

St Peter's Catholic Primary School

Stakes Hill Road

Waterlooville

Hampshire

PO7 7BP

Tel: 023 9226 2599

Email: adminoffice@stpeterswaterlooville.hants.sch.uk

Website: www.stpeterswaterlooville.co.uk



**An Outstanding Catholic
Primary School**

Headteacher: Mr Richard Cunningham BA (Jt Hons), PGCE (Cantab), MSc, CMgr, FCMI.

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Monday 9th June 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Consultation to convert to Academy status and join Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust.

In line with the Diocese of Portsmouth's strategy for the development of Catholic education, our Governing Body has been carefully reviewing its options to convert to Academy status and, in so doing, now wishes to consult with parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders, on whether St Peter's Catholic Primary School should become an Academy and join Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust.

Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust (ESCAT) is located in the South of the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth and shares our Catholic ethos and values. The Governing Body has therefore been working with ESCAT, exploring the benefits of joining the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and now feels the time is right to formalise our relationship.

Underpinning the Governors' and Senior Leadership Team's views is the desire to ensure the promotion, preservation, protection, and future development of Catholic education within the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth. The Catholic Trust model will ensure that the uniqueness of each individual school is celebrated and the unique contribution of each is recognised and appreciated. The aim is also to facilitate greater sharing, adding strength and capacity to the system and ensuring that all schools are supported.

Our Governing Body's priority remains to enable the school to deliver an outstanding Catholic education for our children, whilst continuing to be at the heart of our community. We are therefore **commencing formal stakeholder consultation on Monday 9th June 2025**, for a period of four school term weeks. **Consultation will end at 3pm on Monday 7th July**

What is an Academy?

Academies are state schools, funded directly from central government, no longer under the control of the Local Authority. Academy status gives schools more freedom to be innovative and creative with the curriculum, timetabling, staffing and governance.

All academies continue to be inspected by Ofsted and comply with the same rules as other schools on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), exclusions and admissions.

What is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)?

A Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company and is responsible for overseeing the running of a number of academy schools. It has three layers of governance: the Members; the Directors; and the Local Governing Bodies.

The partnership established between all schools in the MAT ensures that the schools can share skills, best practice, and make optimum use of resources ensuring best value for money for each school.

What will be the main benefits for St Peter's Catholic Primary School joining Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust?

Educational benefits for students because of additional freedoms available to academies in terms of the curriculum we offer, and how we prioritise resources.

Greater control over finances and the money due to schools.

Building on Catholic ethos and protecting Catholic education.

The opportunity to work in close and formalised partnership with other schools and share expertise and services that will benefit all our students and staff, allowing us to target funding towards improving front line teaching and learning.

Moderation of standards across the partnership of schools to ensure the highest quality provision.

"Walking hand in hand with God to make our world a better place."

Develop our own solutions collaboratively.

What additional responsibilities will the Multi Academy Trust adopt?

Currently the Governing Body employs our staff. Going forward the Multi Academy Trust would be the employer, rather than the Governing Body.

The Academy Trust would be responsible for admissions, rather than the Local Authority (although the LA would still co-ordinate and ensure the Trust adopts clear and fair admission arrangements in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code).

Will any changes to the school be made as a result of conversion?

We do not intend to make any changes to the day-to-day work of the school following conversion, other than to adjust the governance arrangements and accountability that comes with working within a Multi Academy Trust, and to bring closer working practices between the schools in the Trust.

Our students will not notice any immediate difference: they will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms with the same teaching staff. However, in time the children will perhaps notice changes and improvements in the way that they learn for example and have greater links with each school within the Trust.

How do I learn more, and how do I respond to the consultation?

More information on the process and the answers to many of the questions you may have can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document attached to this letter. At this stage, we are not committing the school to conversion to academy status or to joining Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust. We are consulting with everyone associated with our school before Governors meet again to make a final decision.

The Governing Body would very much like to hear your opinion. If you wish to respond in writing to the consultation, we ask that you let us have your views by clicking on the following link to complete a feedback form <https://forms.office.com/e/T1zm8NbhRY> or scan the QR code below by 3pm on Monday 7th July 2025. Please include your name and contact details. Paper copies are available from the school office upon request.

Whilst we do not anticipate responding to every communication, we will provide answers to many questions via the FAQs, and we do welcome your views. Please be assured your views will be taken into consideration by our Governing Body when they meet to make a final decision.

Following the closure of the formal consultation period, the Governing Body will meet to consider how to proceed, and the outcome of the consultation process will be shared with you as soon as practicable following the meeting.

Yours faithfully



Mr R Cunningham
Headteacher



Liz Holford
Chair of Governors

Consultation Feedback Form

