

**"I am able to do all things by
the one who strengthens me"**

Philippians 4:13
Lexham English Bible



C.E CONTROLLED
PRIMARY SCHOOL
Mrs Sarah Briggs
Headteacher
BED (Hons) NPQH

Growing, Believing, Succeeding

24th March 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

At a number of Governing body meetings, the Diocese of Derby were asked to provide information to the Board of Governors on the Diocese's Multi-Academy Trust (Derby Diocesan Academy Trust - DDAT), which is being offered to schools within the Diocese who wish to take advantage of an Academy model.

Rationale

The education landscape is changing, as evidenced by many other schools in our area that have converted to academy status or are currently considering this change. At Sale & Davys C.E. Controlled Primary School, we are committed to continual improvement and will always make decisions based on what is in the interests of our pupils. For that reason, over a number of years, our Governing Body have looked carefully at academy status prior to any formal decision being made. This review has involved a number of Governors and staff attending DDAT information sessions to gather information and consider how any change in status will benefit our school. Our dedicated Governing Body have been watching the development of DDAT for the past 7 years, at all times identifying whether there are any reasons that joining would bring benefits to our school. Having reviewed the support available from DDA, and as one of a number of Church schools currently considering academy status, Governors consider that joining DDAT now will be a positive step for the school.

DDAT

As a Church school, we embrace any opportunity to strengthen our links with the Diocese of Derby, which we would do as an academy within the Trust. The Diocese is already working closely with Sale & Davys C.E. Primary School and provides high-quality support. We would maintain our status as a Church School and the existing emphasis on our Christian values and ethos would not change. Becoming an academy would give us increased access to this support from a partner that we know and with whom we share a common ethos, both from a Christian perspective and that of a focus on individual children. DDAT have received significant interest from other schools across the Diocese who would like to join the Trust, demand has been high especially from those schools that are judged to be Good or Outstanding. Governors feel that strengthening our partnerships with these schools would provide clear benefits and opportunities for Sale & Davys C.E. Controlled Primary School as we work collaboratively with like-minded schools to extend curriculum opportunities, develop training for staff and Governors and work together to develop a more supportive and collegiate future.



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DDAT Schools

DDAT currently has 29 member schools and you can find details of the membership, along with further information on the DDAT website here: <https://ddat.org.uk>

Advantages of Academy Status

In addition to the advantages mentioned above, as Governors and Headteacher of Sale & Davys C.E. Primary School we believe that the opportunity to work with new partners and schools, working together to ensure standards across the Trust are consistently high, is an exciting new proposition. However, we will continue to actively work with all local schools and current partners ensuring the best of both worlds. DDAT have made it clear to our Governing Body that academy status will not change all the things that work so well for our school.

It is important to note that Sale & Davys C.E. Primary School would be classified as a 'converter academy', that is we have not been forced to convert to academy status and are doing so through choice as a school previously rated by Ofsted as 'Outstanding'.

Disadvantages of Academy Status

As an academy, there are a number of additional responsibilities placed on the school in terms of financial management and reporting. It is expected that on a day-to-day basis the pupils and their parents and carers, teachers and staff will not notice the difference when we become an academy. There will however be additional workloads for members of staff in the school office. DDAT recognise the additional pressures and will provide the school with a significant amount of support from specialists who support our staff with this additional work.

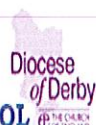
Governors are aware that the Government's academy agenda is to some extent a controversial one, although less so in recent years as more schools choose to become academies. The reasons behind the controversy relate to the weakening of the Local Authority as schools begin to operate independently of local government structures. As government funding for schools is now distributed through different channels (multi-academy trusts, Teaching School Alliances etc.) and directly to schools, this leaves less resource at Local Authority level.

Questions and Feedback

We would like to make sure that the entire school community has had an opportunity to ask questions about what academy status as part of DDAT means for our school.



