



Hallam Schools' Partnership Academy Trust

To Parents and Carers

14th January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

Transfer from HSPAT to St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust

We are excited to share good news of our work with the Diocese of Hallam (and for our joint schools the Anglican Dioceses of Leeds and Sheffield), to create our new, Catholic multi academy trust. We are writing to you because all our families, parents and carers are central to our shared vision.

As you will be aware last year Hallam Schools Partnership Academy Trust was issued a Financial Notice to Improve (FNTI) due to some concerns around finance and governance. This resulted in a change in Trust leadership and appointment of a new Trust Board.

We are delighted to confirm that after 12 months of hard work we were delighted to receive a clean bill of health from the Education Skill Funding Agency just before the summer and we have also just signed off our latest set of externally audited financial accounts showing all schools in HSPAT are now in a strong educational and financial position.

One condition however of the FNTI was that the Board would look to the longer term future of the HSPAT schools within a larger and more secure Academy Trust.

Therefore after careful consideration and discussion, the Directors of HSPAT have been exploring with the Department for Education, the proposal for HSPAT academies to move to the new Catholic CMATs based on their family of schools.

We are now sharing this information with parents and carers, staff, local parishioners and other local schools. We really welcome your views on how we shape this proposal moving forward We want to understand what is important to you .

Background:

Two new Catholic multi academy trusts have been established by the Diocese of Hallam called St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust and St Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust with the view to St John Fisher joining St Clare Catholic CMAT. Our proposed date for joining is 1st March 2022.

We are being supported on this journey by a team of Diocesan officers and by the newly appointed Interim CEOs: Heidi Adcock in St Francis Catholic CMAT and Steve Davies in St Clare Catholic CMAT together with their Boards of Directors. The consent of Bishop Ralph and the Diocesan Trustees, which is a requirement before any Diocesan school can join a CMAT approved by the Diocese, has been given.



Hallam Schools' Partnership Academy Trust

Both Heidi and Steve have made this commitment to schools transferring from HSPAT into one of the new Catholic MATs:

“I am really looking forward to working with our schools on the next stage of this exciting journey. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to work together to transform Catholic education and education in joint Catholic/Church of England Schools” across our region. Blessed with so much, working together we can also unlock new resources to make a difference to our teachers, staff and governance. Together we will make a real difference to our teaching and learning outcomes to ensure our children and young people, reach their full potential.

A summary of all the benefits of this proposal and some helpful frequently asked questions are set out in an FAQ document which is available on the Diocese of Hallam website www.hallam-diocese.com. We will also make a hard copy available on request from the school office. We set out below some of the main points about this proposal.”

Why is this being considered?

We believe being an Academy as part of one of the new Catholic MATs will enable us to build on the work we are doing to work more closely with other local Catholic schools and the wider community of schools and will secure Catholic education for the long term.

What are the advantages?

The Government is clear that strong Multi Academy Trusts are an effective mechanism for ensuring the continued growth and sustainability of academies. We feel that the additional resources, expertise and economies of a large MAT model would enable the Governors of each of our schools to better secure the long-term future of our School.

In addition, it will strengthen our Catholic identity, enable the pooling of some resources. Vital new resources which will improve teaching and management practice within the schools.

What are the disadvantages?

We know that Multi Academy Trusts are not a cure for every problem and challenge faced by a School and we are aware of some difference in opinion both locally and nationally on how effective MATs can be in supporting schools in challenging circumstances. The Diocese has looked at the evidence and lessons learned from other successful Catholic MATs in putting forward this proposal for two strong Catholic MATs. However, we would encourage you to consider all the evidence and check the accuracy of assertions that are being made.

Will any changes to the School be made as a result of transfer to St Francis or St Clare Catholic MAT?

Please be assured that the Catholic character and values of our Catholic schools and joint ethos of our Catholic and Church of England Schools will remain unchanged should the transfer take place. We are not looking to change the uniform or the school day.

The new Catholic MATs are committed to retaining governors at school level and parents will continue to be represented at that level.



Hallam Schools' Partnership Academy Trust

Joint Catholic/Church of England schools will also continue to flourish in a trust that includes representation at all levels of governance from the Catholic and Anglican Dioceses, working in collaborative accord.

Your views are really important

We have set up an email address to gather views. Please email entering your school name and location in the subject box to: cmatconsultation@hspat.org

Whilst we do not anticipate responding to each and every communication, we will provide answers to questions by updating the FAQ document. We will ensure these views are passed on to the new CMATS to help them shape their next steps.

The email box will close on Friday 22nd January 2022. Thank you in advance for your input and continued support moving forward.

Yours sincerely,

A blue ink signature, appearing to be 'S. Smith', written over a blue diagonal line.

Chair of Governors

A blue ink signature, appearing to be 'S. Smith', written in a cursive style.

Chair of Trust Board

A blue ink signature, appearing to be 'Havvott', written in a cursive style.

Headteacher