



# **Proposed Academy Conversion Burton Green CofE Primary School Consultation Report**

**17<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

The Benn Education Centre, Claremont Road, Rugby, CV21 3LU  
Phone: 01788 422900 Web: [www.covmat.org](http://www.covmat.org)

The Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee, and an exempt charity, registered in England and Wales No 8422015. Registered office: The Benn Education Centre, Claremont Road, Rugby, CV21 3LU

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## 1. Context and Background

- 1.1. At the Governing Body meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017, the Governing Body of the Green Leek Federation, incorporating Burton Green CofE Primary School and All Saints CofE Primary School, Leek Wootton resolved to apply to the Secretary of State for Education for an academy order to become an academy as part of the Diocese of Coventry Multi-Academy Trust. Further to this resolution, an academy application form was submitted to the Department for Education and the Governing Body received consent to proceed with the consultation on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017
- 1.2. The Chair of the Governing Body of the Green Leek Federation, working with support from the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust, agreed to the proposal that the school would open as an academy on 1st February 2018.
- 1.3. In accordance with section 5 of the Academies Act 2010<sup>1</sup> the Governing Body of the Green Leek Federation undertook a formal consultation exercise regarding the proposed academy plans.
- 1.4. The consultation period with parents and carers was held between 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017.
- 1.5. As the employer, Warwickshire County Council undertook a consultation with staff, running from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017.

## 2 Consultation Process

- 2.1 The purpose of the consultation was to present reasons for considering conversion to academy status and to establish whether there is any significant objection to academy status among stakeholders that would cause the Governing Body to reconsider.
- 2.2 Consultation on the proposal for Burton Green CofE Primary School to convert to an academy took place through a formal consultation process, undertaken by the Governing Body, with the support of the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust.

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### <sup>1</sup> 5. Consultation on conversion

(1) Before a maintained school in England is converted into an Academy, the school's governing body must consult such persons as they think appropriate.

(2) The consultation must be on the question of whether the school should be converted into an Academy.

(3) The consultation may take place before or after an Academy order, or an application for an Academy order, has been made in respect of the school.

- 2.3 A consultation plan was drawn up that identified an appropriate range of stakeholders to consult. A summary of the stakeholders invited to participate in the consultation included:
- Parents/Carers of children at Burton Green CofE Primary School
  - Existing school staff
  - Unions of school staff
- 2.4 The consultation approach was designed to ensure that those consulted were given an appropriate range of methods to respond. The consultation approaches were:
- A consultation letter outlining the proposal to convert and the consultation process, indicating how stakeholders could engage in the process. This was distributed to parents/carers. (A copy of the consultation letter can be found at Annex 1);
  - A meeting with staff was arranged to discuss the conversion to academy status, specifically the concerns around employment. The meeting was held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017
  - The formal TUPE consultation period was undertaken by Warwickshire County Council.
  - Two parent consultation meetings were held at 2:30pm and 6:30pm on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October and a third parent consultation meeting was held at 6:30pm on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017.

### **3 Results and analysis**

- 3.1 Approximately 63 people attended the three parent consultation meetings held on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, representing both Burton Green CofE Primary School and All Saints CofE Primary School. The Chair of Governors and the Headteacher spoke about the reasons for considering conversion to academy status as part of the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust and there was a presentation from the Chief Executive Officer of the Multi Academy Trust. The Trust's Head of Operations and Head of Education were also in attendance. Questions raised were seeking further information/clarification of the proposal and the impact on the school of conversion to academy status. These were answered by those present. (A summary of the questions asked and the answers given can be found in Annex 2);
- 3.2 A total of 40 consultation responses were received. The breakdown of the responses is that 29 were positive about the proposal to move to academy status and 10 respondents were not sure. One response was received against the proposal.
- 3.3 A letter of support for the proposal to convert was received from Burton Green Parish Council.

## **4 Conclusion**

4.1 The conclusion of this consultation is that the responses indicate a majority positive response to the proposal for Burton Green CofE Primary School to convert to an academy as part of the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust. Any comments from the consultation responses will be taken into consideration by the governing body.



