



Howard Road, East Ham, London, E6 6EE

23rd January 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Consultation to Convert to Academy Status

You may well be aware that the Government is encouraging all schools to consider converting to Academy status. After careful consideration [and preliminary discussion with the Diocese], the School's Governing Body has decided that they wish to explore conversion to Academy status and, in particular, joining the Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust, with the following Catholic Primary Schools:

St Antony's, St Edward's, St Francis', St Helen's, St Joachim's and St Winefride's. We are writing to consult with staff, parents, local community to determine whether the School 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. The School will still be a Catholic School under the authority of Bishop Alan Williams, Diocese of Brentwood, and its religious designation will not change.

Why is this being considered?

As a successful Voluntary Aided School, gaining Academy status would give us the autonomy to continue to develop our School and to continue to achieve high standards. As a Multi Academy Trust, there will be greater opportunities for working more closely with other local Catholic schools and the wider community of schools. The benefits of a school-led system where local schools collaborate are highlighted in the recent White Paper "[Educational Excellence Everywhere](#)".

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 School.



In the footsteps of Jesus, we strive to achieve excellence in everything we do.

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In addition to this, we believe that the formal partnership with Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust will have a number of benefits for our schools. This includes a more targeted approach to the long term future of the schools, strengthening our Catholic identity/local vision, 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 the schools.

Students will benefit from being part of a trust by taking advantage of opportunities and experiences they may not have had access to as part of an individual school by working together across seven schools.

Every school within the trust follows similar standards when developing curriculum, assessing students, planning continuous professional development and consistent educational experiences for pupils. Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy reinforces the identity of schools as Catholic schools and provide a shared vision.

There are opportunities for shared professional development for staff at all levels. By the sharing of best practices and teaching strategies expertise and knowledge can be shared between academies.

What are the disadvantages of conversion?

Greater freedoms do bring additional responsibilities including statutory duties as an academy trust company, but the School is confident it can manage these.

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

It is unlikely that there will be any immediate major changes. The schools in the Trust will continue to function as individual schools serving our community. There are no proposals to change the names of our Schools, nor to change uniforms, admission arrangements or the general management and planning of the school day for our children and students. We hope and intend that present staff will remain with us and continue to serve the Schools as they do at present.

Please be assured that the unique religious character, ethos and values of the School would remain unchanged should Academy conversion take place.



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How to take part in the consultation process

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

There will be an open meeting for you to come and raise any queries you may have or make comments about this on 2nd February 2024 at 2:30 pm in the school hall. If you are unable to make this meeting but would like to ask any questions or make any comments please either telephone and ask to speak to the Head Teacher or email us at info@st-michaels.newham.sch.uk us by 9:00 am on Thursday, 2nd February 2024.

The consultation will close on 6th March. The Governors will meet after this date to consider how to proceed.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Stanley
Martin Stanley
Chair of Governors


Natasha Scott
Acting Executive Head Teacher



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