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## Tenbury C E Primary School



### Proposal of the Governing Body to convert to Academy status and join the

### Bishop Anthony Educational Trust.

20<sup>th</sup> May 2015

#### ***Rationale.***

One of the prime functions of the Governing body (GB) of Tenbury C E Primary school (TPS) is to look at the long term future and plan strategically so as to offer the very best in educational standards and opportunities for all the children in our school. It is important that we closely monitor the support available to our school and look at new ways of offering our children the very best that is available.

It is clear that as Local authorities are forced to make economies the support they are able to offer their schools is under pressure. Therefore, many schools are considering alternatives to this model. One alternative is to convert to Academy status.

It used to be that only failing schools that fell into the Ofsted category of “Special measures”, could join an academy, in fact they are forced to do so. This has changed and now any good or outstanding school with the permission of the Department for Education can apply to become an Academy.

We are proud that TPS is a good school offering a high level of education to our children and we want to be in a position to become even better. The GB of TPS believe that joining a group of academies in a multi academy trust (MAT) would give us the opportunity to further increase the educational outcomes for our children.

#### **Academy Conversion - FAQs**

##### **What is an academy?**

Academies are classed as independent state schools. This is enabled by the Academies Act 2010. An academy has more freedoms. For example:

- Freedom in tailoring the curriculum to suit their needs
- Greater control of their budgets
- Freedom to spend the money local authority currently spends on their behalf

- "Becoming an Academy gives professionals greater scope to innovate and raise standards for the children in their school, while remaining clearly accountable for the outcomes they deliver".

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### **Who can become an academy?**

The Government has expanded the academies programme and has issued an invitation for all schools to consider taking up the academy freedoms. Any school which is performing well can now submit an application to become an academy.

### **How do we apply to become an academy?**

The Governing Body applies to the Secretary of State for Education.

### **Who makes the final decision as to whether we apply to be an academy?**

The Governing Body. Our application can be turned down at any stage and we can withdraw at any stage during the application process. However, once formally agreed, by which we mean the Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State has been signed, the decision cannot be reversed. We need to understand the views of our parents, staff, children and our local community before we can make this decision. The Governing Body is committed to retaining all the positive elements of our school that we have worked so hard to develop.

### **Who runs an academy?**

The academy is run by an Academy Trust. This is a legal body which operates as a charitable organisation and a company limited by guarantee. The Trust has a formal agreement, or contract with the Department for Education.

### **Which academy are we proposing to join?**

We are proposing to join the Hereford Diocese Multi Academy Trust (MAT), the Bishop Anthony Educational Trust.

### **Reasons for joining this particular MAT.**

After meetings with Mr Phillip Sell the Director of Education for the Hereford Diocese, the governors have been looking at what this trust can offer; its support for key areas such as, Finance, staffing & HR, Learning and achievement, resources and procurement.

In addition to this below are the key reasons for joining this particular MAT.

- Our school prides itself on being a Church of England school and by joining the Diocese trust it further strengthens and underpins our strong Christian ethos
- Geography. The trust is based at the Diocese headquarters in Ludlow. Support services and personnel are close at hand
- The trust will have a limit of 2500 pupils within its participating schools. This allows us to be part of an organisation that is big enough to support our school but not too big that the support gets watered down

### **Are there different types of academies?**

Yes. Schools can convert on their own, as 'single converters' or alternatively convert as part of a group of schools. We refer to these group arrangements as Multi Academy Trusts (MAT), Umbrella Trust and Loose Groupings. Dependent on the type of group arrangements the school may still be governed at a local level.

The amount of governance (decision making) kept at a local level and the degree of individual autonomy for the school will vary dependent on the nature of the grouped arrangement.

For example, a Multi Academy Trust decides the amount of individual autonomy given to each school in the group, whereas in an Umbrella Trust each school is an individual legal entity and will retain its own governance.

### **Will the name of the school change?**

We propose to make a simple change of the name to. "Tenbury C E Primary Academy."

### **Will the relationship with the High School and other local schools change?**

**No.** Relationships will not change. As a major feeder school to the High School our close relationship will be unchanged and we will still participate in local events and training with other local schools as in the past.

