



ST CUTHBERT MAYNE CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL



‘Growing together in love and learning as followers of Jesus’



FAQS ON OUR PROPOSED ACADEMY CONVERSION

St Cuthbert Mayne Junior School

Section 1: Academy Information

What is an Academy?

Academies are publicly funded independent schools that are not managed by a local authority, but their funding and accountability is directly with the DfE (Department for Education).

Why is St Cuthbert Mayne Junior School proposing to become an Academy and join ASCAT (All Saints' Catholic Academy Trust)?

In September 2017, the Diocese of Westminster published its strategy for Catholic Academy Trusts <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/academies/>

The Strategy sets out of the reasons, benefits and structure of the Catholic Academy Trusts across the Diocese. The aim of the Diocese's Strategy is "to protect, secure and develop the Church's mission in education."

The School has also been working with ASCAT partner Schools for a number of years, building trust amongst school leaders, working together on common goals and investigating the opportunities that the Diocesan Academy Strategy presents for St Cuthbert Mayne.

The school regards converting to an Academy and joining the existing and successful All Saints Catholic Academy Trust as a natural extension of the collaborative approach that has already been developed. It will provide a platform for enhancing future collaboration at a time of growing pressure on schools and threats to Catholic education.

What is ASCAT?

ASCAT is a Catholic Academy Trust (CAT) under the Trusteeship of the Diocese of Westminster. It currently comprises of the following schools:

- **St Joan of Arc** Catholic Secondary School Rickmansworth
- **Holy Rood** Catholic Primary School Watford
- **Divine Saviour** Catholic Primary School Abbots Langley
- **St John's** Catholic Primary School Rickmansworth
- **St John Fisher** Catholic Primary School, St Albans
- **JFK** Catholic School, Hemel Hempstead
- **St Alberts** Catholic Primary School, Hemel Hempstead
- **St Thomas More**, Catholic Primary School, Berkhamstead

The ASCAT Board is responsible for the quality of education in the schools, as well as the use of public money and the use of all Trust sites under various leases. It is the employer of the staff in all of the Trust schools.

The Trust was formed in March 2012 and its most recent expansion was in July 2023 to include St Albert the Great.

The ASCAT Board of Directors welcomes the proposal for St Cuthbert Mayne to join the Trust and are keen to apply their learning and experience to the benefit of its wider group of partner schools.

Which Schools are proposing to expand the existing Catholic Academy Trust (CAT)?

St Cuthbert Mayne Junior School is proposing to join the existing All Saints Catholic Academy Trust (ASCAT) at the same time as St Rose's Catholic Infant School and St Bernadette Catholic Primary School (St Albans.)

St Roses and St Cuthbert Mayne will join JFK Catholic School, St Thomas More Catholic Primary School and St Albert the Great Catholic Primary School in a Dacorum Hub within ASCAT.

All three schools have received the consent of the Diocese of Westminster and have applied to the Regional Director (RD) to convert to an academy.

The All Saints Catholic Academy Trust has received the consent of the Diocese of Westminster to welcome the three schools into the CAT.

Why is St Cuthbert Mayne proposing to join the All Saints CAT?

There are a number of reasons for this, including;

- The Headteacher and Governors believe that converting and joining a Catholic Trust will deliver the best future for our school.
- The Headteacher believes joining a CAT will secure strategic school to school support and development through sharing the best of our leadership, management, teaching and learning, pastoral and spiritual development.
- Catholic schools often work as 'islands' and by coming together in solidarity we will be stronger, more robust and more resilient for the future.
- Catholic education is facing many threats both nationally and across the Diocese, in terms of declining rolls and increased financial pressures due to austerity.
- With government borrowing already at unprecedented levels, prospects for an increase in school funding in the short to medium terms are extremely low.
- St Rose's and St Cuthbert Mayne will join our partner schools and work together to serve Dacorum families in a Hub within ASCAT.
- In expanding the newly created Dacorum Hub, the Schools can better serve our local communities by creating and delivering a Catholic vision and set of values where every individual is enabled to achieve their rightful potential.
- The schools will also benefit from efficiency gains from sharing back-office functions across the Hub.
- We face a growing need to protect, secure, and develop the Church's mission

in Catholic education, working together to grow our resilience and overcome other future threats.

What is the Dacorum Hub?

The Hub will be a group of Dacorum Catholic Schools working together within the larger ASCAT Family of schools to create a bespoke 3-19 pathway for Dacorum pupils and families, combining strong educational outcomes with the teachings of Christ and His Church at the centre.

The Hub will benefit from economies of scale, resilience and collaborations as part of a larger Catholic Academy Trust of schools in Watford and St Albans.

How will St Cuthbert Mayne Junior School benefit from joining the ASCAT?

The aim of the Diocese's CAT Strategy is to protect, secure and develop the Church's mission in education.

