

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary

Heys Street
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Headteacher – Mr P Eaton

Monday 15th November 2021

Dear Parents/Carers/Guardians/Parishioners

Consultation to convert to Academy status and join the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust

You may be aware that the Diocese of Lancaster has been working closely with the Department for Education over the last few years to agree a way forward for the Catholic schools in the Diocese to form or join existing Catholic Multi Academy Trusts. These Multi Academy Trusts will be developed by groups of Catholic primary and secondary schools who wish to join and work together. The vision behind this initiative is set out in Bishop Paul's letter to parishioners of 14th September 2020.

The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust (BEBCMAT) has been identified by the Diocese and the Department for Education as a suitable Trust to take forward this vision for Catholic education in the Blackpool and Fylde Coast area. After careful consideration and preliminary discussion with the Diocese and other Catholic schools in our area, the Local Governing Body of Sacred Heart has decided that they wish to explore conversion to academy status and, in particular, to join the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust on 1st September 2022.

The Bishop's vision is that all Catholic schools in the Blackpool and Fylde Coast area will join BEBCMAT by 2026. There are currently 6 Catholic schools considering joining BEBCMAT in wave 1. In addition to ourselves they are:

- Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood
- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Thornton-Cleveleys
- St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School, Blackpool
- St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Great Eccleston
- St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Thornton-Cleveleys
- St Wulstan's and St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, Fleetwood

The rationale behind the Bishop's vision for academy trusts is to make sure that we protect, preserve and promote Catholic education in the Diocese of Lancaster. The Catholic Multi Academy Trust model will ensure that the uniqueness of each individual school is celebrated and the unique contribution of each is recognised and appreciated. It will also mean that no individual school will be left isolated or vulnerable in a rapidly changing and complex environment. The aim is also to enable greater sharing, adding strength and capacity to the system and ensuring that all schools are supported.

Our Local Governing Body's priority remains to continue to provide an excellent Catholic education for our children, whilst being at the heart of our community.

Therefore, in line with Diocesan policy, our Local Governing Body are undertaking consultation with staff, parents and carers, local parishioners and other local schools, both Catholic and non-Catholic, to determine whether Sacred Heart should proceed with an application to convert to become an academy and join BEBCMAT. We would like to invite your views on the matter. **This consultation starts on 15th November 2021 and concludes on Friday 3rd December 2021.**

At the end of the consultation, the Governing Body will consider the responses before they make their final decision.

How can we find out more about the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust ?

BEBCMAT is a well-established Catholic Trust in the Diocese of Lancaster. The Trust currently consists of three schools, 2 primary schools and 1 secondary school which are all currently rated 'Good' by Ofsted. The Trust serves approximately 1700 pupils and over 235 staff across the Trust.

The mission of the Trust is for all Catholic schools in the area to work together to develop excellence, build strong communities with Gospel values at the heart. The core principles of the Trust are to educate the whole person, aiming for excellence and working together for the Common Good. Through collective responsibility, united in our Catholic faith, the Trust worked to enable each school to thrive spiritually, academically and financially so that all of the children and young people can 'belong, engage and become' – reach their full potential and realise their God-given talents.

The Trust works in partnership as one family of schools whilst maintaining and celebrating the uniqueness of each individual school which serves its own distinct community. We are values-driven and our core values of Trust, Respect, Faith, Hope and Service are our hallmarks. These values underpin all of our relationships; between staff, pupils, families and our wider parish and local communities.

To find out more about BEBCMAT, there is more information available on the Trust website at:

<https://bebcmat.co.uk/join-us/>

Will any changes to the school be made as a result of conversion?

Please be assured that the Catholic character, ethos and values of Sacred Heart would remain unchanged should the proposals be agreed.

We do not intend to make any changes to the day-to-day work of the school following conversion, other than to adjust the governance arrangements and accountability that comes with working within a Multi Academy Trust and to bring closer working practices between the schools in the Trust. More information on the process and the answers to many of the questions you may have can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document.

How do I learn more, and how do I respond to the consultation?

At this stage we are not committing the school to conversion to academy status or to joining BEBCMAT. We are consulting with everyone associated with our school before Governors meet again to make a final decision.

On Monday 22nd November and Monday 29th November the FAQs document will be updated and shared on our website to reflect any questions that are pertinent to our wider community.

Whilst we do not anticipate responding to each and every communication, we will provide answers to questions via the FAQs and we welcome your views. Please be assured your views will be taken into consideration by our Local Governing Body when they meet to make a final decision.

If you wish to respond to the consultation, we ask that you let us have your views by emailing the attached feedback template to academyconsulation@sacredheart-thornton.lancs.sch.uk by **3pm on Friday 3rd December 2021**. Please include your name and contact details.

The Local Governing Body will meet after this date to consider how to proceed and the outcome of the consultation process will be shared on the school's website on Thursday 16th December 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Mr P. Eaton

Headteacher

Mr R. Clegg
Chair of Governors