



St John's
Church of England (VA)
Combined School

Inspire creativity and fulfil potential within a
Christian ethos

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· Headteacher: Mrs G J Grimsey
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· Chair of Governors: Mrs C Gulliver
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15 June 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

CONVERSION TO ACADEMY STATUS WITH THE OXFORD DIOCESAN BUCKS SCHOOLS TRUST

I am writing to advise you on the Governing Body's plans with regard to conversion to academy status.

Parents will be aware of the Government's policy of developing the academy programme. As an Ofsted 'Good' school we have the freedom to choose if and when to convert to an academy on our own terms. The Governors have kept this under careful review over the last few years in order to be sure of making an informed choice. During this time we have held meetings with academy trusts and spoken and met with headteachers and governors of other schools. We now wish to inform you that we have made the decision, and passed a resolution, to explore conversion to academy status within the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST), a new Multi Academy Trust (MAT) currently being set up by the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (the Church of England).

As part of the decision-making process, we are carrying out a consultation with parents, staff and other stakeholders. The period of consultation starts on 21 June 2017 and will run until 19 July 2017. The Governors are keen to reassure you that the decision to proceed will not be taken without taking your thoughts into consideration. To this end, if you would like to ask a question or make a comment for the Governors to consider, please either write them on the attached form and hand it to the school office, or email them at: stjohnsgb@gmail.com. We will endeavour to answer your questions.

About the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust

ODBST is being established to enable likeminded schools across the Buckingham Episcopal Area (which covers Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes) to convert to academy status within the family of the Diocese. The MAT is open to church and non-church schools. The vision is to allow schools to develop and share best practice and work in support of one another whilst benefiting from central support services.

Although this is a new organisation, it is the sister of the established Diocese of Oxford MAT (Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST)), which currently serves 25 schools across Oxfordshire and Windsor and Maidenhead, but which intends to expand to around 30 schools by the end of the calendar year. The Oxford Diocesan Board of Education and ODST will both be supporting the establishment of ODBST, and our school would be one of the first to join.

Why the Governors wish to make this decision

The Governors believe that this proposed change will enable us to provide some additional choices as to how the school develops, will help us to meet the ongoing changes in the educational system, continue to improve the opportunities we provide for your children and will support the school in its future development. Importantly, joining a Church-led MAT ensures that the ethos and values of our school, which are of paramount importance, are protected.

In practical terms while the academy status will change some things behind the scenes, on the whole you and your child(ren) will see very little difference initially. In particular, admission arrangements will not change as they will remain the same as the local authority arrangements, and we do not propose to change the name of the school, the school uniform, term dates or the curriculum.

The school would keep its Church of England designation whether or not it changes to academy status, however, the Governors and school leadership team believe that conversion with ODBST will offer many benefits and opportunities and ensure the values of our school and our Christian ethos are protected. Over time we hope to see a positive impact on the quality of provision at the school. We will also have a greater level of stability and support than we currently receive in meeting the ongoing challenges of an ever changing education system.

We will continue to work closely with the Diocese, the Local Authority, the schools in our partnership as well as the other schools who choose to convert to academy status with ODBST.

A more detailed document outlining the proposals is available on the school website www.stjohn.bucks.sch.uk.

Information session and next steps

We will be holding a meeting for parents, carers and other stakeholders on 12 July 2017 at 6.00pm in the school hall. Representatives from ODBST will be present alongside members of the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team, to answer your questions and listen to your comments.

Refreshments will be provided and so in order to give the school an idea of numbers **please complete and return the form below**. There is space to include any questions you have in advance so that we can make sure that we have answers ready for you. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the meeting both formally and informally.

Following the information session, the consultation period will close on 19 July 2017. The Governors will review the comments and questions raised in the consultation and will decide whether to continue with the process. If it is agreed, there will then be a period of due diligence, including a meeting with staff. At the appropriate point, the Secretary of State for Education will grant permission for the school to convert to an academy on a determined date. ODBST will make staff available to support the school through this process so that the impact on the day to day running on the school should be minimal.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting on 12 July 2017 and thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely
Mrs G Grimsey
Headteacher

Please complete and return this form to the school office. Thank you.

I/ We will attend the academy consultation meeting at 6.00pm on 12 July 2017.

Name _____

Signed _____

I/ We would like to ask the following questions (please continue on a separate sheet if required):

Please return this slip to the school office by Friday 30 June 2017

- Main Road, Lacey Green,
- Princes Risborough,
- Buckinghamshire HP27 0PL
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- Tel: 01844 343521
- email:office@stjohn.bucks.sch.uk
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- www.stjohn.bucks.sch.uk
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