We expect existing and prospective children in Schools in ASCAT will benefit in a number of ways, including;

- Enhanced collaboration and partnership bringing educational benefits and increased attainment across the Trust schools.
- Increased accountability and performance through the challenge and support of a Catholic Executive Officer (CEO).
- Increased savings and efficiencies at a time of growing financial pressures.
- Increased CPD opportunities and career pathways for staff.
- Improved retention and development of the best Catholic teachers and Leaders.
- Can reclaim VAT on capital works and have direct access to capital funding through the Schools Capital Allocation, which is an annual grant paid directly to Trusts containing 5 or more schools and more than 3,000 pupils.
- Clear, robust and effective Governance at Trust and Local Advisory Council levels.
- Secured Catholic education within the St Albans Diocese for generations to come.

Why is St Cuthbert Mayne Junior School now proposing to become an Academy and join the ASCAT?

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors believe the time is right to move forward after careful consideration and a thoughtful journey.

In September 2017, the Diocese of Westminster published its strategy for Catholic Academy Trusts <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/academies/>

The Diocese's Strategy sets out the reasons, benefits and structure of the Catholic Academy Trusts that the Hemel Hempstead Schools could form. The Diocese is clearly minded to continue and increase the speed of its Academisation programme, and

by choosing to join and expand a Trust under our 'own steam,' we are able to shape our own future.

We also believe the time is right in terms of reductions in funding and support from local authorities.

Will the CAT expand to include more schools over time?

Yes, ASCAT will expand to embrace all Catholic schools in Watford, St Albans and Hemel Hempstead who wish to become Academies under the Diocese of Westminster CAT programme.

What are the Governance arrangements of ASCAT?

The Diocese of Westminster has nominated five Members who will own the Memorandum and Articles and Association of the Trust, registered with Companies House.

The Members include;

- Cardinal Vincent Nichols - the Archbishop of the Diocese of Westminster.
- Bishop John Wilson - Chair of the Education Commission of the Diocese of Westminster.
- Mr. Paolo Camoletto, - Chief Operating Officer/Financial Secretary of the Diocese of Westminster.
- Mr. Peter Sweeney - Director of Education for the Diocese of Westminster.

The Members appoint a Board of Foundation Directors with strategic oversight for the Trust and Schools.

As part of the Trust's planned expansion, it is currently in the process of recruiting a number of new Foundation Directors to its Trust Board.

Our school will retain a Local Governing Body who, alongside the Headteacher, will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the School.

The Local Governing Body will have powers delegated to it by the ASCAT Board of Directors under an agreed Scheme of Delegation and will be accountable to the Board.

The Headteachers of each of the Trust schools are accountable to the CEO, who in turn is accountable to the Trust Board.

Most day-to-day operations of the School will be delegated to the Headteacher and the Local Governing Body which will continue to include staff, parents and community representatives.

Will the School retain its individual ethos?

Yes, the Diocese is clear that the individual ethos, character and good practices of each school are retained and that all the schools operate as equals supporting each other.

Each school is seen as central to its own community with the skills of each being used in a supportive way for all the others. Every school gives and receives support from one another.

What is an Academy?

Academies are publicly funded independent schools that are not managed by a local authority, but their funding and accountability is directly with the Department for Education (DfE).

When will St Cuthbert Mayne Junior School become an Academy?

We would expect that the process will take 6-9 months, work is underway, and the planned conversion date is 1st April 2024.

Why is there a consultation?

The Academies Act 2010 requires the school to consult "such persons as they think appropriate" on whether the school should become an academy.

The Governing Body of St Cuthbert Mayne is consulting with all key stakeholders about the proposed academy conversion including parents, staff, pupils and other schools over a four week period commencing Monday 25 September to Friday 20 October.

Does the school need agreement from the Local Authority to become an Academy?

No. The Academies Act 2010 has removed the need for the Local Authority to approve plans for the school to become an Academy.

What form of relationship will exist between the Local Authority and the school?

This is for individual Academies or Catholic Academy Trusts to determine – there is no statutory requirement for any formal relationship between Local Authorities and Academies.

Academies are directly funded and accountable to central government (Department for Education and the Education Skills Funding Agency).

The Local Authority retains statutory duties for aspects of Special Educational Needs, admissions co-ordination and provision of home-to-school transport. Local Authorities are also expected to play a key strategic role locally in areas such as pupil place planning admissions and sharing good practice.

The schools have good relationships with Hertfordshire County Council, and will seek to maintain and cultivate this in the future.

Are Academies subject to the same Ofsted inspection regime?

Schools converting to Academies will continue to be inspected in the normal way.

What is the process for St Cuthbert Mayne Junior School to join the All Saints CAT?

The conversion process includes the following key legal processes:

- Putting in place a Supplementary Funding Agreement (SFA) for each School
- Transferring the employment of the staff from the local authority to ASCAT following a statutory process (TUPE*)
- Agreeing a Commercial Transfer Agreement for the transfer of assets and contracts from the local authority to ASCAT
- Arranging a 125-year lease for the land and buildings with the Diocese and/or local authority.

