



**Cronton CofE
Primary School**

**ACADEMY CONSULTATION ON BEHALF OF
THE GOVERNORS OF
HALEWOOD CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL AND
CRONTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

HALEWOOD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL & CRONTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

PROVIDING OUTSTANDING TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR ALL

The Governing Bodies of Halewood Church of England Primary School and Cronton Church of England Primary School are proposing to convert to academy status and establish a new multi-academy trust that would include both schools.

This decision has been taken after a considerable degree of research and discussion and with the firm belief that this is in the best interest of the children and communities. Current government policy focuses on joining schools together in Multi Academy Trusts to create supportive links and partnerships between schools. Both schools already support a number of other primary schools and we anticipate that others will join our trust in the future.

A family of schools working together to protect our Christian distinctiveness whilst reflecting the changing world of education.

The Vision

- To provide a Christian education that goes beyond individual schools
- To change our perception from “my school” to “our family of schools” - collaboration not competition
- Sharing our gifts and talents to ensure that the education offered to all our children is OUTSTANDING
- Support one another whilst maintaining the unique identity of each school within its school community
- Support one another to develop the distinctive Christian character of each school

Why convert together?

- Broader curriculum and wider social opportunities for pupils
- Improved professional development opportunities for staff
- Shared expertise and strengths
- Provide mutual support
- Address impact of tightening budgets

Why work together?

- Christian Character
 - To share the Christian values that make us distinctive as Church of England Schools

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- Teaching and Learning
 - Shared learning and curriculum development utilising specialisms and resources available
 - Opportunities for children, teachers and leadership teams to work collaboratively

- Resourcing
 - Collective purchasing and shared contractual arrangements
 - Sharing of human and physical resources

What do we want to retain?

- Our Christian ethos
- Our schools' individual identity
- Excellent teachers
- Outstanding status

As part of the conversion process, we are keen to listen to the views and comments of all stakeholders. We are consulting with parents, carers, staff and wider community. The consultation period will run until Wednesday 24th February 2016. During this time you are invited to make any written submissions you wish to the Governing Body of Halewood Church of England Primary School and Cronton Church of England Primary School to consider, using the response form issued with this document (APPENDIX A).

The Governors of each school will meet the following week to consider how best to proceed and make a decision about going forward as an academy. We will then submit all documents to the Liverpool Diocesan Board of Education and present to them during early March 2016.

Finally, we have included a Frequently Asked Questions section that may address any immediate questions you have.

Signed by Mr T Beesley MBE
Chair of Governors
Halewood CE Primary School

Signed by Mrs D Doyle
Chair of Governors
Cronton CE Primary School

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is an Academy?

An Academy is a state school that is run by an Academy Trust. The Academy Trust enters into an agreement with the Secretary of State for Education that sets out its responsibilities and accountabilities for the effective running of the Academy. The Academy is funded directly by the Government and is no longer run by the Local Authority. The Trust is given charitable exemption, which means it must operate much like a charity.

Some of the additional responsibilities are already held by our schools as we are Voluntary Aided schools – for example, the governing body of each school employs our staff and makes decisions about admissions.

There are two types of Academies:

- **Converter:** maintained schools that are regarded as being at least “good with outstanding features” are able to apply to become “converter academies”.
- **Sponsored:** a maintained school that has been transformed to academy status as part of a government intervention strategy. Sponsored academy status is designed for “underperforming” schools where action is needed to raise standards.

Both Halewood CE and Cronton CE are regarded as being “outstanding” schools and therefore will be **converter** academies. When we apply to convert we will also complete an application form to become an approved sponsor of underperforming schools in order to help raise standards in schools that are judged to have serious weaknesses or require special measures.

2. What is a Multi-Academy Trust?

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is when 2 or more Academies come together. It is an incorporated company which runs more than one Academy. Church of England schools must use the Funding Agreement and Memorandum & Articles of Association produced by the National Society’s legal advisers.

- **Members** are like shareholders in a commercial company but not ones entitled to receive a dividend or shareholder return. They appoint the Directors, calling them to account for operating within the vision of the Trust and delivering high standards and financial sustainability. The members in a Voluntary Aided Multi Academy Trust are appointed by the Diocese.

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- **Directors** are appointed by the Members of the Academy Trust. They are responsible for the operation of the Academies but may delegate a lot of the operational responsibilities to the head teacher/principal. In many respects Directors carry out a role similar to the Governing Body but the responsibilities are distinctly different.
- **The Local Governing Body** provides local governance for each Academy, on behalf of the Directors, and is empowered to do so by a “Scheme of Delegation”.
- **The Scheme of Delegation** is the document by which the Directors empower the Local Governing Body to provide local governance of the school. It requires the Local Governing Body to comply with the Department for Education and Ofsted guidance, and any MAT policies, as well as SIAMS guidance for Church of England schools. It can be a flexible Scheme of Delegation that reflects the principle of “earned autonomy”.

The Department for Education has developed clauses for use in funding agreements that enable former Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled and Community schools to be within the same Multi Academy Trust. This is known as a Mixed Multi Academy Trust. The Board of our Mixed MAT will be based on a Voluntary Aided model as will both our schools, i.e. the majority of foundation governors are appointed by the Diocese. However, should Voluntary Controlled or Community schools join our Trust in the future this will mean:

- **Voluntary Controlled:** the local governing body will have a minority of foundation governors appointed by the Diocese. The Trust will also be required to ensure that the characteristics of the former Voluntary Controlled School are preserved in the areas of staffing, teaching of RE and the provision of collective worship.
- **Community schools:** the Trust will be required as part of its funding agreement to establish a local governing body and preserve the non-religious nature of the school. It is not possible as part of the academy conversion process for a community school to become a faith school.

