



St Francis' Catholic Primary School  
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23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

### Consultation to Convert to Academy Status

You may well be aware that the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Brentwood has instructed the grouping of schools into Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs). Bishop Alan has shared in this vision that "... this will support education in the Diocese into a workable and resilient reality that secures and enables the development of all Catholic schools". As a result, St Francis' 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. We are writing to consult with staff, parents, local community partners to determine whether St Francis' 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.

### Why is this being considered?

As a successful Voluntary Aided School, gaining Academy status would give us the autonomy to continue to develop St Francis' 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 Government's 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 addition to this we believe that the formal partnership with Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust, (currently incorporating St Joachim's and St Helen's Catholic Primary Schools) will have a number of benefits for our school. This includes a more targeted approach to the long term future of the



Newham London



Headteacher: Ms Natasha Scott

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schools, strengthening our local Catholic 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.

What are the disadvantages of conversion?

Greater freedoms do bring additional responsibilities including statutory duties as an academy trust company, but St Francis' 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 name of any School, 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 St Francis' as they do at present.

Please be assured that the unique character, Catholic ethos and values of St Francis' would remain unchanged should academy conversion take place.

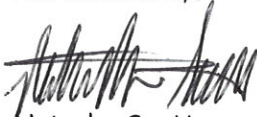
How to take part in the consultation process

At this stage we are not committing St Francis' 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 Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> May at 5:30pm and Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> May at 9:00 am. 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 on the school account at [info@st-francis.newham.sch.uk](mailto:info@st-francis.newham.sch.uk) by Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at 9:00am.

The consultation will close on 21<sup>st</sup> June. The Governors will meet after this date to consider how to proceed.

Yours sincerely,



Natasha Scott  
Head Teacher



Marian Thorn  
Chair of Governors

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to attend the parent consultation meeting on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> May at 5:30 pm.

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