



# St Michael's Catholic College

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Principal: Ms Felicity Corcoran

Vice Principal: Ms Charlotte Sayed

Vice Principal: Ms Joanna Nottage

11th September 2023

Dear Stakeholders,

You may recall that we wrote to you in June, about the possibility of St Michael's Catholic College becoming part of a Catholic Academy Trust, called St Benedict. We are now at the stage of formal consultation which means we would like to know your views.

## **Proposal**

The Governing body of St Michael's Catholic College is proposing to move from single academy status to multi academy trust status, with three other local schools, forming St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust within the Archdiocese of Southwark.

## **Background and Rationale**

Our school is one of four Catholic schools in Lewisham and Southwark that have jointly prepared plans to establish a new Catholic Academy Trust (CAT) called St Benedict Catholic Academy Trust. The four schools that propose to form St Benedict CAT are:

St Michael's Catholic College  
Bonus Pastor Catholic College  
Our Lady and St Philip Neri Primary School  
St Anthony's Catholic School

The Archdiocese of Southwark has also made clear its intentions for all Catholic schools to join one of a number of local Catholic Academy Trusts. Our Governing Body has been working closely with the local schools identified above, establishing a shared vision for the future of our schools.

After much research it was decided that it was in the best interests of our school community to adopt the Catholic Academy Trust model and governors are now consulting on this proposal. As an Outstanding school performing well, the Governors along with the Principal are keen that the school has full control of when and how it moves forward with the diocesan strategy, with the added advantage of being involved in the initial establishment and development of the Trust.

## **Advantages of Multi Academy Trust Status**

The CAT's role will be to provide support to our school ensuring that we continue to be a strong, high performing, inclusive School. As Governors, we believe that the opportunity to work with new partners and schools, collaborating to ensure standards across the Trust are consistently high, is an exciting proposition. However, we will continue to actively work with all local schools and current partners, maintaining our relationships with schools beyond the Trust. Governors have made it clear that Catholic Academy Trust status will add to our school's unique character rather than alter it.

Joining a CAT makes working in partnership with the schools in the Trust easier as one legal entity. For example, joint resourcing decisions can be made, joint specific training sessions can be undertaken across a number of schools, we can make purchases or commission services as a group of schools rather than individually to secure better deals.

There will also be in place a small CAT central team, focused on supporting all the schools in the CAT. This central team will work very closely with the schools and will come to know our individual strengths and characteristics, being able to identify where we can access support, knowledge and capacity quickly from within the Trust, allowing us to continually improve.

The Governing body of each school has been clear that the individual character of each school must be protected. This has been a common theme throughout the development of plans for the CAT and we will continue to ensure that this is a priority.

### **Points for consideration and responsibilities**

As St Michael's has been an academy for 11 years, we already have expertise in successfully managing the additional responsibilities placed on academies in terms of financial management, the school estate and reporting. On a day-to-day basis the school community will not notice the difference when we become part of the Catholic Academy Trust.

The additional responsibilities will be covered by a small central team at CAT level to ensure that there is minimal impact in school. For example, over time, an Accounting Officer (the CEO) and a Chief Finance Officer will be appointed to ensure compliance with company and charity law on behalf of the Trust Board.

Governors acknowledge that staff in school may be concerned that a change of employer will mean a change in their terms and conditions of employment on transfer. Governors have reassured staff at this very early stage that this is a 'non-negotiable' in terms of the proposal and we would not pursue joining a Catholic Academy Trust if this was being considered.

### **Feedback**

We would like to make sure that the entire school and wider community has an opportunity to ask questions about what Catholic Academy Trust Status means for St Michael's Catholic College. We will be holding a meeting whereby we would welcome the opportunity to talk to you about this. The meeting will take place in school on the following date:

**Thursday 5th October 2023 at 6pm**

The consultation will run from 11<sup>th</sup> September to 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023.

We have included a link below to a Google form where you can provide feedback and ask questions. We would be grateful if you could submit any comments or questions to us by **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023.**

<https://forms.gle/qmCgfRcGy7udgw1C8>

### **Additional Information**

We have some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - please see attached.

Finally, we would like to thank you for your continued support of St Michael's Catholic College. Please be assured that our Governors and the Principal act with the preservation of a

high-quality Catholic education for the children of our community at the heart of everything that they do.

Yours sincerely,



Chair of Governors



Principal



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