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**C**reativity  
**K**indness



East Sussex County Council

Newick C.E. Primary School  
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Acting Headteacher: Mrs F Lawrence

Dear Parents and Carers,

Our school is always striving for excellent outcomes for our children. We are always looking for further opportunities to fulfil our vision to enable our children to be the best they can and prepare them for the next stage in the learning journey. For a number of years, the Governing Body of Newick Church of England Primary School has been carefully monitoring the national and local position on academies. As you may be aware, many schools are considering whether academy status would be appropriate at this time and we are no different in this sense.

As a consequence of the national picture and continued growth of academies in England, the Board of Governors decided to look closely into whether an academy model would be in the best interests of the children, teachers and staff at Newick Church of England Primary School. Following consideration, Governors have decided that they would like to explore academy status further. Governors are keen that the school retain full control of when and how we go forward with academy status, without pressure from Government departments.

As part of our investigation and due diligence governors considered strong academy trusts in our area and the models they are offering to schools who are looking to pursue academy status within the Church school system. As one of a number of schools currently considering academy status we believe that joining The Diocese of Chichester Multi Academy Trust, (DCAT), would significantly benefit children and staff at our school. Governors consider that joining DCAT now will be a positive step for the school.

#### The Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust

Newick is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school. This means that we are currently state funded via our Local Authority, East Sussex 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 155 church schools in the Diocese of Chichester, some of which are already academies.

The Diocese of Chichester established the Multi Academy Trust, DCAT to provide an academy option for its schools.



## DCAT Vision & Aims

The vision for the Trust is that it exists to:

*Help every child achieve their God-given potential*

DCAT aims to be a Trust in which:

**Developing the whole child means pupils achieve and maximise their potential**

**Continuous development of staff is valued and improves education for young people**

**All schools are improving and perform above national expectations**

**The distinct Christian identity of each academy develops and is celebrated**

The shared values of DCAT are taken from the Church of England's vision for education, they are:

**Aspiration:** I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4 vs 13)

**Wisdom:** Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise (Proverbs 19 vs 20)

**Respect:** So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you (Matthew 7 vs 12)

Joining DCAT will allow us to access a high level of support across school improvement and operational areas, with a strong focus on enriching experiences and outcomes for all children. The Trust's extensive team of professionals would work in collaboration with our school team to enable us to provide greater opportunities and experiences for our children and staff, helping us to continue to be an Outstanding school.

As governors, we believe that the opportunity to work with new partners and with other schools to ensure standards across the Trust are consistently high, is an exciting proposition. The partnership would provide further resources to enable school leadership to move the school even further forward without losing the unique identity that is special to us. We would also continue to actively work with our local schools and current partners, ensuring the best of both worlds. DCAT has made it clear that academy status will not change all the things that work so well for our school.

As an academy, there are additional responsibilities placed on the school in terms of financial management, the school estate and reporting. Schools within the Trust report that on a day-to-day basis the pupils and their parents and carers, teachers and staff see little difference when the school becomes an academy. There is however a difference in workload for staff in the school office. DCAT understands the additional pressures and will provide the school with a significant amount of support from specialists who will pick up the majority of additional work.

We believe that joining DCAT will support us in securing stability and continued successful outcomes for our school community. We hope that you will agree. We wish to begin a consultation with the entire school community and would like to make sure that everyone has had an opportunity to ask questions about what academy status means for Newick Church of England Primary School within the DCAT family of schools and to help us develop our thinking. There will be meetings held at school where we would welcome the opportunity to talk to you about this, for you to ask questions and to meet DCAT leaders. Separate arrangements are being made for staff.

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 5.30pm

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023 after drop off at 9.00am

Staff Only - Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 3.30pm

You can submit feedback, questions and comments online at this link which is also available on the school website:

<https://forms.office.com/e/bhcZeYyZSU>

The consultation will remain open until 22nd June 2023.

**Additional Information**

We have included some Frequently Asked Questions with this letter which we hope will answer some of your immediate queries.

Finally, we would like to thank you for your continued support of Newick Church of England 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 all of school community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mandy Watson', with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Mandy Watson  
Chair of Governors

## Converting to an Academy Q&A Document

Further FAQs and detailed information is available on the Trust website here:

<https://dcat.academy/join-us/faqs/>

**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. Why are we becoming an academy now?** Successive Governments have made clear their intention for schools to become academies and many schools locally and nationally are choosing to become academies now, joining Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) like DCAT.

As a Church school we are able to join a Diocesan MAT that has been established with Christian values at the heart of the organisation. The DfE has assessed that DCAT can provide us with any support we need whilst protecting the religious character of our school.

**3. Is the Diocese supportive of our school becoming an academy?** The school will engage with the Diocesan Board of Education throughout the decision-making process. The school is required to seek the consent of the Diocese to convert to academy status and as such must apply for this consent. The Diocese has provided schools with a significant amount of guidance and support to ensure correct processes are followed when considering a move to academy status.

**4. Are any other schools in our local area academies?** Yes, there are a number of academies in our local area and region. Our closest DCAT schools are in Eastbourne however DCAT has a growing number of member schools. 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.

**5. Will a move to academy status mean a new name for the school?** No. The school will continue to be called Newick Church of England Primary School. Other schools that have become academies with DCAT have also chosen to retain their existing names.

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

**7. 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.

**8. What will be the impact on our children with special needs?** There will be no change to the level of support provided. Newick Church of England 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.

**9. 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 DCAT 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.

**10. 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 DCAT, who have gone through this process before with other schools.

**11. If we move to being an academy will this change what is taught?** The Trust delegates curriculum policy to each academy. As an academy, there are greater freedoms within the curriculum and the Trust would encourage a broad and balanced curriculum that supports 'life in all its fullness' for pupils. To note, the Trust would be cautious of too much deviation from the National Curriculum.

**12. Would there be an increased emphasis on religion and Christianity in a DCAT academy?** We would maintain our status as a Church School and the existing emphasis on our Christian values and ethos would not change. Church schools are also subject to the statutory (section 48) Church School Inspection and this also would not change.

**13. 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, plus funding to meet additional responsibilities that are no longer provided for them by the Local Authority (LA). With DCAT, the money that would have been provided to the LA to run the school is provided directly to DCAT. DCAT does retain some of the budget in order to provide services to the academy. Local authorities fund their core services in a similar way.

**14. Does this improve on current funding arrangements?**

Converting to an academy will not be to our detriment or advantage financially. Funding is available to cover the costs of the conversion process itself, which is provided by central government once the go ahead to convert has been approved. In addition, the MAT Board has access to capacity funding from the Department for Education as well as opportunities to bid for capital funding on an annual basis.

**15. What are the Terms and Conditions for staff?** On conversion to academy status teachers and staff employed by the school 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.

**16. Who will employ teachers and staff following conversion?**

At present, Newick Church of England Primary School teachers and staff are employed by East Sussex County Council. Following conversion, teachers and staff will be employed directly by DCAT.

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

**18. Does DCAT have the capacity to raise educational standards?** The Trust considers that its role is to develop and enable the academy leadership to ensure all pupils can achieve their maximum potential.

It fulfils this objective through providing appropriate support and challenge to academy leaders by provisioning appropriate personnel and services to support the Headteacher and other members of staff, both internally through its Head of Improvement and externally through other partnerships (e.g. Teaching Academy Alliances, academy-to-academy support and specialist services). Additionally, the Trust provides robust governance structures to ensure accountability at all levels, with a focus on the pupil's experience and outcomes.