# Burton Green Church of England Primary School Academy Conversion - Consultation Information

25<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dear Parent / Carer,

## Introduction

Within the context of a changing national scene in education governors have been considering the schools status and whether or not it would be beneficial for our school to convert to become an academy. The governors have looked very carefully at the support and opportunities provided by the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust (DMAT). As a result of considerable investigation and consultation with the DMAT the governors decided to make an application to convert to an academy and join the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust. Approval has now been received from the Department of Education for us to proceed with our application for both Burton Green CofE Primary School and All Saints' CofE E Primary School to convert to an academy.

The aim of this letter is to provide more information about the proposal for Burton Green CofE Primary School to join The Diocese of Coventry Multi-Academy Trust. This is a fantastic opportunity for Burton Green CofE Primary School to join a group of schools committed to supporting and enhancing education within a Church school environment, whilst keeping the school and its families at the heart everything it does. Our ambition is to work with the school to enhance and expand the educational experiences offered to your children.

## What is an Academy?

Academies are local schools which are funded by public money directly from central government and are not part of the local authority. The role of the Multi Academy Trust is to work with the Academy to provide a teaching and learning environment that is in line with the best in the maintained sector and offer a broad and balanced curriculum to pupils of all abilities. Within the Trust there is a strong emphasis not only upon what children learn but importantly on how they learn so they are well prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. As well as providing the best opportunities for all children from the most able pupils to those needing additional support, academies have a key part to play in the local community. The school will continue to build on its distinctiveness as a Church of England School.

## What will the Academy be like?

Our plans are to create an Academy that will continue to build on the successes of the school and the federation with All Saints' CofE Primary School. It will be a place where all learners have access to high quality academic provision as well as a broad and interesting curriculum. The Academy will have the freedom to innovate and improve the pupil experience, curriculum and performance levels. The Trust will provide dedicated school improvement support and opportunities for shared development and working within a family of like-minded schools. This approach has been recognised by Ofsted as strength for all the academies within the Trust.

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Burton Green CofE Primary School will continue to work as part of the Green Leek Federation to serve the needs of your community. It will continue to develop strong partnerships with families, the Local Authority, all elements of the local community and the local church to secure transformational educational provision for your children.

On behalf of The Diocese of Coventry Multi-Academy Trust, I would be delighted to welcome you to the following consultation meetings where there will be an opportunity for you to meet some of the DMAT Team and find out more about the Trust.

- **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October at 2pm** at Burton Green CofE Primary School
- **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October at 6:30pm** at All Saints CofE Primary School
- **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October at 6:30pm** at Burton Green CofE Primary School

A list of frequently asked questions is attached for your information along with a consultation response form for you to complete and return to us following the meetings. Before providing your feedback we suggest that you come along to meet some of the team, find out who we are, ask questions and hear about our success so far and how being part of the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust could benefit your children and school.

Alongside the proposal to become an academy the DMAT is supporting governors to finalise the leadership and management structure for January. We are not in a position to share our plans at the moment but will be keeping you updated as the plans progress.

We look forward to meeting you on either Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> or Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

Yours sincerely



**David Morris**  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Diocese of Coventry Multi-Academy Trust



**Barbara Mead**  
Chair of Governors  
Green Leek Federation

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: If the school converts would the Academy have a new name?**

A: Yes, it is proposed that the new Academy would be called Burton Green Church of England Academy.

### **Q. Will there be a new uniform?**

A. It is not our policy to change the uniform at conversion to an academy. However, we welcome views of parents in deciding whether the uniform should change or whether it should remain as it currently is for Burton Green CofE Primary School with the change of name phased in over a period of time.

### **Q: Would the new Academy be making any changes to timings of the school day?**

A: No, the new Academy would have the same arrangements for timings of the school day as the current arrangements for Burton Green C of E Primary School.

### **Q: What are the admissions arrangements?**

A. Admission of pupils would be in accordance with both the School Admissions Code of Practice and the current arrangements for Burton Green C of E Primary School.

### **Q. Will children who are currently at Burton Green C of E Primary School have to apply for the new Academy?**

A. No, children who are currently on roll at the school will automatically transfer over to the new Academy if the proposal goes ahead.

