

*'A Caring Christian Community Committed to Achievement'*

**St Mary's Church of England V.A. Primary School**

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22.2.16

Dear Parents,

### **Academy conversion and the creation of a learning partnership**

As a Governing Body we have been exploring the concept of formal collaborations with other schools for more than a year now. After careful consideration the Governors voted unanimously at the end of last month to consult on becoming an Academy and joining with Gordano School, High Down Infant School, High Down Junior School, St Peter's Primary School and Portishead Primary School in setting up a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) based here in our community.

We are convinced that this will have a great many benefits for our children, families and staff. In particular we will be able to share facilities and staff expertise to develop our curriculum. We will have a central focus on professional development for our staff so that we continually improve in our teaching and learning. There will also be benefits in smoothing the transition between Year 6 and Year 7 as almost all our children already transfer to Gordano School. Also, as education budgets continue to tighten, working collaboratively with other schools will allow us to achieve very best value through economies in purchasing and effective management of our resources.

Each school within the Trust will retain its own individuality, ethos and values. The Diocese of Bath and Wells is also very supportive of this change and in terms of the day-to-day running of our school, there will be no difference to that which is experienced currently: we will be maintaining our strong identity as a Church of England school. In almost all respects the structure of the leadership team here would also remain the same with the Headteacher making operational decisions and sharing the strategic leadership with our Governing Body but we will also benefit from shared planning of collaboration with other schools and the challenge on standards that working with the new Trust will bring. Our strong working relationship with the parish church will continue exactly as before.

We have created an Academy Consultation page on our website where you will find some further information on our proposal and an FAQs document. You are also invited to attend one of our consultation events. The schools will be running a joint meeting at Gordano School on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm. This will be followed by two drop in sessions here at 9.15 am and 6.00pm on the 17<sup>th</sup> March when you can come to raise any questions directly with Mrs Wright and several of our Governors. You can contribute to the consultation through your questions and responses at these events or alternatively you may wish to send written responses in to our school office. The governors will have access to all responses to the consultation before they make a final decision on the issue.