### **Will the uniform change?**

Not initially, although in time there could be a small change.

### **Is there a financial benefit or loss for the school?**

The school would receive direct funding for the proportion of Government grant held back by the Local Authority that provides wider educational services in addition to the core funding it already receives by way of formula funding grant and currently used to provide centrally procured services. TPS will receive an increase in funding of approx. 3%, but the GB is clear that this is not a reason in itself to convert but an added benefit.

### **Would the admissions arrangements change?**

Although the academy would have control of its own Admissions Policy, the Governors are committed to ensuring that TPS maintains its inclusive nature. All academies are bound by the national code of practice on admissions and we would work with the Local Authority on co-ordinating the admissions process with parents on an annual basis. TPS would be responsible for an appeals process broadly as it is arranged now.

### **Are there any rules relating to admissions that academies have to follow?**

Yes. Academies have to follow the law for school admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as if they were a maintained school.

### **What are the educational advantages in converting?**

Many of the responsibilities of the Local Authority would pass to the school under the guidance of the trust. Academies have the freedom to determine their own curriculum and are not tied to following the National Curriculum. This freedom would allow our staff, as professionals, to devise a curriculum that is

best suited to the needs of particular pupils. Currently we are very happy with the curriculum that we offer. However, we may need to change it in the future. We will always ensure that the curriculum that we

offer meets the needs and interests of our children. Academies have to deliver "a broad and balanced" curriculum, but the academy does have the freedom to arrange learning within the school day. Academies offering primary provision have to implement the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as set out in section 40 of the Childcare Act.

With increased autonomy and independence we can also be more selective about the educational initiatives we become involved with, the partnerships we choose to develop and the way we allocate our resources to meet the needs of our children. In addition we can ensure that educational provision is appropriately suited to the needs and requirements of our local community, making use of the significant resources that exist in our locality.

**What will it mean for my son/daughter? Will my child have the same teachers?**

There would be very little evidence of any visible day-to-day changes to children and parents/carers. There would be no changes to staff. The intention is that the change of status will allow us to keep developing the school the way that we have been doing.

**Will TPS still be inspected by Ofsted?**

Yes. Primary academies are inspected by Ofsted using the same framework and time scales as for maintained schools. The academy would also be subject to inspection by the Diocesan authority for R.E and collective worship through the SIAMS inspection process.

**What are the safeguards for vulnerable children?**

Under the terms of the Funding Agreement, the contract between the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State, an academy has to act in exactly the same way as a maintained school in relation to Special Education Needs, behaviour and exclusions.

**My child has special education needs. How can I be confident that they will be given the same level of support, attention and care?**

The Academies Act 2010 requires Academies to follow the same statutory framework for special needs as local authority schools. Schools will receive funding for children with statements of special educational needs in the same way, whether they are academies or local authority schools. If children have statements with an enhanced package of support, both types of school will get additional funding directly from the local authority, again, in the same way.

Where children have special needs, but do not have a statement, once again, academies are required to have regard for the Code of Practice on SEN, in exactly the same way as local authority schools.

**What would be the impact on free school meals?**

There will be no change to free school meals. The application process will remain the same and TPS would continue to make every effort to encourage families that are entitled to free school meals to apply for them. 'Universal free school meals' for KS1 has been introduced at TPS from September 2014 in line with Government policy and would continue after conversion.

### **What would be the impact on School transport and crossing patrol?**

There would be no impact at all. School transport will still be the responsibility of the LA and School crossing patrol the responsibility of the councils highways dept.

### **Would the relationship with the Local Authority change?**

The school would continue to work with the Local Authority on common issues and would remain part of the local school networks that work in partnership to develop the outcomes for our children.

### **What support does a Local Authority provide to an academy?**

The local authority fully supports schools in the conversion process and works closely during that process. The Local Authority would retain numerous statutory duties, including ensuring sufficient school places, transportation and appropriate provision for special educational needs. As an academy we can choose to purchase any additional support we may need from a range of providers including the Local Authority. The LA will still oversee the schools performance and the DFE will monitor the Trusts performance.

