



Bomere & the XI Towns Federation

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Julie Ball, NPQH, PGCE, PG(Dip)M



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5th June 2024

Dear

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSAL OF BOMERE HEATH & ST JOHN THE BAPTIST PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO JOIN A MULTI ACADEMY TRUST AND FOR THE SCHOOLS TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS

For some time, the Governing Body of **Bomere Heath CE Primary School & St John the Baptist CE Primary Schools** has been carefully considering the school's future in a fast-changing and increasingly challenging educational landscape. The Church of England's ambition is for all schools to be part of a multi academy trust (MAT) by 2030, as strong MATs are now a better vehicle for school improvement than Local Authorities. Over years, the support that Shropshire Council has been able to provide to us as maintained schools has diminished as funding from central government for their education improvement service has fallen dramatically. Maintained schools are also now feeling the impact of a reduction in other local authority support services to schools. We want to be part of a strong and sustainable group of schools so that we are well-placed to collectively meet the challenges we will face over the coming years and ensure we have the right support to continue to improve.

Governors have spent time researching options available to our school and now believe that the best option is for **our schools** to become an academy and join a new multi academy trust being established in Shropshire through a joint project between Hereford Diocese and Lichfield Diocese. We are a church school in Lichfield Diocese. Governors have therefore approached the Department for Education (DFE) to secure their agreement, in principle, for **Bomere Heath CE Primary School & St John the Baptist CE Primary School** to become an academy and join **Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust**.

The values of the Trust are closely aligned with **our schools**, in particular their ethos around the inclusion of all pupils and enabling us to retain our individual school identity. Leaders in our school have been able to help shape the formation of the new Trust and, as members of the founding group, we have an opportunity to create strong foundations for the Trust. Working with the Trust and its schools is something that Governors feel would continue to strengthen our school, providing new and further opportunities to pupils and staff.

The new, joint Diocesan Multi Academy Trust will particularly support rural church schools in Shropshire like ours. by upholding our Christian ethos and values. The new Trust will need to adopt model Articles of Association (2023) approved by the Church of England and Department for Education. These articles ensure that the Christian foundation of each church school entering the Trust would be protected.

Gathering your views

Governors believe that this new Trust is the best home for our schools, but they want to find out what you and other stakeholders think too. As part of the process, we have a duty to formally consult with key stakeholders and the information enclosed within this letter is the beginning of that consultation process.

Our formal consultation process will run for a period of 6 weeks and during this time we will be hosting meetings and preparing documents which will help you to understand our proposals, what it means for the school, the children and the staff, answer any questions you may have and most importantly, enable you to share your views.

What is the proposal?

Our schools would like to collaborate with other schools in a strong and resilient structure and we believe that becoming an academy and joining Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust will provide this opportunity for our pupils, staff and community.

When would our school join the Trust?

We anticipate that the Trust will open on 1st October 2024. We hope to join – subject to consultation - with seven other Shropshire schools on or soon after this date, as part of the founding group of schools. There are about 25 schools who are interested in joining the trust and so there will be more schools joining in phases over a rolling period. This will ensure that there are enough pupils in the trust to make it financially viable to support effective school improvement work through a small central team, initially comprising of a Chief Executive Officer and Chief Finance Officer who can help the trust achieve its aims and vision.

Why have Governors decided to join the Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust?

The opportunity to be part of a founding group of schools in a new MAT, where all the schools share Christian values and a common vision for serving their community, allows us to shape some of the Trust's culture from the start and is a great opportunity. Governors have looked at other local trusts. Some of them we could not join because they do not have the right Church Articles of Association (this is to do with our Trust Deed and other legalities) but some of them, whilst being successful, have different values which do not align so closely with our own, or have a large focus on secondary schools rather than primaries.

First and foremost, we will only join a trust whose values fit our values as a school. By joining a family of schools, we believe we will further improve your child's education because we will be sharing ideas and expertise with other schools. We want to help our local community to thrive by giving children even wider curriculum opportunities to learn inside and outside the classroom. There are lots of reasons why joining a likeminded group of schools would make us stronger as a school. Most importantly, we will only make a decision that will give our children and staff the very best opportunities.

Like any other state school, our school as part of the Trust, would continue to be free to attend, we would be inspected in the same way, and children would take the same statutory tests.

Consultation Process

Governors are now entering the consultation phase and would like to consult with parents, carers, staff, pupils and the wider community on the proposal for **Bomere Heath CE Primary School & St John the Baptist CE Primary School** to convert to academy status and join the Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust.

The consultation period will run from **Wednesday 5th June** until **Tuesday 16th July 2024**

Following consultation, the Governing Body will consider a report on the findings of the consultation at a meeting which will be held by 9th September 2024 and this report will help to inform their decision making. The report will be made available online to all stakeholders via our school website and the outcome of the meeting will be communicated to parents and staff.

**We invite stakeholders to attend a consultation meeting on
Thursday 13th June 2024 at Bomere Heath CE Primary School
At 6.00pm**

Or

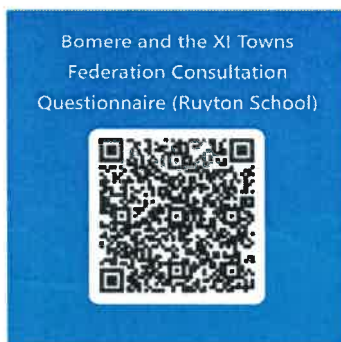
**Monday 17th June at St John the Baptist CE Primary School
At 2.30pm**

The two sessions (which will be identical in format) will be an opportunity to ask questions about academy status and joining the trust, and how this will affect the schools. Representatives from Governors, school leadership and Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust will be available to talk to you and you will also be able to register your comments, queries and any thoughts on opportunities or concerns.

We have also prepared a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document to help answer some of the questions we anticipate you may have. This accompanies this letter.

You can have your say in the following ways:

- By completing our online survey via the link below (also available on the school website)
<https://forms.office.com/e/6gTXMHEAkq>
- By asking questions at any of our meetings



We look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Ball".

**Julie Ball
Headteacher**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Lister".

**Keith Lister
Chair of Governors**

Enclosed:

- Academy consultation FAQs

I/we will be attending the following information session:

Thursday 13th June 2024 at 6.00pm at Bomere Heath CE Primary School

Monday 17th June 2024 at 2:30pm at St John the Baptist Primary School

Name(s)