### **Q. What will change if Burton Green C of E Primary School becomes an Academy?**

A. Most pupils and parents will not notice any change. Becoming an Academy gives the school more freedom to make decisions about the best way to provide an outstanding education for the pupils. If any major changes are planned, there will be a consultation with those affected before making any final decision.

## **How to find out more and have your say**

There will be consultation meetings for parents on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017. There is also an opportunity to have your say on this proposal by filling in the response form and returning it to Burton Green C of E Primary School reception by Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

**Consultation is now open and will close on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017**, any responses submitted after this date will not form part of the consultation results. The school's Governing Body and The Diocese of Coventry Multi-Academy Trust will review the consultation responses and it is expected that stakeholders will be notified of the outcome of the consultation by **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017**.

## **Burton Green C of E Primary School Proposed Academy Consultation Response Form**

**Q1. Which of these apply to you regarding the level of involvement you have with Burton Green CofE Primary School? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY**

- I have at least one child at Burton Green C of E Primary School
  - I have at least one child who has recently left Burton Green C of E Primary School
  - I work at Burton Green C of E Primary School
  - I have at least one grandchild at Burton Green C of E Primary School
  - I have an involvement not listed above with Burton Green C of E Primary School \*
- \*Please state involvement .....

**Q2. Do you support the proposal for Burton Green C of E Primary School to convert to Academy status?**

- Yes                                       No                                       Not sure

Please comment:

Your views on this proposal are important and we look forward to receiving your comments. Please return this response form to reception at Burton Green C of E Primary School. Forms can also be posted to: David Morris, CEO, Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust, Claremont Road, Rugby CV21 3LU.



## All Saints and Burton Green Parents Meeting Questions

### **Why do we need to consider becoming an academy, we are not a failing school?**

Since 2010 the educational landscape has been revolutionised with the introduction of the academy agenda. Initially academisation was an option for failing secondary schools to push forward change and raise standards. Very quickly good and outstanding schools were requesting access to the same freedoms and additional funding as they watched underperforming school benefit from academisation. It would not be true today to say that academisation is a stigma of a failing school. Funding cuts have impacted on the Local Authorities reducing the services that they are able to offer over the past 10 years. Good and outstanding schools have received very little support and advice for a number of years as the focus has been on struggling schools. As good schools Burton Green and All Saints have received very little support from the Local Authority for a long time. From September Warwickshire will be focussed on fulfilling its statutory duties and will no longer be able to provide any school improvement support and many other services to schools are being reduced or withdrawn. The Government vision remains for all schools to become academies although the date of 2020 is no longer being pushed. This is a national agenda for all political parties. Within Warwickshire Local Authority Officers have been visiting schools speaking to Headteachers and governors encouraging them to consider becoming academies and form their own multi academy trusts.

Figures from the Department of Education in *March 2017* show that there were

- 6,431 academies nationally of which
  - 35% secondary schools
  - 60% primary schools
  - 35% special schools
  - 71% have chosen to convert to an academy

There are three options for schools –

- single standalone academies which are considered particularly vulnerable and are now not a preferred option for the Diocese, the LA or the DfE. Standalone academies are being encouraged to join together to form their own multi academy trusts.
- school led multi academy trusts where a group of schools join together and form their own trust where they are responsible for purchasing or providing central services such as finance, HR etc. themselves
- multi-academy trusts with central teams such as the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust. The central team provides the support and services for academies within the Trust. The academies pay a management fee to the Trust and the services are funded through this charge. Different trusts employ different models for providing services some run in-house services, others purchase services through external providers, others have a mixture of the two models.



Each Trust has its own organisation structures and method of providing support and services. It is important that all multi academy trusts are not judged to be the same.

