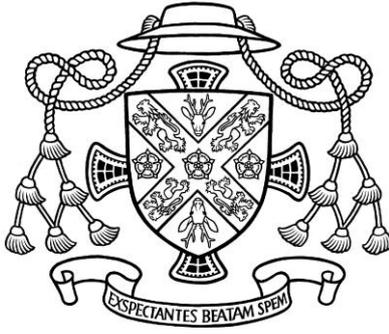


# Diocese of Middlesbrough



**Rt Rev Terence Patrick Draine**  
**Bishop of Middlesbrough**

Curial Office  
50a The Avenue  
Linthorpe  
Middlesbrough  
TS5 6QT

Tel: (01642) 850505  
Fax: (01642) 851404

Email: [bishopsecretary@dioceseofmiddlesbrough.co.uk](mailto:bishopsecretary@dioceseofmiddlesbrough.co.uk)

19<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

## **Information on the merger and formation of a new Catholic Multi Academy Trust (CMAT) for the North of the Diocese of Middlesbrough.**

The Diocese of Middlesbrough has 54 Catholic schools and academies spread across seven local authority areas, providing Catholic education to some 17,514 children and young people.

In the north of the Diocese, Redcar & Cleveland, Middlesbrough and Stockton on Tees, we provide education to approximately 9,100 children and young people in 25 schools and academies employing over 1,000 teachers and support staff. 24 out of the 25 Diocesan schools in the north are academies operating within 4 separate geographical Catholic Multi Academy Trusts. We have one remaining voluntary aided school, St Pius X RC Primary in Middlesbrough.

As your Bishop I asked staff in the Diocese and our school leaders, including governors, to review how, in their current structures, our schools work together and more importantly how this helps to support and improve Catholic education for all our children in all our schools.

The review has taken over 18 months to complete and been informed by discussions with the Department for Education and reference to high performing Catholic schools and academies across the country. This work has now reached the stage where I would like to inform you of the changes we wish to make to Catholic education in the north of the Diocese and to hear your thoughts as stakeholders in Catholic education. The new arrangements we are seeking to put in place will deliver vital changes to our current structures, changes we feel will benefit every pupil and every school.

Although 'academies' have been around for over a decade, the structure, accountability, operations and most noticeably the numbers of academies has developed dramatically in the last 4 to 5 years. In 2008 there were 83 academies whilst today there are almost 7,000 academies across the country.

Many of our schools have welcomed and embraced the collaborative approach that academy status has afforded them, seeking to share expertise and resources. However, our review has identified some key areas the Diocese and our schools feel collectively we can improve upon, specifically the governance and oversight of all 25 schools and academies in the North, the appropriateness of leadership structures to provide immediate and targeted support to secure and sustain high outcomes for our children and young people and the effective use of the collective resources of our Catholic family of schools.

We feel improvements in these areas are needed if we are to meet our ambitions of securing outstanding outcomes and a high quality Catholic education for all our children in all our schools.

Therefore, we are today providing information and inviting comment on a programme to merge the four existing Catholic Multi Academy Trusts that are home to 24 Catholic schools in the north of the Diocese, into one Catholic Multi Academy Trust for all 24 Diocesan academies in Redcar & Cleveland, Middlesbrough and Stockton on Tees. In addition, the one remaining Voluntary Aided Catholic School in Middlesbrough, St Pius X RC Primary School would become an academy and join the other 24 schools in the creation of our 25 school Catholic Multi Academy Trust (CMAT).

This “merged CMAT” has the support of the Department of Education, the Diocese, the Trust Boards of the existing CMATs responsible for the 24 Catholic academies in the north of the Diocese and the Governing Body of St Pius X RC Primary School.

The “merged CMAT” will be called “Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust” (NPCAT) and will employ a Chief Executive Officer who will provide dynamic and inspirational leadership to the Trust, ensuring the very highest standards of performance is achieved in all of our schools and that resources are directed appropriately towards need. They will also ensure the Catholic character and ethos of our school firmly roots Christ at the centre of all that we do.

