



Head teacher:
Mr E Masterson
N.L.E.

St. John Bosco Catholic Primary School
National Teaching School
Monmouth Drive, West Bromwich,
West Midlands, B71 2ST



Archdiocese of
Birmingham

Telephone/fax: 0121 556 0228
e-mail: headteacher@st-johnbosco.sandwell.sch.uk

Learning ,Living and Growing in God's Love



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Dear Parent/Carer

Proposed Conversion to Academy Status

As you may already be aware, the Governing Body of St. John Bosco Catholic School, Wednesbury has applied to become an Academy under the Academies Act 2010. The governing body is now consulting on whether the school's academy conversion should take place. Further information about what becoming an Academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

Will St. JohnBosco Catholic Primary School definitely become an Academy?

The Governing Body has submitted an application to convert to Academy status and is working towards a conversion in **September 2021**. However, the school is not obligated to become an Academy until the contract between the Academy Trust and the Department for Education (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed. The Governing Body has not even begun to negotiate the Funding Agreement with the DfE yet.

The Governing Body will not agree to sign the Funding Agreement until parents and carers of pupils at the school, staff at the school, and pupils themselves have had the opportunity to comment on whether the conversion should take place. We would like to invite all parents and carers to **contact the school** to learn more about the proposals to become an Academy, or to comment on the proposals.

We will also be holding meetings with staff, and will be keeping pupils informed throughout the process. Any comments or representations which are made about the proposals will be considered by the Governing Body before a decision

is taken to sign the Funding Agreement. Details of how to provide comments and representations are set out below.

The Governing Body will not agree to sign the Funding Agreement unless they are content that conversion would be in the best interests of the school, taking account of all of the legal and practical ramifications.

What is an Academy?

An academy is essentially an independent school which is funded by the state. It is independent of the Local Authority and receives its funding direct from central government.

Previously, academies have tended to replace schools which have poor results or otherwise needed to improve. Under the Academies Act 2010, all schools are able to become academies. As St. John Bosco Catholic Primary School, is an Outstanding school [Ofsted 2012], we can apply without being part of a group of schools, and without a sponsor.

What are the benefits of being an Academy?

In the school's opinion, the benefits are numerous:

- academies are independent of Local Authority control – this means that academies have more freedom about how they conduct themselves;
- academies receive their funding direct from central government – this means that academies control more of their funding because none is retained by the Local Authority for the provision of central services;
- academies have more freedom over the curriculum taught – this means that academies do not need to teach parts of the National Curriculum which they do not consider is appropriate for their pupils;
- academies can set their own pay and conditions of service for their staff - academies have the freedom to alter the pay and conditions of their staff (subject to normal employment law protections for staff) and so can provide staff with better pay and conditions than previously;
- academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects – academies are charitable companies and so have more freedom to undertake innovative projects, such as setting up and utilising trading subsidiaries.

Are there any disadvantages to becoming an Academy?

As an Academy we will be directly liable for matters such as insurance, employment liabilities, pensions, health and safety, and property maintenance. However, as mentioned above, academies receive more funding from central Government to help them meet these additional costs.

Will the admissions arrangements change?

As a voluntary aided school, St. John Bosco Catholic Primary School already deals with its own admission arrangements. As an Academy, it would still deal with its own admission arrangements and would also still be bound by the national

Admissions Code, and Admissions Appeals Code. Accordingly, there will be no change in the way in which the admission arrangements are set if the school becomes an Academy.

The current admission arrangements will remain in place for the time being. If the Academy wanted to change its admission arrangements consultation would be required.

Will staff leave?

If the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by the school will automatically transfer to the new academy on their current pay and conditions. Although the academy will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, the Governing Body does not intend to take such a step in the foreseeable future and in any event, any change to pay and conditions would need to be consulted upon with staff representatives.

Will St. John Bosco Catholic Primary School change?

We want to continue on our journey to provide our pupils an outstanding Catholic Education. We therefore do not intend to change St. John Bosco Catholic Primary School, except in ways which we think will improve the school even more. For pupils, it is unlikely that they will see much, if any, change in their day to day school lives. Academies do have the power to vary their curriculums and vary the length of the school day, and we would engage with parents/carers, staff and students if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future.

How can I find out more?

Please contact the school for more information regarding information about the process.

There is also more information about Academies on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

If you can't find the answer to your questions from the school, or on the DfE website, please email the Chair of Governors, Dr Gerry Gomez at **gerry.gomez@st-johnbosco.sandwell.sch.uk** who will try to assist.

How can I make representations?

To comment on whether the school's conversion to academy status should take place, representations can be made in writing to:

Dr Gerry Gomez
Chair of Governors
St. John Bosco Catholic Primary School
Monmouth Drive
Hately Heath

West Bromwich
W71 2ST

Or by email: [**gerry.gomez@st-johnbosco.sandwell.sch.uk**](mailto:gerry.gomez@st-johnbosco.sandwell.sch.uk)

The closing date for representations to be made is Thursday 11th June 2021.

Yours faithfully,

Edward Masterson NLE
Executive Head Teacher