### **How was the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust chosen?**

Governors are tasked with setting the strategic direction for the school. As part of their role they have been diligent in keeping abreast of the changes to the educational landscape and have been investigating academisation for a number of years as the Government drive towards academies has grown. They have examined all the options and have held discussions with the Local Authority, Diocesan Board of Education and the Multi Academy Trust to understand what the potential benefits of joining the Trust are for All Saints and Burton Green schools. Governors have visited three academies within the Multi-academy Trust and spoken to staff and governors to find out how being part of the Multi-academy Trust has benefitted the schools and what level of support staff receive. The outcomes from these meetings has been very positive and it is at the end of this lengthy due diligence process that governors voted to make an application to the Department for Education and the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to seek permission to begin the consultation process to join the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust. All schools must receive approval from the RSC before being allowed to convert to an academy. The RSC considers the capacity, stability and effectiveness of a trust and the ethos and values of the school before agreeing that a school can begin the process toward joining a particular trust. If permission had not been granted then there would have been no point in beginning the consultation process.

This is a true consultation process and all parents will have the opportunity to ask questions and give their say about the decision through the response to the questionnaire before any decision is made.

### **Which schools are part of the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust?**

There are currently 12 academies within the Trust – 11 primary schools and 1 secondary. Four academies are based in Coventry and 8 in Warwickshire. Of the 11 primary academies 8 are graded good or outstanding, 2 are awaiting their first inspections as academies and one is judged requires improvement. A list of all the academies and details about the Trust, its Directors and key staff is available on the website at [www.covmat.org](http://www.covmat.org)

### **I've looked at the map and your academies are not near us. What is your geographical boundary?**

A number of our academies are within half an hour of Burton Green or Leek Wootton. We are also in discussions with a number of schools who are considering joining the Trust some of which are based in the Warwick / Leamington area of the county. Staff are used to traveling to attend training sessions with the Local Authority and in most cases, apart from training, the central team will be visiting your schools.

The diversity of the Trust is also one of our strengths as we are made up of a mixture of rural and city schools, larger primaries and small village schools. Staff value the skills and experience they can share with colleagues from all types of settings. Schools joining the Trust are also encouraged to continue to work in the local partnerships if they are



productive.

The Trust covers the geographical area of the Diocese of Coventry which is relatively small. This stretches from Nuneaton in north Warwickshire to the Worcestershire borders in the south of the county and encompasses Coventry and Solihull too. The majority of Diocesan schools are within one hour from each other. Within our Trust most are less than 30 minutes apart. A number of the larger trusts are national organisations covering large areas of the country. We have no plans to expanding beyond our Diocesan boundaries.

**Is this decision based on funding issues? What if parent’s made a voluntary contribution to support the school?**

The decision is not based on financial need. Both schools have set balanced budgets for the next 3 years, which is no mean feat in these days of cuts to education funding. We are stable financially. The proposal is based on the fact that the LA is diminishing and there is a national move towards academisation by all schools. Governors have been monitoring the situation closely and now feel that the time is right to join an established and nationally recognised Trust. This proposal is based on what is best for the staff and children at the schools, on being part of an organisation that provides support, challenge and professional development for staff which is no longer available from the Local Authority and will ultimately benefit the children and their learning experiences.

**Academic vision**

The vision of the Trust is that all academies within the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust will be recognised for their distinctive and inclusive Christian ethos and for the impact that this has on raising educational standards. Each academy will provide an inspirational and holistic education which enables all children and staff to develop and achieve to their full potential

The Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust recognises that regardless of their Ofsted grading every school, its staff and children benefit from support and challenge to ensure the best possible educational experience is delivered for the children at each school. To this end the Trust provides a minimum of 12 days support from a dedicated, skilled and experienced School Improvement Partner to work with governors and senior leaders at the schools to design a bespoke school development package. The role also encompasses the sharing of good practice and facilitating school to school support both within the Trust and with external partners and schools outside the Trust. This is a significant increase in the support received from the Local Authority where only ½ day support was received last year for All Saints.

The Trust has worked with educational experts from the University of Warwick and the University of Birmingham to develop staff training programmes and the Trust’s school improvement strategy.

**We are not in special measures. How would being part of the Trust benefit us?**

The majority of schools in the Trust are now judged good or outstanding, with some choosing to join the Trust as good schools so we have experience with schools of all



categories. We are very proud that no school within the Trust has received a poor Ofsted judgement since joining the Trust.