Supported by a team of highly qualified school improvement experts, this new structure will allow us to provide immediate direct support and challenge to our schools, sharing expertise across the 25 schools more effectively. It also provides greater opportunities for staff development and training, and as a result, ensures that all of our schools provide the very best for our children and young people. Finally, each school will continue to develop its own unique character and ethos with a dedicated leadership and staff team serving their local families, parishes and wider community. We need to sustain and continue to develop the great things happening in many of our schools whilst ensuring the quality of Catholic education and outcomes achieved by all our children and young people in all of our schools rises to those of the best.

The newly formed CMAT Board will consist of a group of twelve highly skilled individuals who have a clear understanding of their wider corporate role in raising standards across all of our schools and protecting and promoting our Catholic mission.

In each individual school, a dedicated team of governors will ensure rigour and challenge continues at a local level and strong staff and parental representation will remain at local governance level. The Local Governing Body will also continue to work with and support the parents, carers, parishes and the wider local community.

The information giving and invitation for comments exercise with our key stakeholders will allow us to gather your views as we shape the development of the new CMAT and we will ensure these are taken into account as we implement our exciting and innovative plans. The invitation to comment begins today, Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and closes at 5pm on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

We have provided some frequently asked questions and a response form within this letter. We will of course keep you updated on progress as we move forward with this proposal and it is anticipated these changes will take place from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

Yours in blessed hope



Rt Rev Terence Patrick Draine  
**Bishop of Middlesbrough**

## **The Diocese of Middlesbrough Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why are you making these changes?**

There are three key reasons to support this change:

- Strengthening Governance
- Strengthening Leadership
- Strengthening Resources

By strengthening these areas, we can ensure we provide in all of our Catholic schools in the north of the Diocese a high-quality Christ centred Catholic education. An education that educates the whole child, so our children and young people realise their full potential academically but also receive support in their on-going personal and spiritual formation.

### **Strengthening Governance**

We will strengthen our Governance model by forming a single over-arching board of Directors comprising of 12 highly skilled and experienced individuals who have the ability to support and challenge our school leaders. This is an unpaid, voluntary role and it is vital that this Board hold our Catholic ethos at the heart of their decision-making.

The core governance functions of the Multi-Academy Trust, (i.e. setting the direction of the Trust, holding the CEO and Head teachers to account and ensuring sound use of finances) are carried out by the multi-academy trust Board of Directors.

In individual schools, we will ensure strong local governance rooted in the school community continues to exist, governance that supports and challenges our school leaders.

### **Strengthening Leadership**

We have identified a need to improve leadership accountability. The Department for Education's preferred model is that every Academy Trust should employ a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and this is our intention. The CEO will hold the Head Teachers in each of our schools to account for the performance of their individual school and offer support through a dedicated school improvement and business team to ensure that every school performs well.

The ability to identify and provide immediate high-quality support where and when it is needed is a major issue for schools both locally and nationally. Strong school leaders will often have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to achieve improvement or to sustain strong performance in their school but cannot secure or access such support.

The CEO, supported by a school improvement and business team will work in schools to meet these needs, coaching, mentoring and advising on effective teaching and learning practice. In addition, they will broker direct support for our schools to ensure we secure the highest standards of Catholic education for all our children and young people in all our schools.

### **Strengthening Resources**

In these more financially constrained times it has never been more important to ensure that we secure value for money. We are funded by the public purse and therefore it is only right that we are held accountable for our use of resources. The CEO will be supported by a Chief Operations Officer whose role it will be to secure value for money and ensure that we fulfil our statutory obligations as a CMAT. We have undertaken a full financial analysis to ensure that savings can be realised that will protect front-line teaching in schools while securing efficiencies behind the

scenes through better procurement and reducing bureaucracy e.g. through operating one Academy Trust rather than four.

The structure for the Catholic Multi Academy trust will be:

#### **Members of the Trust**

5 Members of the Academy Trust appointed by the Bishop and responsible for the appointment and removal of Directors and compliance with company and charity law

#### **Directors of the Trust Board**

12 Directors forming the Catholic Multi Academy Trust (CMAT) Board, the majority of which will be Foundation Directors appointed by the Bishop, set the strategic direction of the Trust as a whole and hold the Chief Executive and Head Teachers to account for the Catholicity, teaching and outcomes of all 25 schools, ensuring they also use financial resources to maximum effect.

