

Monday 15th October 2018

Dear Parents, Carers, Pupils and Friends,

Consultation Regarding Joining a Multi Academy Trust

Following communication from the Diocese of East Anglia's Director of Schools, Julie O'Connor and under the direction of Bishop Alan Hopes, St Thomas More Catholic Primary School is opening consultation to consider joining the St John the Baptist Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) with other schools in our Diocese.

The following schools are currently part of the St John the Baptist Catholic MAT:

- *St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Norwich*
- *St Benet's Catholic Primary School, Beccles*
- *St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, Bungay*
- *St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, Norwich*
- *St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Lowestoft*
- *St Mary and St Peter Catholic Primary School, Gorleston*
- *Notre Dame High School, Norwich*

It is proposed as part of this consultation that the following schools will join, probably by September 2019:

- *St Martha's Catholic Primary School, Kings Lynn*
- *Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Peterborough*
- *St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Peterborough*

Other local Catholic schools may well join too in the coming years

You are invited to attend an information event to find out more.

- 14th November 2018, 3.30 - 5 pm at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Peterborough
- 15th November 2018, 3.30 – 5pm at St Martha's Catholic Primary School, Kings Lynn

With regard to this proposal the Governors of St Thomas More are very supportive of becoming an Academy, joining this MAT and working with the other schools. Governors have considered the pros and cons and have agreed that in joining the MAT it provides the best opportunities for securing and developing Catholic Education in this region.

It is also important to explain how joining the St John the Baptist Catholic MAT would affect current and prospective St Thomas More pupils, staff and parents. All can all be reassured that the current school name, uniform, structures and admissions will not change and the conditions of service for staff, employment rights

etc. are protected. The Heads of the schools proposing to join have visited the other schools currently in the MAT and have seen that each school keeps its separate identity and a strong level of independence. This proposal to join the MAT is simply the next progression within our cluster of schools and is designed to benefit not just St Thomas More but all the other Catholic Schools in the Diocese.

It is acknowledged that academy conversion is not a panacea for all ills and we are aware of some difference in opinion as to the effectiveness of multi academy trusts. There are some vocal opponents of academies and we would encourage you to consider the arguments for and against and check the accuracy of assertions that are being made.

We believe that there is greater scrutiny of academies now than for voluntary aided schools and Governors are confident that this will have a positive impact on standards and enable the School to continue to fully engage with its community.

In order to fully inform and reassure all parties we are undertaking this consultation, which will run from 19th October until 10th December 2018. We have created a bespoke email for questions and clarifications: consultationeastanglia@gmail.com . Additionally our Headteacher is always happy to speak with any interested parties and can be contacted via the school email.

The Governors and Leadership Team are excited about the next step in working closely with Catholic Schools, under the direction of the Diocese and welcome your thoughts and involvement as we look forward.

Yours faithfully,

AM McElhinney
Headteacher