

ST WALBURGA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

REALISING POTENTIAL CELEBRATING SUCCESS



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Headteacher: Mrs E Snelling



21st April 2016

Dear Parents and Carers

Feedback from Academy Consultation meeting on Tuesday 19th April 2016

I'm writing to you following the Academy Consultation meeting held at school on Tuesday 19th April. This was an opportunity for the Governing Body to hear parents views around St Walburga's becoming a Voluntary Academy, as part of the Blessed Christopher Wharton Trust.

It was great to have so many of our Governors in attendance last night along with parents, as Governors, they have undertaken an active role in scrutinising the possible benefits of academy conversion.

Since October 2015, myself and the Headteacher alongside the full Governing Body have met with the Diocese on 4 separate occasions. Following one of these discussions with the Diocese, Head Teacher, Kieron Flood was invited to address the Governing Body to describe his experiences as an early convertor to the Bishop Konstant Academy Trust in Wakefield

When Kieron was asked by the Governors on early conversion, the greatest benefit he felt, was that school staff were able to concentrate in a more focused way on teaching and learning whilst the Board of Trustees dealt with other services to support the school.

Whilst the Blessed Christopher Wharton is in the early stages of formation, it is the view of the Governing Body and Headteacher, that we would be best placed to steer and shape the Trusts work as an early convertor.

The concerns we heard from parents following consultation were:-

- Losing our teachers to other schools in difficulty within the Trust
- Quality of the "backfill" which could have a negative impact
- Speed of the proposed conversion
- Opportunity for parents views and responses to be heard
- Possible financial impact with a proposed National Funding Formula
- Changes to the school curriculum
- Any changes to the school day
- The control of the Governing Body that would remain at a local school level
- Admissions Policy

Response to Parental Views:

- First priority has been and will continue to be the children, their families and staff at St Walburga's. The Governing Body are committed to recruiting all staff including supply teachers of the highest calibre. This would remain in place if we became an academy.
- We recognise parents may feel the proposed conversion could happen very quickly; however, Governors have been working tirelessly on issues around this agenda since the beginning of this academic year.
- All parents received an invitation to the consultation meeting via letter, with an initial text message being sent out notifying them to expect such letter. We will be adding other relevant information to the website throughout the consultation. The powerpoint from the consultation meeting is also available on the school website.
- The Governing Body regularly and routinely, as part of our code of conduct and terms of reference, scrutinise the school financial position. All budgeting plans take account of wider national economic situations, including the possible introduction of a National Funding Formula.
- As Governors we are considering the increased range of opportunities we could access which would further enhance our already strong and creative curriculum as part of a Trust.
- Following conversion St Walburga's would have an "Academy Council". The Trust Board follows the principle of subsidiarity; that decisions should always be taken at the lowest possible level closest to where they will have their effect. Such delegated powers would include the recruitment of staff, setting and approving annual budgets and shaping the school curriculum. Following a conversion an already existing Governing Body becomes an Academy Council.
- A Catholic Multi Academy Trust in the Diocese of Leeds adopts the Diocesan approved policy for admissions.

If you want to share any further views around St Walburga's proposed academy conversion there are a number of ways to communicate:

Response Form on school website: www.stwalburgas.co.uk

Trust Email address: bcwcmat@gmail.com

School email address: Office@stwalburgas.co.uk

Chair of Governing Body address: chairgb@stwalburgas.co.uk

All parental views expressed will be discussed by the Governing Body prior to any final decision being made.

I look forward to hearing from you should you have any other queries around possible conversion.

With my best wishes



Sarah Martin
Chair of Governors

Attendees: Liz Snelling, Head of St Walburga's
John Devlin, Executive Head of Our Lady of Victories and St Joseph's, Keighley
Sarah Martin, Chair of Governing Body at St Walburga's
Bernadette Cawley, Member of the Board of Trustees
Patricia Wright, Vice-Chair of Governing Body at St Walburga's
Mike Cawley, Foundation Governor at St Walburga's
Natalia Mazepa, Foundation Governor at St Walburga's
Cliff Leggoe, Parent Governor at St Walburga's
Sarah Tolson, Staff Governor at St Walburga's
Liz Fearnley, Teacher at St Walburga's
Parent representation from year groups across the school