Regardless of its Ofsted grading every school receives its own bespoke package of support focussed on the individual needs of each academy. Each year the Trust commissions an independent report for each school from experienced educational professionals who review the position of the school and identify areas for development for the coming year. This report also provides feedback on the effectiveness of the support provided by the Trust at each academy. Governors are invited to the feedback from the lead professional so they are able to hold both the staff and the Trust to account for the quality of education provision at the school. This report forms the basis of the planning for the bespoke package of support for the coming year along with input from the governors and senior leaders at the school and the School Improvement Partner who has a broader reaching view of developments in the educational world. This approach has been commended by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and the Department for Education (DfE). We are working with the DfE to share our school improvement strategy with other multi academy trusts nationally.

### **What is your educational vision for this school?**

This is the beginning of a consultation process and the decision for the school to become part of the Trust has not been taken. As such it would not be appropriate for us to have developed a strategic vision and plan specifically for your schools yet. We will be undertaking a due diligence process over the next few weeks which includes looking at teaching and learning, finances and building conditions. This information will be compiled and used to form the basis of an individual plan for the school moving forward if it chooses to join the Trust. However as part of the Multi Academy Trust All Saints and Burton Green schools would be at the heart of the vision of the Trust, namely to provide an inspirational educational experience for the children and the rest of the school community.

### **Apart from support for teaching and learning what other services do you provide?**

As the Headteacher and senior leaders of small schools your staff are expected to deal with all aspects of running the school not just teaching and learning. They could be dealing with meetings with contractors to discuss faulty drains, supporting staff who are poorly whilst arranging suitable cover, monitoring expenditure and keeping track of the budget etc.. All this is in addition to monitoring standards, keeping an eye on the rapidly changing landscape of education and managing the introduction of new initiatives and changes to the curriculum as they are applied by the Government.

As part of the Trust every academy receive the support of an experienced team of professional HR, Operations and Finance advisors. This is not limited to a service level agreement but is unlimited support to deal with issues as they arise. For example the Trust has employed a chartered surveyor to support building issues, operational support is provided for negotiation of contracts to leverage costs savings which are returned to the school and HR and Finance Business Partners are available to come into the school to work with staff to deal with any staffing and finance questions as they arise. The services are provided to reduce the management burden on staff, enabling them to focus on their key roles of teaching and learning.



**What is the impact of joining the Trust on our staff?**

A separate consultation process is being held with the staff and the response has been very positive so far. All staff would transfer to the Trust under the legal process of TUPE which ensures their continuous service, pensions and conditions of employment are protected.

As part of the Multi-academy Trust all staff including learning mentors and teaching assistants will be provided with greater opportunities for continuous professional development, joint working with a wider network of schools and will have access to support and advice from the central HR team who operate an open door policy for all staff.

In a world where staffing shortages, particularly at senior leadership level within schools is a big issue the Trust has a strong record of recruitment and retention of staff at all levels. As an indication of this the Trust recently received 7 strong applications for the position of Headteacher at one of the academies. This reflects the fact that teachers looking for headship positions have actively sought to be part of a larger organisation which provides opportunities for support, professional development and access to innovative ways of working as part of a network of professionals. Headship is a lonely position particularly for good or outstanding schools who no longer receive any external support or challenge from the Local Authority. Being part of an organisation which provides additional challenge, support and development opportunities for staff at all levels is very appealing.

We also run our own programmes of support and development for new teachers which have been designed with lecturers at the University of Warwick. This has ensured that teachers stay within the profession and has enabled us to grow our own talented pool of teachers. When seeking promotion our staff are now actively applying for jobs within the Trust rather than applying for jobs outside the Trust as they value the support they have received.

**Would we have to share our excellent staff?**

No. Staff would not be expected to work at other schools within the Trust although often staff have valued the opportunities working as part of a bigger group brings such as the possibility of joint planning or joint training. There are a number of networks operating in the Trust including maths and literacy subject leaders, learning mentors and early years teachers. This gives staff the opportunity to come together and share their experience of what works well and what doesn't and investigate together how the latest changes in education can be introduced effectively to their own schools.

