



We love, value and respect each other.

St Godric's RC VA Primary School

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Head Teacher: Mrs C Craig

1st March 2020

Dear Parents,

Proposal for St Godric's RC Primary School to join Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust

Context

As advised in the parish newsletter dated 22nd December 2019 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; currently 45 diocesan schools are academies. The implementation of this policy will happen in two stages:

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

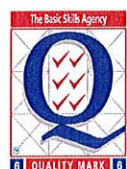
Stage 2: conversion of voluntary aided schools to academy status within their regional trust.

Whenever voluntary aided schools convert to academy status, they will join their regional trust as equal partners.

All schools in the region will be included in the process from the outset. 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 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 contribution of each is recognised and appreciated. This has always been the expectation of our school, parish and governing body.

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 education in the diocese.



What is a Catholic Education Trust (CET)?

A CET is formed when two or more Catholic academies legally come together in partnership. Each school keeps its own name and it is possible for other academies to join the trust in the future. The partnership ensures that the schools can share skills and best practice and make optimum use of resources ensuring best value for money for each school.

In many ways the children will not notice any immediate difference, they will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. However, in time the children will perhaps notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn for example and have greater links with schools within the trust.

Therefore, in line with diocesan policy, it is the intention of our governors that St Godric's RC Primary School joins the CET originally named The Trinity Catholic Multi Academy Trust, soon to be known as Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust.

The Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust currently has the following academies working together:

- Cardinal Hume Catholic School
- Our Lady Queen of Peace RC Primary School, Houghton-le-Spring
- St Anne's RC Primary School, Gateshead
- St Bede's RC Primary School, Washington
- St John Boste RC Primary School, Washington
- St Joseph's RC Primary School, Washington
- St Michael's RC Primary School, Houghton-le-Spring
- St Robert of Newminster Roman Catholic School, Washington

The following academies have commenced the legal process of joining Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust and hope to have this completed within the Spring Term of 2020:

- St Thomas More Catholic School, Blaydon on Tyne
- Sacred Heart, Gateshead
- St Matthew's Catholic Primary School, Prudhoe
- St Leonard's Catholic School, Durham
- St Bede's Catholic Academy, Lanchester

The following primary schools are consulting at this time as to whether they will join Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust and hope to have completed the process within the same time scales as ourselves:

- Our Lady Queen of Martyrs RC Primary School, Esh Winning
- St Bede's RC Primary School, Sacriston
- St Benet's RC Primary School, Ouston
- St Cuthbert's RC Primary School, Chester-le-Street
- St Godric's RC Primary School, Durham
- St Joseph's RC Primary School, Ushaw Moor
- St Michael's RC Primary School, Esh Village

About Bishop Wilkinson

The four regional academy trusts have been named after Bishops of Hexham and Newcastle. Each bishop has played a significant role in the history and development of the diocese. Bishop Thomas William Wilkinson was ordained a priest in December 1848 and assigned to found a mission in Tow Law, Weardale. He was appointed as Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle in 1889. He also served as President of Ushaw College. Bishop Wilkinson served as Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle from 1889 to 1909. He is buried at Ushaw College.



About the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust

The original Trinity Catholic Multi Academy Trust Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for the schools within the trust and accountable to the Bishop, providing visionary strategic leadership, a focus on continuous improvement, high quality governance and a strong Catholic ethos with a caring and supportive culture.

Governance

The Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust Board will provide strong and effective governance to all of the schools in the trust including our school. Within the CET each school will have a Local Governing Committee with specific powers delegated from the central trust board.

Will admissions arrangements change?

The Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust is responsible (in accordance with diocesan policy) for setting the admissions arrangements for our schools. It must be stressed however the admissions criteria must have regard to the National Admissions Code of Practice. There are no plans to change the admissions criteria for our school.

When would the school change to become part of The Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust?

We would aim for a transfer date of 1st October 2020.

What are the main benefits for schools within the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust?

- Access to high performing staff team who are sharply focused on securing excellence.
- Moderation of standards across the partnership of schools to ensure the highest quality provision.
- Greater control over school finances, as funding comes directly to school from central government.
- Educational benefits for students as a result of additional freedoms available to academies in terms of the curriculum we offer, and how we prioritise resources.
- The opportunity to work in close and formalised partnership with other schools and share expertise and services that will benefit all of our students and staff.
- Sharing resources and expertise allows us to target funding towards improving teaching and learning, facilities and the teaching environment.
- Ability to develop our own solutions collaboratively.
- Building on Catholic ethos and protecting Catholic education and values.

How can you respond?

The Trustees would very much like to hear your opinion. Should you wish to provide written feedback, then please address your correspondence to Mr Nick Hurn, Chief Executive Officer, Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, Cardinal Hume Catholic School, Old Durham Rd, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE9 6RZ

Yours sincerely,

 M. Stephenson

Headteacher and Chair of Governors

