



## *The March Church of England Primary School*

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Headteacher: Mrs Nicky Metcalfe BA Ed (Hons)

Dear Parents/Carers and members of the local community

### **PROPOSAL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS**

This informs you of the Governors' proposal that our school should convert to academy status within the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust and asks for your comments. More information about what that means for our school and for your children is attached to this letter and details of how to comment or to ask questions are provided at the end. Please do give us your views.

The Governors have been considering this way forward for some time and are choosing to take this step as a positive way forward for our school. The support we receive from West Sussex County Council has reduced over time, as the Council's budget has been reduced by the Government. As Governors we are keen to ensure that the school has a wider network of support and challenge and believe that academy status within the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust is the best way to support the school in continuing to develop and improve. Having spoken to the Trust's leaders and explored with them the opportunities that joining DCAT will provide, we have concluded that working together within the Trust will bring benefits to teaching and learning and thus to your child's achievement. It will also support us in continuing to promote the Christian ethos of the school to enrich the learning of pupils. We hope that you will continue to give the Governors and the staff your support.

Whilst we see real benefits in working more closely with the Trust, any changes are likely to be behind the scenes. You and your children will see little visible difference when we become an academy. The school uniform will not change and we will not change term dates or the school's admissions policy – which will continue to give equal priority for places to children living in Oving. All children and members of staff will continue to be part of each school as they are now.

There will be an opportunity for you to come and hear more about the proposal and to ask questions on 27 September at 6pm.

If you have any questions or comments about this proposal please email the school office, respond on-line at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MarchDCAT> or complete the form attached and send it in an envelope marked "Academy Consultation" to the school.

If you have any comments please send them by close on 12 October.

Yours Sincerely

John Proctor (Chair of Governors)



A University of Chichester  
ITT Partner School



## **Information on the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT)**

DCAT was established in 2014. Our mission is to become a multi-academy trust of choice for the schools and families of the Chichester Diocese by supporting the academic, spiritual and professional needs of the whole community.

We aim to be a trust in which:

- All children achieve and maximise their potential;
- All schools improve and perform above national expectations;
- All staff are supported and actively engage in continuing professional development; and
- The distinct Christian identity of each of our academies is maintained and celebrated.

Schools joining DCAT retain their own unique identity but benefit from a range of shared services and opportunities. Individual Local Governing Bodies, including parent representatives, continue to play an important role in the life of the school.

Each academy will be welcoming to all, and will serve equally those who are of the Christian faith, those of other faiths and those with no faith.

Each of our academies works with a Senior Education Leader [SEL] who is responsible for providing support and challenge to the school leadership team and local governing body. In addition, the DCAT team based in Church House work to support all our academies.

The Trust is part of the Diocese of Chichester which was established in 681 CE. The Diocese has over two hundred years of successful experience as a provider of schools across Sussex as part of its mission to support and serve the whole community. The Trust will draw on expertise in the Diocese of Chichester and on the wider national Church of England role as the leading sponsor of academies. The Trust directors have local and national expertise to ensure every academy is well led and governed, through the Trust's Board of Directors and the Local Governing Body.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is an Academy?**

Academies are state maintained schools free to all children. They are run separately from the local authority, and have an agreement with the Government which provides funding directly to the Academy Trust. They follow the same rules as all other state-funded schools over admissions, pupils with Special Educational Needs and exclusions. They are inspected by Ofsted.

### **What is a Multi Academy Trust?**

A Multi Academy Trust is a company established to be responsible for a number of Academies. Each Academy remains a separate school, but the governors are responsible to a board of directors established for the Trust as a whole.

### **So why make the change?**

Academy status gives us some more freedom to make decisions about how we can best continue to move the school forwards. Working within the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust we will be able to develop new relationships with all the schools in the Trust to further develop good practice.

### **Who will be the members of the local governing body?**

On conversion the current governors will remain in place as the local governing body for the school, but over time governors will be appointed by the Directors of the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust, seeking to ensure that there is a balance of appropriate skills. Our local governing body will include two elected parents and one elected member of staff.

### **How can I find out more?**

We are holding a meeting for parents on 27 September at 6pm which all parents are welcome to attend.

At that meeting there will be an opportunity for you to come and hear more about the proposal and to ask questions. You can also ask questions or make comments by emailing the school.

### **How can I make my views known?**

We would be grateful for comments either on-line at

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MarchDCAT> or by completing the form attached and sending it in an envelope marked "Academy Consultation" to your child's school.

If you have any comments please send them by close on 12 October

## **Academies: Some key facts**

### **Curriculum**

Academies are required to have a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. For pupils below Key Stage 1 (i.e. reception and nursery), academies are required to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The curriculum must include:

- English, maths and science;
- Religious Education; and
- sex and relationship education (SRE).

Academies are required to take part in the same pupil assessment arrangements and to report on the achievement and attainment of pupils in the same way as all other state-funded schools.

### **Inspection**

Academies continue to be subject to Ofsted inspections.

### **Staffing**

The regulations that place requirements on maintained schools do not directly apply to academies. General employment law applies to academies in the same way as to other organisations. The Academy Trust has responsibility for setting pay and conditions.

Teachers must be suitably qualified. The Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust employs all its staff on national terms and conditions so there is no change for staff.

All teachers employed at an academy have access to the Teachers Pensions Scheme and all other employees at an academy have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

### **Funding**

The academy trust will receive General Annual Grant from the Secretary of State calculated as the equivalent to that which would be received by a maintained school taking account of the number of pupils at the academy. Capital funding is also available, channelled through the Academy Trust. Every academy trust must abide by the requirements of and have regard to the guidance in the Academies Financial Handbook.

### **SEN**

Academies should be fully inclusive local schools and in common with all other schools have a clear legal duty to do their best to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities.

### **Admissions**

Academies are required to provide education for pupils wholly or mainly drawn from the area in which the academy is situated.

Academies must have admission arrangements that clearly set out how children will be admitted, including the criteria that will be applied if there are more applications than available places.

Academies are required to provide education for pupils of different abilities (i.e. they may not select pupils by ability).

### **The conversion process**

There is a defined process to secure our conversion to academy status, which includes:

- Consultation with parents, staff and other stakeholders
- Agreeing a contract with the Secretary of State to run The March Church of England Primary School as an academy within the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust as a state-maintained school, free to all pupils and students;
- Consulting staff and their unions on the transfer to a new employer;
- Working with the owners of our site to ensure that it can be used by the Academy;
- Transferring contracts for goods and services.

A grant from the DfE will support the costs incurred, including expertise in managing the process so that your child's education is not disrupted.

**The March Church of England Primary and Nursery School  
Response Form**

Thank you for your interest in our school's conversion to Academy status within the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust. Having considered the information available, do you agree that the school should go forward in this way?

Yes	No	Not sure
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please add any comments or questions here,

*Please continue overleaf and add an extra sheet if necessary*

Please indicate your connection to the school and give your postcode

Parent/carer

☐

Staff member

☐

Governor

☐

Wider community

☐

Other : Please specify

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Postcode .....

Please return this form by 12 October in hard copy to the school in an envelope marked 'Academy Conversion'. You can also complete the form on-line at

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MarchDCAT>