Summer 2019
EXCELLENT
CHURCH SCHOOL



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We have included a feedback form with this letter that we would be grateful if you could submit to us by **1st April 2021** with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have. You can also complete an online survey available at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SCWTZDT>

We will then be able to make sure we can circulate answers to all your questions shortly after the Easter break. If any parents would like to meet with the governors or representatives of DDAT to discuss the proposed academy conversion, we are able to make arrangements to do this remotely via Zoom. Please do contact the school if you wish to do this.

You can leave your feedback forms in the box at reception and forms received will be kept completely anonymous.

Additional Information

We have included some additional information with this letter:

- An outline of the DDAT Vision (information also available at <https://ddat.org.uk/>)
- A Frequently Asked Questions Document

Finally, we would like to thank you for your continued support of Sale & Davys C.E. Primary School. We believe that we have a truly wonderful school here and we are committed to ensuring we provide the very best for our family.

Yours sincerely,

Nicola Read - Chair of Governors

Sarah Briggs - Headteacher

Attached: Feedback Form
The DDAT Vision
FAQ



Feedback Form

1. Do you support the decision for Sale & Davys C.E. Primary School to become an academy?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Comments

2. The proposal is that the school will be an academy within Derby Diocesan Academy Trust (DDAT). Do you agree with this partnership arrangement?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Comments

3. Do you have any concerns or questions about the proposal? If so, what are they?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Comments / questions

I am:

- A Parent / Carer
- A Member of Staff
- A Pupil
- A Governor
- A Member of the Community
- Other (please specify)

Thank you for your comments!

Please return this form to the School Office (Reception) by 1st April 2021

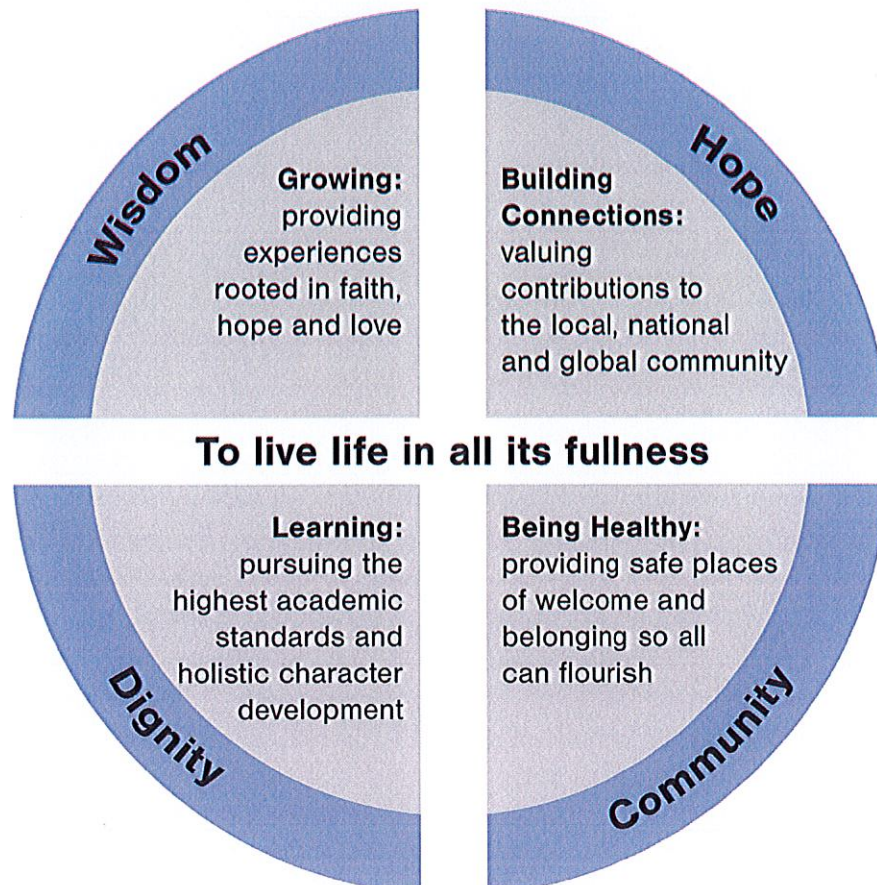
The DDAT Vision

The Derby Diocese Board of Education has established a multi-academy trust “to provide the best possible education for the pupils in their care based on the Christian principle that Every Child Matters to God.”

