



Newnham St Peter's Church of England Primary School

CONSULTATION - Consideration of conversion to academy status as part of DGAT FAQs Number 1 April 2018

Introduction

The Consultation document was launched on the 20th April. A consultation meeting held on the 24th April was attended by the new head teacher Mrs Nolan and Mrs Kerry Brimfield Chief Operating officer from DGAT.

This Consultation document presents a summary of the extensive research and thinking of the governors and staff so far, in order to inform the wider school and local community, it also has FAQs. The FAQs here are based on the comments and questions received so far, as more come in over the six-week period then more FAQs will be published.

Q How have the staff been involved?

A The staff have been involved from the start. The Governors and staff explored the options and implications prior to the consultation on the move to academy status in April and May 2016. There is a staff governor on the Governing Board and the Head teacher so any decisions made by the Board includes the staff. The Strategic Plan was agreed by the Board in July 2016 we then spent time together looking at the different MAT models and potential organisations for Newnham St Peter's to join. We all agreed that DGAT matched our ethos and the style of MAT that would suit us as a school and a Church of England school. Hence the consultation and the fact that we are recommending this to you.

Q Will there be more or less of a Christian Ethos?

A There is no expected change as we already work with the Diocese and have had our Ethos celebrated by all external visitors and inspections. DGAT, like the school, are here for the education of all children of any faith or no faith.

Q Will the school uniform change?

A Unequivocally NO (see number 7, page 7). The school staff and governors agree that the school values need a review so that might change the http; such change will be managed without parents having to pay for it. The values will remain both Christian and universal because that is our remit. You and your children will be involved in these discussions.

Q Why now?

A The school has met the challenge of finding the resources to provide the best education possible for all the pupils but it has been incredibly difficult and nothing is in place or on the horizon nationally to make that better. You have seen the impact of the budget constraints in the last year and you have expressed your concerns about large group/class numbers. The staff do a fabulous job but we want to provide an outstanding education for pupils now and in the future; and provide a supportive environment for staff. Being part of DGAT will provide a wider school community, benefits of scale, and career opportunities so that staff can stay with us.

Q Can you publish all discussions that the governing board has had about academisation?

A No. All parents can read any Governing Board minutes by going to the School Office (this is standard school practice) and requesting to see them. We do not provide them electronically, nor are they removed.

Q The school ran a consultation on academisation in 2016. What were the results of that consultation?

A The Strategic Plan 2016-2020 published July 2016.

Q Will SATs continue?

A Yes, the school and its pupils will continue to undertake the nationally required assessments including SATs, no change.

Q Will the Academy status have an impact on the recent inclusion of Early Birds?

A The Early Birds provision continues and we hope to expand in the years to come. The staff are part of the School staff so they transfer in just the same way, under their terms and conditions. The moneys that go to support the pre-school children are kept for those children (existing funds on transfer are protected) and the moneys for the school children are kept for those children.

Q Who owns what now in terms of school and land?

A The Diocese have a Foundation Trust that owns the school buildings and land from the front gates across to just behind the Early Birds building across. The County Council own the rest of the playing fields. (see page 8, number 20 of the consultation doc)

Q Will these be sold?

A No. 125 year lease and/or a supplemental agreement is arranged as part of the membership.

Q Will SEND funding change or be reduced?

A No. The route the money follows would change but whatever the status of the school the Local Authority have a statutory responsibility to ensure children with SEND continue to receive support. This will not change. The school will continue to offer the highest standard of pastoral and educational support.

Q Will the school lose services provided by the Local Authority (LA)?

A The days of the Local Authority just providing services is long gone. Schools purchase services from the LA; the school pays now for a "package of services" from the LA, we would have more choice in DGAT and it depends who provides the best value and quality for the children as to which services will be bought.

Q Can a school that becomes a Trust come out of a MAT?

A Theoretically yes, but it would not return to its original status as it has become an Academy with all the implications of that (see consultation document page 2 re charitable status etc). There are no perceived advantages for Newnham St Peter's going it alone in such a situation. **The school remains a non-fee-paying state school accountable to the Department of Education whatever.**

Q Will pupil numbers change?

A Our LA numbers are a maximum of 140 pupils (not including pre-school numbers). So, there is still scope to expand however that has to be balanced with qualified staff. No change from our agreed numbers is planned or envisaged.

Q Who wrote the consultation document?

A The Governing Board but we drew upon a recently used, well regarded school consultation document. Particular thanks to this school for kindly giving their agreement for us to use their document as a basis to develop ours is noted on page 2 of the consultation document. To give the school their full title it is St Lawrence Church of England Primary School, based in Lechlade.

Q Can you provide the web address for DGAT?

A Yes. <http://dgat.org.uk>

More on curriculum in the next FAQs.