

St Mary's Church of England Primary School & Nursery

Old Road, Writhlington, Radstock, BA3 3NG
Telephone 01761 434548
email: stmaryswrithlington_pri@bathnes.gov.uk
website: www.stmaryswrithlington.co.uk



Head Teacher : Cathie Lampert
Deputy Head Teacher: Beth Hamblin

22nd April, 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Formal Consultation on Proposal to convert to Academy Status

The school's Local Governing Body have been giving consideration to what is in the best interests of our school over a significant period of time, including researching and investigating local and national Multi Academy Trusts.

The Governing Body of St Mary's Church of England Primary School and Nursery is currently considering whether to change the status of the School from that of Local Authority Maintained School to Academy. This conversion would be in line with the Government's plans for a reformed system of strong, autonomous schools and a modernised role for Local Authorities, but the decision to change status resides with the Governing Body. One key part of our decision process is to consult with relevant stakeholders as to whether or not St Mary's Church of England Primary School and Nursery should or should not become an academy and we have set out below how you may make your views known, along with some summary information on the proposal.

The School is currently a Local Authority maintained school. There will be three key legal and organisational changes if we choose to convert to Academy status:

- The school would cease to be maintained by the Local Authority but instead be funded and maintained directly by the Department for Education. This will mean that the school can retain the money the Local Authority currently spends automatically on our behalf and seek improved services and value for money elsewhere. It also means that we would be eligible to apply to the central government ESFA (Education Schools Funding Authority) for future capital projects.
- A charitable Academy Trust ("the Trust") will hold a leasehold of the school's site (the lease term is usually 125 years), be the conduit for funding and appoint the Governing Body of the school. It is anticipated that all existing Governors will have the right to complete their term of office if they so wish to ensure continuity of governance. The Trust is an "exempt" charity and not required to register with the Charity Commission.
- The school staff, currently employed by the LA, will become employed by the Trust with the employment rights of all members of staff being protected by TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings -Protection of Employment) Regulations which came into force in 2006. This ensures our staffs' employment transfers to the Trust under the same terms and conditions of employment with all their rights protected. This is a key consideration for the Governing Body at St Mary's Church of England Primary School and Nursery as we recognise the huge value our staff team bring to the School.

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DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH AWARD



The Governors and Leaders at St Mary's Church of England Primary School and Nursery are committed to ensuring our children receive the best learning opportunities possible in education today. Our decision to consider conversion to academy status is driven by our desire to meet the challenges brought about by Government policy and the changes in LA provision in a positive and constructive manner. We have worked hard to establish ourselves as a well-respected school in our community, which has a strong, caring ethos whilst delivering innovative and creative learning. We are very proud of our leaders, staff and children and their commitment, we are keen that we are the ones driving the future of the School, rather waiting for an external decision to be imposed upon us.

The Governing Body have researched in depth all the potential routes for conversion and our proposal is that, upon conversion to academy status, we join with The Bath and Mendip Partnership Trust. This Multi-Academy Trust has formed from partnership working between all-through, first and primary schools in both mainstream and special needs provision, and also includes the Bath and Mendip Partnership Teaching School who are a key partner for delivering School Improvement to all schools in B&NES. It has a strong background in supporting schools and delivering school business economies, in a partnership model that still enables each individual school to maintain their own identity and ethos. This is a hugely important issue for our Governing Body, as we are proud of St Mary's Church of England Primary School and Nursery and do not wish to see our personality become overshadowed by a larger, more corporate academy chain.

The Bath and Mendip Partnership Trust is also very supportive of our intention to continue working closely with our local network, which we believe has a huge benefit to our community through shared practice and experience in a local environment. Government policy requires schools to become more autonomous and take the lead in delivering education improvement as the Local Authority role has reduced, our decision to convert to an academy and join The Bath and Mendip Partnership Trust will equip us well to deliver this, whilst not impacting negatively on the children's learning and everyday experience at school. Joining this Multi Academy Trust will also ensure that the curriculum, extra-curricular programme, school day, pastoral support and guidance and general organisation of the school will not be affected and we can continue to grow and embed the great work already taking place at St Mary's Church of England Primary School and Nursery.

This letter is part of our formal consultation process which will run from today for a period of three weeks. The Consultation will end at 12.00 noon on Wednesday 15th May, 2020 representations must be received by that time or cannot be considered.

We would have ordinarily have held a public meeting as part of this consultation process. However, we are living in extra ordinary times and such a meeting would fall outside of Government Guidance. We welcome all comments and representations and under the circumstances, would like to invite any representations in writing, marked for the attention of the Governors by email to stmaryswrithlington_pri@bathnes.gov.uk. We will respond in writing to those representations and will put copies of the representations and responses on the school website (we will endeavour to ensure that these are posted every Friday on this page of the website).

With kind regards,

Frances Butt

Chair of Governors

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