Derby Diocesan Academy Trust (DDAT) has been approved by the DfE as an academy sponsor. DDAT will support schools with an exceptional school improvement strategy, it will look after the business elements of running an academy and protect the distinctively Christian nature of each school.

DDAT aims to:

- Provide children with excellent educational provision
- Rapidly improve under-performing schools
- Develop effective school-to-school support
- Build strong relationships and promote work with external partners
- Raise aspirations and tackle disadvantage so that no pupil is failed by their school.



Converting to an Academy Q&A Document

WHY ARE WE LOOKING AT BECOMING AN ACADEMY?

- 1. What is an academy?** Academy schools are state funded schools in England, which are directly funded by central government (specifically, the Department for Education) and independent of direct funding and control by the Local Authority.
- 2. Are all academies the same?** No. There are many different types of academy. For example, some schools have become academies independently; others have joined together with other schools to form a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) whilst others have joined larger groups and organisations, often known as academy chains. Different academies have a variety of school improvement and governance arrangements.
- 3. Why are we considering converting to an academy now?** Sale & Davys is a voluntary controlled primary school. This means that we are currently state funded via our Local Authority, Derbyshire County Council, but operate within the Church school system. The Church school system is managed and developed through individual Dioceses, and each Diocese has a Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) which is a statutory body. There are currently 111 church schools in Derby Diocese, some of which are already academies. The Diocese of Derby has established a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) called the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust (DDAT) to provide an academy option for its schools.

Many schools nationally are choosing to take advantage of academy status as well as those who are having to move to academy status as the Department for Education has identified that they are in need of additional support.

As governors we have a responsibility to monitor the national, regional and local education position to ensure that we are able to make the correct decisions when setting the direction of our school. As such we have been monitoring the growth of academies and gathering as much information as possible to allow us to assess whether this would be a consideration for our school. We have been in discussion with DDAT about joining their Trust and now is the right time to take this forward.

- 4. Are any other schools in our local area academies?** Yes, there are a number of academies in our local area and region. Griffie Field Primary is our closest DDAT school. DDAT has a growing number of member schools however growth of the Trust is managed carefully to ensure the correct mix of good and outstanding schools and those who require additional support to improve.

WHAT DAY-TO-DAY CHANGES WILL HAPPEN?

5. Would there be an increased emphasis on religion and Christianity in a DDAT academy? No, we would maintain our status as a Church School and the existing Christian values and ethos would not change. We would continue to follow the locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education. Church schools are also subject to the statutory (section 48) Church School Inspection and this also would not change.

6. Will a move to academy status mean a new name for the school? No. The school will continue to be called Sale & Davys C.E. Primary School. Other schools that have chosen to become academies with DDAT have also chosen to retain their existing names.

7. Will a proposed new academy have a new uniform? No. Parents will not need to buy a new uniform.

8. Will a proposed new academy still be open to the community? Yes. There will be no change to the current provision and use of the school by different groups to hold events.

9. What will be the impact on our children with special needs? There will be no change to the level of support provided. Sale & Davys C.E. Primary School will continue to recognise that every child is different and has the right to be included as a valued, respected and equal member of the school community.

10. Will the school hours be any different as an academy? Although it is highly unlikely that the school day will be changed, it is the decision of the DDAT Board to decide this as they have the power to do so. This decision is usually delegated to the local governing body of an academy, so there is no real change from our authority in this regard. As is the case now, parents would be consulted prior to any change in school hours, although no change is envisaged.

11. Will pupils' education be disrupted by a transition to academy status? No. When an academy is approved to go ahead, it will do so with minimal disruption to the staff and students. Most of the changes will take place behind the scenes with support from a dedicated team from the Diocese, who have gone through this process before with other schools.

