

St Antony's Catholic Primary School
Upton Avenue
Forest Gate
London
E7 9PN

Attention: Parents and Carers

24 February 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Consultation to Convert to Academy Status

You may well be aware that the Government is encouraging all schools to consider converting to Academy status this falls in line with the Bishop's Vision for all Catholic Schools in our Diocese. After careful consideration, the School's Governing Body has decided that they wish to explore conversion to Academy status and, in particular, joining the Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust. We are writing to consult with staff, parents, local community partners and the local parish church community to determine whether the School should proceed with conversion and we would like to invite your views on the matter.

What is an Academy?

Academies are publicly funded state schools that are independent of the Local Authority and receive funding directly from Central Government.

Why is this being considered?

As a successful Voluntary Aided School, gaining Academy status would give us the autonomy to continue to develop our School and to continue to achieve high standards. **It would also mean that we would be able to receive 100% of our Capital Budget (and not 90% as is the case in our current status) which would aid us with doing far more for our children.** As a Multi Academy Trust, there will be greater opportunities for working more closely with other local Catholic Schools and the wider community of schools. The benefits of a school-led system where local schools collaborate are highlighted in the Government's White Paper "[Educational Excellence Everywhere](#)".

What are the advantages of conversion?

The Government is clear that the greater freedoms enjoyed by Academies are designed to allow schools to develop and to build on individual strengths in response to the needs of their community. We feel that the additional freedoms and flexibilities would enable the Governors to better secure the long term future of our School.

In addition to this we believe that the formal partnership with Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust, (currently incorporating St Joachim's, St Helen's, St Francis' and St Edward's Catholic Primary Schools) will have a number of benefits for our school. This includes a more targeted approach to the long term future of the schools in the MAT, strengthening our local Catholic vision guaranteeing that the ethos, morals and values taught are preserved, pooling of resources which will improve teaching and management practice within the schools as well as having a greater control of our finances and better management of these for the benefit of all children attending our school.

Specific Benefits For St Antony's:

Full capital funding which will allow the school to further improve facilities such as:

- Our KS1 playground areas
- Our KS2 Playground areas
- Our Nursery and Reception outdoor areas
- Strengthening our school budget
- Sharing Good Practice across the schools in the MAT
- Developing our school physical infrastructures

What are the disadvantages of conversion?

Greater autonomy does bring with it additional responsibilities including statutory duties as an academy trust - but the school is confident it can manage these.

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

It is unlikely that there will be any immediate major changes. The schools in the Trust will continue to function as individual schools serving each of their communities. There are no proposals to change the name of the school; there will be no change of uniforms, admission arrangements will not be adjusted and the general management and planning of the school day for our children, staff and parents will remain the same.

Please be assured that the unique character, Catholic ethos and values of our school will remain unchanged should the academy conversion take place.

How to take part in the consultation process

At this stage we are not committing the School to conversion to Academy status. We are consulting with everyone associated with our School before Governors meet again to make a final decision.

There will be an open meeting for you to attend and ask any questions that you may have or voice any comments about this plan of action on 27th February at 4:30pm at St Antony's Church (in St Claire's Hall). If you are unable to make this meeting but would like to put forward any questions or make any comments, please send these in writing to: governor@st-antonys-jun.newham.sch.uk by Wednesday, 26th February 2020 by the end of the school day.

The consultation will close on 3rd April 2020. The Governors will meet after this date to consider how to proceed.

Yours sincerely,



Chair of Governors



Head Teacher