**Do you follow the national curriculum, local school holidays and usual school times?**

Yes although we have the freedom to change the curriculum, holidays and school hours we have no intention of making any changes. Term dates remain in line with the Local Authority holiday dates and the school day remains unchanged. All our academies continue to follow the national curriculum although where there is an opportunity to enhance it for a benefit for the children we will take it.



### **We don't want the ethos, values and nurturing environment of the school to change.**

Both schools are already part of the Diocese of Coventry. It is through their links with the Diocese as Church schools that the ethos and values of the schools have been nurtured. As part of the Diocese of Coventry Multi-academy Trust the school would retain its links with the Church and the Diocese and strengthen its values. Our values are your values.

### **This is all a bit quick, we don't know you.**

Your governors are tasked with overseeing the strategic direction of the schools within your federation. They have a detailed knowledge of the strengths and challenges facing your schools. In the face of a changing world of educational models they have undertaken a thorough investigation of the options, made visits to speak to others who have been through a similar journey and have sought the advice of external professionals and senior leaders in the school before reaching the decision to talk to you. Change can be disruptive and sharing too much information before there is a clear direction of travel is often very unsettling for both current and prospective parents and staff.

The Trust have found that the consultation period is much more productive if parents have the opportunity to hear face to face from school leaders and governors about how the decision has been arrived at and what they perceive the benefits of the choice they are presenting to you to be as quickly as possible once a firm decision to consider academisation has been made.

The series of meetings planned with staff and parents have been arranged to coincide with the start of the consultation period to give you the opportunity to meet senior members of the Trust, hear about the opportunities on offer and ask questions of the people directly involved. This gives you the opportunity to understand how the Trust runs, what is truth and what is myth within the vast array of information on academies available to you and to find out how specific functions with our Trust work as not all trusts operate in the same way. For example some trusts do insist on uniform changes or impose a corporate uniformity to their schools (*This is something we don't do*)

With this grounding of accurate information you are then able to take the information provided away and come back to us with informed questions which we will endeavour to answer before you make your decisions. We recognise this can be an unsettling time for you and want to be sure that you have all the right information at the start of the process.

### **Who are you beyond your support for academies?**

The Trust was initially established by the Diocesan Board of Education in 2013 to support Church schools converting to become academies. The Trust is well thought of nationally and senior leaders are often invited to be part of task groups and discussions with other Diocese and the Department for Education regarding policy and decision making for academies and schools. David Morris is currently part of a group reviewing the impact of funding for small rural schools led by Lord Nash, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System.

In December 2016 the DfE published the "*Good practice guidance and expectations for growth for academy trusts*" which included a case study of the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy



Trust.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/576240/Multi-academy\\_trusts\\_good\\_practice\\_guidance\\_and\\_expectations\\_for\\_growth.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/576240/Multi-academy_trusts_good_practice_guidance_and_expectations_for_growth.pdf)

We are an exempt charity which means that all funds received must be spent on education and the Trust cannot make a profit. Every cost saving leverage on behalf of the academies is returned to the academies. The Trust is subject to closer financial scrutiny than LA maintained schools and every year the accounts are externally audited and the financial report is filed at Companies House and published on the Trust website.

**Is this decision linked with the need to recruit a new Headteacher**

No governors have been investigating the possible benefits of becoming an academy for a number of years. However there is a national recruitment crisis particular in leadership roles in schools. The Trust has a strong reputation which is attracting high calibre applicants for jobs that have been recently advertised. As part of the Trust there will be a greater support for the recruitment and retention of staff. The Green Leek vacancy has been advertised twice since March and the governors unsuccessful in appointing anyone. The challenges of managing small schools on reducing budgets and being responsible for all aspects of running a school including finance, staffing and buildings without external support is impacting on the successful appointments for this type of role.