(*TUPE = Transfer of Undertaking – Protection of Employment)

Section 2: Staff Issues

Does the school have to hold a consultation with staff?

Under employment legislation the Governing Body, which is the current employer, will need to conduct a TUPE consultation with all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) and the relevant unions as part of the staff transfer process.

Can teachers' pay and conditions change?

No. Whilst Academy Trusts do have the freedom to vary terms and conditions from national ones, the Diocese of Westminster Strategy commits its Catholic Trust to abiding by teachers' pay and conditions.

If the school becomes an Academy, who takes responsibility for the pension arrangements?

Teachers working in an academy fall within the scope of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), just as if they were employed in a Local Authority maintained school.

Non-teaching staff at schools are able to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This is administered by Hertfordshire County Council as at present.

Employees will pay the same rate as at present under both schemes, subject to any nationally imposed changes.

How will the TUPE process work and what specific responsibilities does the Governing Body have?

As the current employer, the Governing Body is responsible for informing and

consulting with staff.

The Governing Body is responsible for informing ASCAT, as the new employer, of any 'measures' which will impact on their employment.

There are none planned in this case and ASCAT will write to each member of staff confirming that they will transfer under existing terms and conditions.

Section 3: Finance

Will we get more money as an Academy?

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority (LA) as a maintained school. The Government is clear that becoming an Academy should not bring about a financial advantage or disadvantage to a school. However, academies do have greater freedom to decide how they use their entire budget, and Multi Academy Trusts are able to identify efficiency savings from enhanced partnership working. It is also true that on becoming an Academy, a Voluntary Aided school, such as our own, will be able to claim back VAT on all capital works – something the school is unable to do if it remains Voluntary Aided. This will provide additional flexibility for Governors with regard to its use of the school budget and building funds.

Section 4: Admissions

Will becoming an Academy affect our admissions arrangements?

When a school becomes an Academy it also becomes an admission authority responsible for its own admission arrangements. As the school is joining a Multi Academy Trust – All Saints CAT will become the admissions authority. Schools will continue to make decisions about their admissions arrangements, and a CAT could propose changes in the same way a school currently can.

In the same way as maintained schools, all academies and their schools are required to adopt clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code.

Will Academies have to be a part of the annual coordinated admissions scheme? E.g. when the LA needs to find places for families relocating to the area etc.

Yes - Academy Funding Agreements require them to be in local coordination. That means although the academy will apply its own admission arrangements, the LA will send out offers of places. The Local Authority in Hertfordshire also coordinates admissions for in-year applications and applications for year groups other than the normal point(s) of entry. This will not affect the Academy's right to determine which applicants have priority for admission. Academies are also required through their Funding Agreements to participate in local fair access protocols which help to ensure that no child is without a school place.

Will the Academies decide to bring in academic selection?

No, there will be no introduction of selection. Schools which already select some or all of their pupils may continue to do so when they become Academies, but schools becoming Academies cannot decide to become new selective schools.

Section 5: Special Educational Needs

Will our responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs and exclusions change?

No. Responsibilities as an Academy in relation to Special Educational Needs and exclusions will be just the same as they are now as a maintained school.

Can a child with a statement of Special Educational Needs nominate an academy as their school of choice?

Yes. These arrangements and related processes must at all times comply with the School Admissions Code, and responsibilities as an Academy in relation to Special Educational Needs will be just the same as they are now as a maintained school.

Does becoming an Academy change the way in which exclusions are dealt with?

Academies are required by their Funding Agreement to follow the law and guidance on exclusions as if they were maintained schools. This includes reporting exclusions to the Local Authority. However, Academies do not have to consult the Local Authority before deciding to exclude a pupil and they can arrange their own independent appeals panel.

Section 6: Further Information

How do I find out more about the proposals?

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors will host a consultation meeting for parents at 6.00pm on 5th October 2023.

A separate meeting is being held for staff.

Please complete and return the questionnaire page below to the School office.

If you would prefer to complete it online, return it by email to:

admin@cuthbertmayne.herts.sch.uk

Or alternatively you can use the Google form to complete the questionnaire which can be submitted to the school once completed. This can be found on the school's website at

<https://cuthbertmayne.herts.sch.uk/cat-consultation>

If you have any questions regarding academisation please email them to

consultation@cuthbertmayne.herts.sch.uk

Ms. Maria Butchart
Chair of Governors
St Cuthbert Mayne Junior School
September 2023

St Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School Academy Consultation Questionnaire

1) Please tick the box(es) that best represent you?	
Parent	
Employee at the School	
Member of the Community/Local Resident	
Local Authority Employee	
Other	

2) Do you agree that St Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School should convert to an Academy and join ASCAT (by entering into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State)?	
Strongly agree	
Agree	
Undecided	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Please give your reasons below	

3) Do you have any other comments to make about the proposal for St Cuthbert Mayne Catholic Junior School to convert to an Academy and join ASCAT?