#### **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

The CEO will hold the Head Teachers in each of the schools to account for the performance and outcomes of their individual school offering and guidance through a dedicated school improvement and business team to ensure every school performs strongly. They will also ensure the school provides strong Christ centred Catholic education rooted in the gospel values

#### **School Improvement and Business Services**

A team to provide immediate support and challenge to our schools, sharing expertise and best practice across all 25 schools more efficiently, identifying and securing external support where necessary and ensuring value for money from all funding spent.

#### **Head Teacher**

This is the person with day to day responsibility and accountability for each individual academy school. The Head Teacher is the person parents and carers will normally deal with and they will manage all aspects of their school's day to day operations. They will provide the spiritual leadership and direction for the school and work closely with parents, carers the parish and the wider community to root their school within the local Catholic community. They will work with the CEO, Standards and Business Services Team and other Catholic schools to ensure the standards in all schools rise to those of the best.

#### **Local Governing Body (LGB)**

The Local Governing Body, the majority of which will be foundation governors appointed by the Bishop, are responsible for holding to account the leadership team of their school for the quality of Catholic education they provide, and the outcomes achieved by the children they serve. The LGB will include staff and parent governors and the range of areas they are responsible for will be clearly set out in a 'Scheme of Delegation' provided to the LGB by the Directors of the Trust Board. The Local Governing Body understand and develop the unique nature of their school within its Catholic community, whilst sharing in and supporting the wider vision and needs of the Trust as a whole.

## **What does it mean for my child and the school that they attend?**

Day-to-day there will be no significant changes to the educational experience of your child in school. The school name won't change, the school uniform won't change, and the same staff will continue to work in the school. The school will however be able to access and benefit from a strong central school improvement team and share, potentially as both a recipient and provider, in the best practice evident within our schools. Your school leaders will be held to account for the performance of every child, but we will equally celebrate the outstanding Catholic education provided in many of our schools.

Governance arrangements for the school will however be significantly strengthened through this change as a result of the formation of a strong, professional and highly skilled Academy Trust Board and a continued strengthening of local governance arrangements across all schools.

Legally, staff across all 25 schools and academies will be employed by one single employer, the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT). Staff not currently employed by this Trust will transfer their employment under TUPE legislation from their current employer, to NPCAT. We are consulting with our staff and trade unions to seek their views.

Effective collaboration can benefit everyone. Through the sharing of excellent practice, shared resources and training opportunities and future economies of scale, we can further improve the provision for our children and young people, targeting funding to front line teaching and learning.

## **Transition**

The new CMAT provides an outstanding opportunity across the Catholic schools in the north of the Diocese to ensure movement from Primary school to Secondary school and Secondary school to Sixth Form College is handled seamlessly, ensuring young people begin to make progress on their first day in their new school.

By creating the opportunity for staff in our Catholic Primary and Secondary schools to systematically work closely together to meet and learn about the needs, aspirations and ability of our children in the years leading up to a move to Secondary school or Sixth form, we can create the conditions for continued progress and success, avoiding what DfE call 'the wasted years' when sometimes children and young people repeat rather than build on prior knowledge and understanding. We understand however for this to truly work, all of our schools must be strong, high performing schools of choice for our parents and carers.

## **Have your say**

- Complete the response form provided with this information letter;
- Feel free to discuss these proposals with your Head Teacher if you wish to know more;
- Wider information on the Academies programme is available on the Department for Education website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/convert-to-an-academy-information-for-schools>

**The Diocese of Middlesbrough  
Multi Academy Trust (MAT) Merger Information Feedback Form**

Please let us know your views regarding the proposed formation of one Catholic Multi Academy Trust in the northern area of the Diocese of Middlesbrough.

Name.....

Email address.....

Telephone number.....

Parent/guardian       Staff       Other (please indicate) .....

Your written response should be handed in or posted to any of the schools' offices and marked "Private and Confidential MAT Merger Feedback" to be received no later than **5pm Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018.**

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the information giving and comments exercise.