The governors would be presenting this option even if there wasn't an issue with the recruitment of a new Headteacher. However, this is an opportunity to secure strong leadership and develop a support network which will support improvements and benefit the whole school community as part of a nationally recognised and well respected Church-led multi academy trust. A part of the Multi-academy Trust they will support the governors in finding a solution for the recruitment process. There are a number of options open to us to put in place a strong leadership solution. Some of these are with the Diocese of Coventry Multi-academy Trust and other options are outside the Trust. We are not able to share these with you at this point as there have been no decisions made and discussions are on-going.

Governors and senior leaders ask that you trust them to be working for the best outcome for the schools and understand that any plans cannot be shared until discussions have reached a more conclusive stage.

**Would recruitment be easier if there was one Headteacher at each school**

It is unlikely as single small schools are also struggling to recruit due to the challenges of the role and the financial constraints imposed on schools by budget cuts. More and more schools are adopting shared leadership models. The Headteacher in a small school has to cover the same functions as a Headteacher in a larger school and meet the same high standards for compliance and innovation but with less staff. Larger schools where there is a bigger support network for staff are more likely to fill their posts quickly.

Also the benefits of the federation have been very positive for both schools over the past 4 years and it would be a shame to go backwards.



### **What happen if we don't become an academy?**

The governors will continue to work to secure an appointment for the post of Headteacher. The Local Authority will seek to provide an interim Headteacher from January until a new appointment can be made. The Diocesan Board of Education will continue to support the schools particularly around RE and Collective Worship but we will not be able to access the array of support services provided by the Multi-academy Trust.

### **What happens if the school doesn't receive the support promised as part of the Trust? Can we go back?**

Trusts and academies are continually monitored by the Department for Education and Ofsted to ensure they are providing high quality education. Where a trust fails to provide adequate support academies can move to another trust. For Church schools this would need to be another Church led trust to protect the ethos and values of the school.

### **Will we still get the same amount of funding or will the Trust redistribute the money?**

Yes the school will continue to receive it full allocation of funding. The Trust cannot take money from one school to give to another without the right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Education and an exceptional case would need to be made for this to happen. The biggest change is that funding comes to the school directly from the Department for Education via the Trust and not through the Local Authority. The school will continue to receive all additional grants such as pupil premium funding, primary school sports grants and infant free school meals in full.

In addition to the 'per pupil' revenue funding the Trust also receives a capital grant to support the maintenance of school buildings. Currently All Saints have to pay 10% of any capital project for the school. This is not a requirement under the Multi Academy Trust.

### **What difference will we see as parents if the schools convert?**

The staff will remain the same and there should be no obvious changes on day 1. Overtime it is expected that the support and development opportunities staff receive as part of the Trust will result in increasingly confident teachers and standards should rise. Other changes may be greater opportunities for building links with the Cathedral and the Diocese, increasing opportunities for diversity of experience for staff and children and staff will be more professionally aware of developments in the wider educational world.

### **Who is responsible for safeguarding?**

The Local Authority retain the statutory duty for safeguarding and the Multi-academy Trust works closely with the local safeguarding teams, following their procedures and policies in all things. We provide additional support to schools to ensure they apply the procedures effectively and safeguarding is always on the agenda of the regular meetings in school.



### **What happens to admissions? Can children be forced to move schools?**

No all schools continue to work with Warwickshire County Council who manage the normal admissions process for entry to the school. Although academies have the freedom to change their admissions processes the academy admissions policies are in line with national guidance and agreed Local Authority procedures. There will be no change to catchment areas or the oversubscription criteria applied.

### **Who owns the land and buildings and what can you do?**

The land and buildings are leased to the Trust on 125 year lease. The time limit for the lease is set by the Government for all academies. During that period the property can only be used for educational purposes and cannot be sold or re-developed. It would not be possible to sell the football fields to developers for example.

The school would be subject to the same pressure to grow from the Local Authority if there were major developments in the area as it would as a maintained school. However as a part of the Trust and not a Local Authority school it would have a stronger voice in the decision making process. It would be easier to refuse a request to expand. Projected figures for the new development in the area in Leek Wootton will not impact directly on the school size as it is anticipated that the additional families can be accommodated within the current school admission numbers.