3. How would converting to an Academy benefit our School?

Converting to an Academy is about enhancing teaching and learning for all children; it would allow us to share skills and operate more effectively.

4. What is involved in becoming an Academy?

The Governing Body of each school has voted for this proposal *in principle*. The school must complete a consultation with parents, pupils, staff and the wider community which the Governors will take into account in reaching its decision.

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5. Would the schools have to change its logo or uniform?

No. The schools will not be changing their uniforms as a result of Academy status.

(Halewood CofE has changed its PE kit from September 2015 and this will be compulsory from September 2016. The school has also updated its logo in recent years.)

6. How will being an Academy affect staff?

Currently, staff are employed by the Governors of each school and not by the Local Authority. After conversion all staff will be employed by the Multi Academy Trust. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. Their continuity of service is protected, and all staff will be consulted in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations. So the same people will be employed on the same terms and conditions as before. The Governing Body of both schools will continue with its long-established approach of attracting and keeping the best staff.

The Diocesan Board of Education – Policy on Academies – states “a commitment by the Academy Trust must be given to retain the national terms and conditions of service as a minimum standard for the employment of Academy staff.”

In relation to day to day matters, we can confirm that:

- The hours currently worked will remain the same
- Planning & preparation time will be given and, at the minimum, remain the same
- Term times will remain the same but as a Voluntary Aided schools we already have the ability to change term times that at times can vary from the Local Authority

7. How are the children affected?

In many ways the children will not notice any immediate difference, they will still be taught in a caring, Christian, learning environment, be in the same uniform, be in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. We will continue to strive for an outstanding education for all our children. However, in time the children may notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn, resulting from the greater training opportunities given to teaching staff to innovate and improve the pupils' learning.

8. Will we get more money as an Academy?

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. They also receive additional funding in the form of the Education Services Grant to cover the services that are no longer provided for them by the LA and to cover the costs of Academy status.

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All funding comes direct from Government to the Multi Academy Trust. The Board of Directors (appointed by the Diocese) then controls the overall budget. Each school does not necessarily have more money, but as a group the schools are better able to control that part of the budget currently "top sliced" by the Local Authority.

There will be additional funding to help both schools undertake all the legal costs and requirements in moving from maintained schools to Academies. This will not be funded by school budget.

9. What are the risks of becoming an Academy?

The change to Academy takes a school out of Local Authority control, but does not exclude the school from Local Authority support. For example, Academies can continue to receive finance, HR, behavioural support and other services from the Local Authority and where these represent 'best value' the MAT would use these services. Where the MAT feels that others can provide better services or better value the change to Academy increases the freedom to make these changes.

There are risks associated with not changing to Academy status. At some stage in the future, any school might be influenced to become part of a broader Academy Chain. We believe that the ability to create a local MAT, under local direction, offers the best opportunity for our staff and pupils. The Government has made it clear that they aim for all schools to become academies in the next 5 years.

10. How will admissions to the school be affected?

As both schools are Voluntary Aided schools our Governors are already responsible for Admissions. Academies are also their own admissions authority and must meet all the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code. The Diocesan Board of Education – Policy on Academies – states "the Academy agrees to consult with the Diocese on its Admissions Policy and on any subsequent changes, having regard to Diocesan guidance on Admission."

The Governing Body of Halewood CE and Cronton CE have no plans to change the admissions criteria of either school, however future Government legislation may lead to enforced changes.

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11. Does becoming an Academy change the relationship with other schools and the community?

No. Academies must ensure that they continue to be at the heart of their community, collaborating and sharing expertise with other schools and the wider community.

12. Will our responsibilities in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and exclusions change?

No. Responsibilities as an Academy in relation to SEND and exclusions will be just the same as they are now. The local authority would retain responsibility for assessing and funding children with SEN. We would, therefore, continue to receive some additional funding for pupils with Statements of Special educational needs.

13. Can a child with a statement nominate an Academy as his or her school of choice?

Yes. Schools converting to Academy status can retain the admissions criteria they currently use. These arrangements and related processes must at all times comply with the School Admissions Code.

14. Who is taking the decision on becoming an Academy?

The governing body of Halewood Church of England Primary School and Cronton Church of England Primary School takes the decision. Schools submit their application to the Department for Education once they have a positive vote for the change from their governing body.

15. When will the decisions be made?

By Friday 26th February 2016, Halewood CE and Cronton CE are proposing to submit all information to the Liverpool Diocesan Board of Education. A formal presentation is then required from the schools, which would take place during the first week of March 2016. Should all formal approvals be received, we would expect to convert during Autumn 2016.

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APPENDIX A

ACADEMY CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

The governing bodies of Halewood Church of England Primary School and
Cronton Church of England Primary School welcome your views.

Please tick the box that applies to you:

- HALEWOOD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
 CRONTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

About you (please tick the box that applies to you):

- Parent/Carer Local Resident
 Teacher Other (please specify)
 Support Staff _____

Comments and/or questions (please continue overleaf if you need more room)

We would be interested to hear any suggestions you may have in relation to the
Academy Trust's name _____

Please return completed forms no later than Wednesday, 24th February 2016 to:

The Governing Body (Academy Consultation)
Halewood CE Primary School, Church Road, Halewood, Merseyside L26 6LB

The Governing Body (Academy Consultation),
Cronton CE Primary School, Smithy Lane, Cronton, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 5DF

