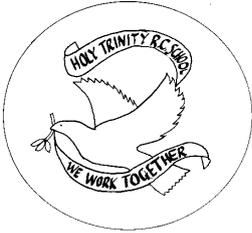


## OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL



**Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School**  
**24 London Road**  
**Chipping Norton**  
**Oxon OX7 5AX**  
**☎ 01608 643487**

### **Head Teacher:**

Mrs Lorna Buchanan BA

1<sup>st</sup> May 2014

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **THE POPE FRANCIS ACADEMY OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

I write on behalf of the Governors, to bring you up to date with the current state of play.

You may recall that I wrote to you on 25<sup>th</sup> November last year to let you know that we, the Governors of Holy Trinity School, were in active discussions with Blessed George Napier Secondary School and St Joseph's Primary School, in Banbury with a view to forming a multi academy company (MAC). We took the view that this route would give us the best opportunity to achieve the potential benefits of becoming an Academy (which have already been documented in the material made available to parents,) including the sharing of best practice and mutual support with the other schools in the MAC.

At the same time, you were invited to participate in the consultation process, and a number of you took the opportunity to do so in early December.

While the consultation raised some questions and concerns initially, we believe that these have all been dealt with satisfactorily (largely, may I say, as a result of the hard work, dedication and commitment of my fellow governors, the Head Teacher and the Staff.) Negotiations have since continued, very much in line with our original timetable.

At their meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> of March, the full governing body of Holy Trinity voted unanimously to go ahead with the conversion to become an academy. One very minor change from the original timetable has become apparent, namely that the Pope Francis Academy, (PFA) as the MAC will be known, will not come into operation until 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014, (rather than 1<sup>st</sup> July as originally anticipated) solely as the result of a bottle neck of conversions with which the local authority is having to cope. Nevertheless, when Holy Trinity reopens in September after the summer vacation, we fully expect that it will be as an academy, within the PFA.

There will inevitably be some changes that will emerge as the next term progresses; but as we have explained before, the vast majority of these will be "behind the scenes," so to speak, and all the familiar faces around the school will still be there. The governors can again reassure you that there will be no change, either in the day to day running of the School, or amongst the Staff; the channels of communication between you and the school will also be unaltered. We can furthermore reassure you that our membership of the Chipping Norton Partnership will not be compromised or affected in any way.

There will, however, be considerable changes in the governance and administration, operating in the background. For example, the governing body will be dissolved, as it will no longer have the sole or prime responsibility for running the school. This task will be assumed by the board of directors of PFA. Holy Trinity will instead form its own academy committee whose responsibilities will be specific to the school. The constitution and functions of this committee will be very similar to those of the existing governing body; indeed, most of the existing governors have indicated that they are happy to continue to serve the school as members of the new academy committee. There will be a minimum of 12 members, of whom 7 will be appointed by the diocese (as at present); a maximum of 2 parent representatives (elected); 2 staff representatives (also elected); and the head teacher. In practice, however, the board of PFA will delegate most, if not all, of the day-to-day decisions to the academy committee. For example, although the head teacher and deputy will be appointed by the board, all the other teachers and the non-teaching staff, will be effectively appointed by the academy committee.

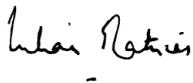
The most significant administrative change will be that the funds needed for running the school will no longer be received from the local authority, but instead will be paid by the Department for Education directly to the board of PFA which will distribute them to the individual schools in accordance with prescribed rules.

One of the key advantages of being a founder member of PFA is that we have been able to ensure that Holy Trinity is fully represented on the board of directors. Not only is our Head Teacher, Mrs Buchanan, to be one of the two principal directors, but we will provide at least two (of eight), of the initial foundation directors, and one of the two parent directors. Our new parish priest, Canon Mervyn Tower, who has very considerable experience in the educational field, has already accepted an invitation by the diocese to serve as a foundation director, in addition to our own representatives.

We on the governing body are optimistic and enthusiastic about this latest development, and are glad to report that the unavoidable set-up costs of becoming an academy will not affect Holy Trinity because the Department for Education has subsequently increased the funds available for this purpose substantially above what they had indicated initially.

There are still a number of details to be finalised before we reach the final straight, but the main principles have been agreed and the building blocks are firmly in place to maintain the high standards of education at Holy Trinity.

Yours sincerely,



Julian Mathias  
Chair of Governors