### **How are you going to manage growth if there are a number of new schools interested in joining you?**

The success of the Trust has been recognised by the Department for Education and the Trust has been asked to grow to support more schools wishing to become an academy. There are a number of schools in discussion with us about joining the Trust, all of which are good or outstanding schools. Some are community schools. We have received a grant from the Department for Education to support our expansion and in preparation for growth the Education Team has already appointed two new members of staff who have a wealth of experience. One is a National Leader of Education and both have taken schools to outstanding under their tenure as Headteacher. There is a strategic plan for growth for the other departments as schools join the Trust.

We are conscious that our success has been built on the close relationship and intimate working of our professional staff with our academies. We are also conscious that we do not want to dilute our success by becoming too large and remote from the schools. The plan moving forward is to replicate this successful model and create two school improvement led groupings of schools each with their own full time dedicated education lead who will take responsibility for the teaching and learning in the academies within their group. The academies will continue to receive HR, finance and operational support at the same level they receive today.

### **Do you have any schools which are comparable to us?**

St John's CofE Academy in Coventry chose to join the Trust in 2014 as a good school. It has been rated the highest performing school in Coventry this year. The attainment results



for pupils have always been very good and are similar to the attainment figures for All Saints. However we are particularly proud of the high progress figures for the school this year which show how far children's learning has come. Strong progress figures indicate the impact the school is having on children's learning over the course of their time with the school.

### **What happens next? How will you be communicated with us?**

You will have received a feedback form with the letter inviting you to come and meet us. The questions and answers from the meetings are being circulated to everyone so that the information from the different meetings is shared. If there are any further questions please feel free to email them to [info@covmat.org](mailto:info@covmat.org) or drop them into the school office and they will be forwarded to us.

At the close of the consultation period we will compile a report of the responses from the questionnaires and questions raised at the meetings. This will be given to the governors and the Department of Education as part of the process. A copy of the report will be made available to parents on the schools website too.

It will then be for your governing body to meet and review the responses and make the decision as to the next steps. This is not a ballot and there are no percentages of parents who must agree or disagree to make a decision. We do however, value your input and would like to hear from you as to views about the proposal. We encourage you to submit a response form to the school office.



## **Comments in recent OFSTED reports relating to the role of the Multi Academy Trust and the impact it has on the achievements of the academies.**

“... the many highly productive links with the Multi-Academy Trust have assisted the transformation of the academy. Regular visits from a representative of the trust focused on improvements in the academy and collaboration with other academies in the trust and have helped to accelerate the pace of necessary changes.” **February 2015 - Stretton Church of England Academy Grade Outstanding**

“The governors and multi-academy trust work in partnership as they effectively support and challenge leaders. Their work has reversed any previous underachievement.” **December 2016 - Queens Church of England Academy Grade Good**

“Leaders, governors and the multi-academy trust are ambitious for the school and they are committed to ensuring that pupils achieve highly and are well cared for.” **January 2017 – St James Church of England Academy Grade Good**

“The Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust provides highly effective input which has supported many improvements. The school continues to improve under the astute stewardship of the trust.” **September 2017 - St Bartholomew’s Church of England Academy Grade Good**

### **List of academies within the Trust**

**St Laurence CofE Primary School, Old Church Road, Coventry CV6 7ED**

**Stretton CofE Academy, Stretton Avenue, Coventry CV3 3AE**

**St Bartholomew’s CofE Academy, Bredon Avenue, Coventry CV3 2LP**

**Queens CofE Academy, Bentley Road, Nuneaton CV11 5LR**

**Harris CofE Academy, Harris Drive, Rugby CV22 5EA**

**St James CofE Academy, Barbridge Road, Bulkington CV12 9PF**

**St Nicolas CofE Academy, Windemere Avenue, Nuneaton CV11 6HJ**

**Studley St Mary’s CofE Academy, New Road, Studley B80 7ND**

**St John’s CofE Academy, Winsford Avenue, Coventry CV5 9HZ**

**St Oswald’s CofE Academy, Addison Avenue, Rugby CV22 7DJ**

**St Michael’s CofE Academy, Hazel Grove, Bedworth CV12 9D**

**Leamington Hastings CofE Academy, Birdingbury Road, Rugby CV23 8EA**