12. If we move to being an academy will this change what is taught? We would be expected to continue to offer the full range of National Curriculum subjects. OFSTED continue to inspect academies and their handbook for inspection is the same one as used in any other school. The academy would be expected to strive to be outstanding in both the statutory OFSTED (section 5) and the Church School (section 48) inspections. In other words, there may be no change in what or how pupils are taught.

13. Will the Board of Governors have less authority and control? The composition and powers of the Board of Governors will be set out in a formal 'Scheme of Delegation' which allows the DDAT board to delegate responsibilities to the Local Governing Body. There will continue to be Parent Governors on the Governing Body (as at present), together with Foundation Governors and a Staff Governor as well. That said, DDAT may appoint additional governors, such as governors provided from the local community, and may step in if the Board of Governors is not performing its duties effectively. Our School and Governing Body have considerable freedom and responsibility to take commercial and strategic decisions without recourse to the Local Authority and this will not change substantially following conversion to an academy.

WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR OUR SCHOOL FINANCES?

14. How is an academy funded? In maintained schools, including church schools, all revenue funding (building funding is slightly different) goes directly to the Local Authority. The Local Authority (LA) takes a proportion of the money from the school budget to provide essential services to the school and the rest is delegated under the Local Management of Schools. Schools can, and do, buy additional services from the LA and other providers. As a result schools currently depend upon the local authority for many services such as school improvement, HR, finance, etc. This has led to a dual system where the LA has taken the lead on school effectiveness whilst the Diocese has focused on the distinctive and inclusive characteristics of the school.

Academies will receive a similar level of per-pupil funding as maintained schools. With DDAT, the money that would have been provided to the LA to run the school is provided directly to DDAT. DDAT does retain some of the budget in order to provide services to the academy. Local authorities fund their core services in a similar way.

15. Does this improve on current funding arrangements?

Converting to an academy will not be to our detriment financially. However, any decision is not motivated by money. Funding is available to cover the costs of the conversion process itself, which is provided by central government once the decision to convert has been approved. We will have opportunities to support other schools and to benefit financially from doing so. In addition, the MAT Board has access to capacity funding from the Department for Education as well as capital funding on an annual basis.

WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF?

16. What are the Terms and Conditions for staff? On conversion to academy status teachers and staff employed by Derbyshire County Council will transfer with the same terms and conditions, via a formal TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) process. In addition, conversion will not affect any union memberships.

17. Who will employ teachers and staff following conversion?

At present Derbyshire County Council employs teachers and staff at Sale & Davys C.E. Primary School. Following conversion, teachers and staff will be employed directly by DDAT.

18. Will DDAT employ non-qualified teachers? All class groups of pupils will be registered to a qualified teacher, as is the case in schools currently.

WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR STANDARDS?

19. Does DDAT have the capacity to support our educational standards? DDAT has established its own school improvement capacity for those schools choosing to become an academy which includes a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Deputy CEO and Head of School Improvement, and Senior School Improvement Officers. Details of the school improvement team (and wider DDAT central team) can be found here: <https://ddat.org.uk/whos-who/>.

Collectively, the team is experienced and qualified to support and challenge schools in data analysis, teaching, behaviour, safeguarding, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, Christian distinctiveness, special educational needs and disabilities, and leadership and management. The school improvement package will include support and challenge for governance and the team are able to draw on further support from the Diocese and National Leaders in Governance as appropriate.

20. How will an academy raise achievement?

The whole structure of DDAT's Multi Academy Trust has been designed to challenge and support schools in equal measure. We would receive at least 6 days of school improvement support from a school improvement professional, irrespective of whether the school is outstanding or inadequate. This is more than we currently receive from the LA.

These visits are not inspections but an opportunity for senior leaders to benchmark their judgments through shared lesson observation, work scrutiny, analysis of data, supported self-evaluation and school improvement planning. Indeed the outcome of these visits will confirm the development state of the school.

DDAT will intervene rapidly in schools that are underperforming or on a downward trajectory based on OFSTED criteria.