**Holy Trinity School**

**Parent Consultation on conversion to Academy status**

**November 2013**

**Academy background**

**What is an academy?**

An academy is an independent school funded directly from central government. An academy is not maintained by a Local Authority, and is is therefore free of LA control, monitoring, support and intervention.

On the DfE website, it states:- “Academies are publicly-funded independent schools that provide a first-class education.”

**What’s different about academies?**

Benefits

To innovate and raise standards. This may include the Curriculum and partnerships with other primary and secondary schools.

Funding

Academies receive the same level of per-pupil funding that they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school, plus additions to cover the services that are no longer provided for them by the Local Authority. However, Academies have greater freedom over how they use their budgets in the best interest of their pupils.

Academies receive their funding directly from the Young People’s Learning Agency (an agency of the Department for Education) rather than from Local Authorities.

Governance

The principles of governance are the same in Academies as in maintained schools, but the governing body has greater autonomy. Academies are required to have at least two Parent Governors.

**…and what’s the same?**

Admissions, special educational needs and exclusions

Academies are required to follow the law and guidance on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as if they were maintained schools. The Board of Directors is the Admissions Authority.

Collaboration

Academies have to ensure that the school will be at the heart of its community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other schools and the wider community.

**What is a Multi-Academy Company within the Archdiocese of Birmingham?**

Using the Multi-Academy Company model ensures that individual Academies are part of a family of Catholic Academies. This family of Academies work with and support each other under the control of, and reporting to, a single Board of Directors. The Directors delegate some operational control of each individual Academy to its specific Academy Committee through a Scheme of Delegation. The members of each Academy Committee are known as Academy Representatives.

The MAC model roots: -

* The Catholic character; the canonical and legal identity
* The educational aims and purposes
* The strategic governance and local management of the Academies

The MAC secures for all: “who we are” and “what we are about” but still offers the freedoms for all the individual members to participate in other inclusive relationships and partnerships of a more temporary or transient nature in accordance with the specific needs of members of the communion of Academies.

Each school keeps its distinct character and operational matters are still dealt with at school level.

**Will we lose our Catholic ethos on conversion?**

The set of Academy conversion documents for use in the Archdiocese of Birmingham are all legally binding and protect the Catholic character and ethos of the schools, if they wish to convert to Academy status.

**How many principals are there on the Multi-Academy Company Board of Directors?**

* A maximum of two of the Principals of the Academies may be appointed as Directors
* If an Executive Principal is appointed then the Executive Principal alone is appointed to the Board of Directors
* A maximum of two Staff Directors [*Staff Directors are selected through a process determined by Members of the MAC*]
* Two Parent Directors [*Parent Directors shall be elected by parents of registered pupils at the Academies. Each selected Parent Director must be a parent of a registered pupil at one of the Academies at the time when he/she was elected*]
* There are eight Foundation Governors

The reason for Foundation Directors being in the majority is to ensure that the Diocesan Bishop retains control over the provision of Catholic schools in the Diocese, in accordance with his canonical authority and responsibilities. Only the Diocesan Bishop has authority to permit a school to be titled a ‘Catholic school’.

If the structural benefits of MACs are to be realised, there needs to be a willingness to innovate, developing new (and in some cases, radically different) approaches to: accountability; collaborative practice; distributed and collective leadership; teamwork; use of budgets; and deployment of resources, human, financial and material. The key areas of collaboration within which the schools could work together are: -

* Spiritual life
* Safeguarding/health and safety
* New technologies
* Community
* Self-evaluation
* Teaching and learning
* Specialism

**Consulting interested parties about becoming an Academy**

Governing Bodies of schools that wish to convert to become Academies are required by the Academies Act 2010 to carry out a consultation on the conversion process with appropriate stakeholders before entering into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State. This will include TUPE consultations. The Secretary of State will therefore need to ensure that the Governing Body of the school has carried out such consultation before he can sign a Funding Agreement.

There is no specified length of time for the consultation but it is important that interested groups, individuals or organisations have a fair chance to respond and ask questions. It may be approximately two to four weeks.

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| School wants to become part of a MAC |

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| After a full Governing Body meeting to pass the resolution to become an Academy in a MAC, the individual school Governing Body will need to make a formal submission for approval to the DES [representing the Trustees] |

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| Schools seeking to convert to Academy status, as part of a Multi-Academy Company [MAC], must first seek approval of the Trustees |

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| When the formal submission for approval has been considered by the DES, a reply will be sent to the Governing Body either: -   1. Granting approval with, a requirement to use the Diocesan Model Academy documents and no other 2. Asking to meet with the Governing Body [or Bodies] to discuss further the submission for approval to seek clarification on matters of specific interest to the Trustees |

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| When a school [*or schools*] has Trustee approval to progress the process for conversion the Governing Body: -   1. Should delegate the work involved in progressing the process of conversion to a committee 2. Determine who will be the named point of contact for the DfE known in this document as ‘the school’s representative’ and 3. Register with DfE 4. Apply to consult |

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| School starts consultation process to be an Academy |

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| Consultation process decision |

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| School tells DfE re consultation outcome |

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| School receives Academy order from DfE |

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| School starts conversion work |

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| School opens as an Academy |