



9th January 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: Diocesan Academy Policy

I am writing to inform you that Bishop Robert wrote to all Catholic schools to inform them that the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle had agreed a new Diocesan Academy Policy, following a consultation that involved all the Headteachers and Chairs of Governors in the 156 diocesan schools. This policy clearly states that all Catholic schools will become part of four large Multi Academy Trusts (MAT). This will mean that all Northumberland Catholic schools will join with the Newcastle and North Tyneside Catholic schools to become a large MAT consisting of 39 schools.

It is expected that all voluntary aided schools will work towards conversion to academy status by July 2022. The consent of the Bishop and the Diocesan Directors is required before a school can become an academy. The decision to convert to academy status is that of the school Governing Body, which should have regard to any policy or guidance issued by or on behalf of the Bishop. The Diocesan Department for Education will work with each regional group to ensure that from the outset all schools are included in the process of trust growth.

What will this mean for St Roberts?

We will continue to be St Robert's First School, this name will not change. We will join a MAT that has yet to be named. We will continue to work alongside our local schools in Morpeth and with the Catholic schools within Northumberland, with which we already have a positive working relationship. The current admissions arrangements with the middle schools will remain in place. St Robert's will continue to have a governing body which will be responsible for the school. Both the governing body and I see this as a positive strategic decision that will improve the school.

Timescale:

We know that July 2020 is the set timescale for the conversion to academy status. I will keep parents informed once the process begins.

If you have any questions regarding this announcement by the Bishop, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

D Sutcliffe

Mr D Sutcliffe
Headteacher