### **Can a school change its admission arrangements as soon as it becomes an academy?**

No. The admissions arrangements will have been set as final in the April preceding conversion. However academies can consult in the future on changing their admission arrangements in line with the requirements in the Schools Admissions code.

### **Who deals with complaints about schools that have converted to academy status?**

Parents/carers who have a complaint about their child's academy school will need to contact the academy directly.

In summary, the route for academy complaints is;

1) To the appropriate staff member or Head teacher 2) Contact the Academy Trust (this should be set out in the academy's complaint procedure) 3) Contact the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA). The YPLA is the funding body for academies, and represents the interests of the Department for Education

### **How would Parent Governors be appointed in an academy?**

Currently, when a vacancy arises, applications are sought from parents at the school and if necessary an election will be held. This system would continue after conversion.

### **What does the conversion process involve?**

The Governors recommended strategic direction is to join the existing Hereford Diocese Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). This means much of the legal work of becoming an academy has already been done e.g. establish an Academy Trust as a company by registering with Companies House.

The school will need to:

Formalise its relationship with the preferred Trust insurance for educational services as appropriate.

Manage the transfer so that it is seamless to the children and does not negatively impact the teaching and learning of the children.

### **How long will it take?**

The government says this can be as little as three months - including school holidays. Most schools should be able to convert in around five months (it may take longer if there are complicated issues).

### **Can we withdraw from the conversion process?**

Schools are able to withdraw right up until the point that they sign the funding agreement. Once this is signed there is a legally binding agreement between the Secretary of State and the Academy Trust. This decision cannot be reversed or cancelled for 7 years. If after considering all the feedback from the consultation and the experience of the conversion process so far the governors still feel that becoming an academy is the best way forward for the school then the funding agreement is signed at the end of the conversion process.

### **Who is being consulted?**

The Governors would like to hear the views of all interested parties. The school will distribute information to parents, staff and other stakeholders. The Local Authority will be kept informed throughout the process. TPS will also consult other local primary and secondary schools, community partners, the PCC, the Town council and the multi- agencies we work closely with.

### **How can I communicate my views about the school converting?**

You can write with your views, or ask any further questions to [office@tenbury-pri.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:office@tenbury-pri.worcs.sch.uk)

This FAQ document will be developed on the website throughout the consultation period.

### **Will there be an opportunity to meet with Governors to discuss any questions or concerns I may have?**

Yes. The period of consultation with all of the key stakeholders will be running from the 20<sup>th</sup> May -19<sup>th</sup> June 2015. Below (Appendix 1) you will find a response document through which you can make your opinions or questions known to us or you can email us at [office@tenbury-pri.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:office@tenbury-pri.worcs.sch.uk).

Governors have considered every option in detail and are fully satisfied that the proposal is the right direction for TPS. We will be holding 'drop in' sessions should you have any questions which are not answered by the full document or have any queries you would like to raise. Those sessions will be:

Thursday June 4<sup>th</sup> from 3.45pm- 5pm

Tuesday June 16<sup>th</sup> from 6pm-7.30pm

Mr P. Sell, Director of Education for the Diocese of Hereford will be in attendance along with Governors.

**Where can I obtain further information?**

The Department for Education website has further information, and links to other sources of information about academies:

[www.education.gov.uk/academies](http://www.education.gov.uk/academies)

The anti-academies alliance has also produced some useful material. The website is -

<http://antiacademies.org.uk/>

The Independent Academies Association is a very useful website that gives more in depth information about Academies

<http://www.iaa.uk.net/>

From this website is a very informative document (Becoming an Academy) that gives readers a Head Teachers perspective on why they felt becoming an academy was the best option for their school

[http://www.iaa.uk.net/?wpfb\\_dl=10](http://www.iaa.uk.net/?wpfb_dl=10)

Appendix 1. Response document.

Tenbury C E Primary School



20<sup>th</sup> May – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Response to consultation on change of status of Tenbury C E Primary School to an Academy as part of Hereford Diocese's Bishop Anthony Education Trust.

Please tick who you represent		Your comments
Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Trade Unions	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Diocese	<input type="checkbox"/>	
MP	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Local Schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Town Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
PCC	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please describe)  _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	

