



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS, MARK BUTCHER

Welcome to our first Governors' Update which we hope you'll find informative with regards to what it means for St. Bede's to become an academy and join The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust (GSCT). As you are all aware, we, the Governors, agreed to explore becoming an academy and joining the GSCT. We were scheduled to start consultation on Monday 3rd February but after meeting with our staff, we agreed to push back the consultation to Monday 2nd March so that we could respond to various questions that have been raised during the staff meeting.

Every Governor takes their role very seriously and as a Governing Body, we always have St. Bede's at the heart of everything we do. Please be aware that out of the 12 Governors, 9 currently have children from Nursery to Year 6 and that's why we want to make sure that we go through meaningful consultation with staff, parents, parishioners and the wider community. **We therefore encourage you to ask questions via our dedicated email address mats@st-bedes.redbridge.co.uk and we will aim to answer via email or the newsletters.**



Welcome to
The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust

*I will give you shepherds after my own heart,
 who will feed you on knowledge and understanding.*
 (Jer 3:15)

*The Good Shepherd
 Catholic Trust Presentation*
<https://www.gsctrust.co.uk/>

(Full presentation can be found on the school website)

BY MICHAEL CORCORAN, CHIEF ACCOUNTING OFFICER, GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC TRUST

How does a Catholic Multi Academy Trust affect my school in 9 positive ways?

1. Pupils are invited to and participate in joint Trust sporting events and occasions.
2. Our Senior Leadership Teams have a schedule of joint 'Teaching and Learning' reviews across the schools in the Trust to help share good practice and check standards.
3. Experienced staff visit and share good practice with staff across the schools rather than relying purely on internal capacity for school improvement.
4. Our staff come together for joint liturgy and social events.
5. Catholic Headteacher colleagues meet each half term and plan school improvement, curriculum development and policy development together.

6. We have a growing range of shared, central policies that the Leadership Group are designing to relieve the burden of policy development and review at school level.
7. The strength and numbers in the Good Shepherd Trust mean we finally feel like we have a 'voice' at the highest level to argue the case for our pupils.
8. We have a better range and quality of services at a better price than we could have achieved as a single school.
9. We no longer have to put 10% of our own school budget towards capital/buildings works as an academy. We also have access to significant funding streams that only multi-academy trusts can apply for.

How does a Catholic Multi Academy Trust NOT affect my school?

- **NO CHANGES TO THE SCHOOL UNIFORM** (Controlled locally)
- **NO CHANGES TO THE SCHOOL DAY**
- **NO CHANGES TO THE SCHOOL NAME**
- **NO CHANGES TO NATIONAL PAY POLICY**
- **NO CHANGES TO STAFFING OR STAFFING STRUCTURES**
- **NO POWERS TO MOVE STAFF BETWEEN SCHOOLS**

AND FINALLY...

"The preservation of the Catholic identity within the MAT will strengthen the voice of the Church and the right to a Catholic education."

SUMMARY TO DATE

- 1 September 2018 - The GSCT was formed with one secondary school and one primary school
- 8 September 2018 - Bishop Alan Williams issued his statement of intent for all Diocesan schools in his Pastoral Letter to be part of of a CMAT
- 21 November 2019 - Governors and Headteacher approved for St Bede's to explore joining the GSCT
- 9 January 2020 - Staff Information Meeting with the Trust and Governors
- 13 January 2020 - Staff Q&A with Governors
- 6 February 2020 - Parent Information Meeting with the Trust and Governors

IMPORTANT DATES

- 2 March - Formal Consultation starts
- 9 March - Staff Meeting with the the Trust and Governors
- 16 March - Parent Meeting with the Trust and Governors
- 3 April - Governors to Vote

PARENT INFORMATION MEETING



Thursday, 6 February 2020

(Full list of Q&A will be available on the school website)

Q: Will we employ unqualified teachers?

A: Only when we are training them to be teachers. We have successfully 'grown our own' teachers in recent years, in response to the recruitment crisis.

Some roles require qualified teachers across all maintained schools and academies such as the Special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and Designated teacher for looked after children (LAC).

Q: Will children with SEN or disabilities still be catered for as well or will their budgets be cut and these children sent elsewhere?

A: The budgets will remain the same. St Bede's will continue to be a school that is inclusive, welcoming children with the full range of needs.

Q: Will St Bede's continue to recognise staff unions?

A: Yes.

Q: If we help other schools in the CMAT, will this be to the detriment of our own pupils?

A: We can learn by helping others; we would never do anything that was to the detriment of St Bede's pupils.

Q: Has the Trust lost staff following conversion?

A: No

Q: What was the conversion period like for pupils?

A: They noticed no difference. The main changes came for head teachers and office staff.

Q: Who has done the sums? Will we save money?

A: In the long term, we may make savings but the main benefits of joining the Trust are collaboration with others and protecting the Catholic education.

Q: Will the Trust be inspected by OFSTED?

A: No, but the school will be.

Q: Will the land ownership be transferred to the Trust?

A: No

Q: Will tutoring continue?

A: Yes

Q: What role does the Trust play in the school governance

A: The Trust will be involved in Headteacher recruitment instead of the Local Authority.

Q: Will our Local Governing Body still have a say?

A: The Local Governing Body will continue to focus on our school and in supporting the Headteacher to ensure that high standards are maintained.

They will continue to make decisions about our school e.g. Headteacher and teachers' performance management, organisation and curriculum, budget, admission policies, local staffing structures and recruitment, etc.

Since joining the GSCT in September 2019, none of the 5 schools who converted have made any changes to the areas mentioned above.

Q: How old is the Good Shepherd Catholic Trust (GSCT)?

A: 1 year, 6 months

Q: Why has the GSCT not signed a formal agreement with the unions?

A: GSCT does not have any issues about having a formal agreement with the unions.

Q: How can I contact the Governors if I have questions or clarifications?

A: The Governors would like to hear from you. Please email your queries to mats@st-bedes.redbridge.co.uk and we will reply via email or via the newsletters. Alternatively, you can come to the next Parents' Meeting on 16 March.



ST. HELEN'S CONVERSION EXPERIENCE 2014 (Part of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust Newham)

(Full presentation can be found on the school website)

BY GAEL HICKS, HEADTEACHER, ST. HELEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Why did we convert initially?

1. Lack of capital funding for Catholic schools in Newham
2. Desire to ensure Catholic education in the future

Some of the steps undertaken:

- Informal consultation with staff
- Consultation with unions: confirmed terms and conditions
- Formal consultation with staff: confirmed that staff would not be directed to others schools
- From the staff: "We trust you, you wouldn't do anything that would be detrimental to the school or to the staff..."

Advantages of the MAT

- Schools remained unique, kept their uniform!
- Access to funding - £2m building extension to St Joachim's
- Joint curriculum projects - sharing expertise
- Increased inter-school pupil contact
- CPD across the schools to benefit both
- Joint contracts with savings on IT, HR & payroll, catering, insurances, building maintenance - £200,000 approx
- Increased access to legal advice
- Improved financial systems, planning and accountability
- Increased awareness of risk management across the Trust
- Enhanced headteacher peer support
- "We are one" "joint accountability" beyond a federation