not intend to change Peter's except in ways which we think will improve the school even more. For pupils, 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, we do not intend to take any such steps at this stage and would engage with parents, staff and children if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future. We will not be changing our uniform or the St Peter's school badge.

### **Will school staff change?**

If the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed at the school through the local authority will automatically transfer to the new academy on their current pay and conditions. We have a great team and will maintain a strong staff.

### **Will St Peter's C.E. (C) Primary School definitely become an academy?**

The governing body has submitted an application to convert to academy status and is working towards a conversion date sometime next academic year. However, the school is not obligated to become an academy. The governing body has only just begun the consultation process and nothing will be signed 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 of pupils currently at the school and those due to join the school in September and have also invited them to a meeting to learn more about the proposals to become an academy, or to comment on the proposals. The governing body will not proceed with the proposal 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.