

22 January 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Diocese Academy Policy - Proposal for the creation of one of four Diocesan Education Trusts

Context

The Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle has announced that the Diocesan Academy Policy has been revised with the aim that all diocesan schools will become academies within one of four diocesan education trusts by July 2022.

Underpinning the Diocesan Academy Policy is the desire and need to ensure the promotion, preservation, protection and future development of Catholic education within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle so that it is fit for the mission of the Church.

There are 156 schools in our diocese educating 53,600 children. 45 of our schools are currently academies. The implementation of this policy will happen in two stages:

Stage 1: consolidation of existing academies and trusts into one base trust

Stage 2: conversion of voluntary aided schools to academy status within their regional trust

In establishing these trust structures and having a single system in the Diocese, the aim is to ensure that the children and young people in our schools will continue to receive the very best educational opportunities and life fulfilling experiences, within communities which have the teachings of Christ and his Church at the very centre.

A Catholic trust model where every school has its place will mean that no individual school will be left isolated or vulnerable in a rapidly changing environment. It will ensure that the uniqueness of each individual school is celebrated and the unique contribution of each is recognised and appreciated.

In order for this policy to be fulfilled, the Bishop expects all schools to continue to work together as a Diocesan family for the good of Catholic education in the Diocese.

Through the trust structures the aim is to facilitate greater sharing, adding strength and capacity to the system and ensuring that all schools are supported and included.

The Diocese believe that in this way the Diocese will better fulfil the mission of Catholic education within the Church.

cont'd...

Local context

As existing MATs within the south of the region, the intention is that the Romero Catholic Education Trust, which includes St John's and St Joseph's Primary in Newton Aycliffe, together with The Holy Family Education Trust, which includes English Martyrs School, will be part of the South Base MAT. As stage 1 of the process these 2 Trusts will merge with Carmel Education Trust. We are hopeful that this transition can take place towards late spring/early summer of 2020 but the exact timescales have not yet been confirmed.

Thank you for your support with this matter.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Byron

Headteacher