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## **Consultation on St Andrew's Church of England Primary School Converting to an Academy and Joining Severn Federation Academy Trust**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What is an Academy?**

An academy is a state funded school which is operated by a charitable company known as an academy trust. A single academy trust (SAT) operates just one academy. Funding is provided directly to the academy rather than via the Local Education Authority.

#### **What is a Multi Academy Trust?**

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is a group of academy schools overseen by a charitable trust and governed by a board of trustees. Rather than being financed by the local authority. A MAT is directly funded by, and accountable to, the Department for Education. While the schools that make up the Trust are still firmly part of their community, the Trust is there to support the schools and help them work together for the benefit of all children. The Department for Education must be satisfied that academy trusts have appropriate arrangements for sound governance and financial management. They also have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all their pupils and to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education, the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education.

#### **Why are schools grouped in a Multi-Academy Trust?**

Grouping schools within a multi-academy trust can enhance the quality of education provided for your child. Improved learning outcomes are behind everything the Trust does. It provides collaboration opportunities for pupils and staff, an efficient Central Team and an effective Executive Team to provide challenge and support.

#### **What other benefits are there to a multi-academy trust?**

A significant benefit is the ability to collaborate and share expertise across the Trust. Severn Federation Academy Trust focuses on allowing its schools to keep and value what makes them unique, as well as providing opportunities, especially for our teachers, to share their knowledge and skills with member schools and, equally, to learn from them. Children will benefit from a wide range of specialist staff. This allows the Trust to deliver both a broad curriculum and a range of enriched extra-curricular activities to children across all their schools.

### **Do The Severn Federation Academy Trust schools have to follow the National Curriculum?**

The Severn Federation Academy Trust fulfils all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The Trust provides a curriculum which is relevant, exciting and dynamic and tailored to each local setting.

### **Are the schools still inspected by Ofsted?**

Yes, academies are still subject to Ofsted inspections.

### **Do you have to be a Church of England school to join the Trust?**

No, The Severn Federation Academy Trust is a mixed MAT which enables non-faith schools to join. However, such schools would need to engage with the Trust's Christian distinctiveness.

### **Would the school have to change its name, logo or uniform?**

No, there is no intention for any school becoming part of the Severn Federation Academy Trust to change its uniform, name or logo. We will still be St Andrew's Church of England Primary School. A school's individual identity and place within the local community is incredibly important to the Trust.

### **How will our children be affected?**

The children will probably not notice any immediate difference. They will be in the same uniform, in the same school, in the same classrooms.

We will continue to provide an enriching education for all our children. However, in time the children may notice some changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the pupil experience.

### **Will there be a change in our responsibilities in relation to SEND and exclusions?**

No, our responsibilities as part of The Severn Federation Academy Trust in relation to SEND and exclusions will be just the same as they are now.

### **Can a child with an EHCP nominate an academy as their school of choice?**

Yes, these arrangements and related processes must always comply with the School Admissions Code.

### **How will joining a MAT affect staff?**

Staff will benefit from having greater opportunities for career development and training. Members of staff may choose to work with other member schools to extend their own experiences or to accept other responsibilities as opportunities arise. This enables the Trust to retain high quality staff within all its schools.

### **Will staff levels change?**

Moving to Academy status will not dictate the number or make-up of staff. As at present, decisions on staffing depend on need as well as the resources available.

### **Does becoming an academy change the relationship with other schools and the community?**

No, academies must ensure that they continue to be at the heart of their community, collaborating and sharing facilities and expertise with other schools and the wider community. We will continue to work with other schools locally and from further afield.

**Will we get more funding as an academy?**

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. .

**How will the money raised by our PTFA be used?**

Money raised by our school's fundraising efforts will only be used for our own school and will continue to be independent of the school, raising money for agreed resources or projects that have been asked for by the school's leadership.

**Is there a hierarchy of funding within the Trust?**

No. Trustees have an obligation to act in the best interest of the Trust as a whole and therefore in the best interests of all schools within the Trust. There must be due regard to the funding needs and allocations for each individual school.

**Will Severn Federation Academy Trust continue to grow?**

The Trust understands that growth brings additional strength and capacity to all its schools. As the Trust grows, it can share its expertise more widely and work collaboratively to benefit all in the Trust. If the opportunity to grow the Trust is in the best interests of those involved, then the Trust Members and Trustees would consider this on a case-by-case basis.

**Do the large schools have larger voting rights when it comes to decision making?**

MATs do not operate on a one vote one school principle. The Trust has a board of Trustees which have the responsibility of running all the schools within the MAT, in relation to the financial position, operational management and the risk management of the organisation. The day to day running of the school is carried out by the relevant headteacher. A 'local governing body' known as the 'Local Academy Committee' is set up for each school which has a focus on educational standards and outcomes.

**How will the unique Christian ethos of our school be supported by the Trust vision?**

Severn Federation Academy Trust has the support and approval of the Diocese of Gloucester. Each of the Trust church schools has retained its unique identity and their Christian values are reflected on each school's website. We have also seen this in practice in the Trust schools visited by our Trust Working Group.