

St Oswald's CofE Aided Primary School

Academy Conversion Engagement Questions & Answers

Parents/ Carers Meeting, Wednesday 15th June 2022, 5.30pm

Attendees:

Neil Dixon, CEO, CDAT
Dave Wallace, Headteacher, St Oswald's CE Primary School
Marianne Sunter, Chair of Governors, St Oswald's CE Primary School
David Rowlands, LA Governor
Rachel Holliday, Parent Governor
Sarah Phelps, Staff Governor
Hardip Hayer, Senior Project Manager, AMF UK (Ltd)

QUESTION: Are the 11 schools within CDAT all Northwest based?

ANSWER: Schools within CDAT are geographically spread. CDAT currently has eleven member schools: six are in Cheshire (Little Bollington, Brereton, Bosley St Mary's, Wybunbury Delves, Astbury St Mary's and Utkinton St Paul's), four in the Stockport/Tameside area (St Matthew's Stockport, St Paul's Stalybridge, St George's Hyde and Bredbury St Mark's) and one on the Wirral (Christ Church Moreton). All are CofE primary schools.

There is a cluster model in place. The biggest privilege is for staff to visit other schools. Genuine shared learning is encouraged. The schools in CDAT – widely spread as they are – do work successfully together – collaboration is strong.

QUESTION: There is a misconception about funding.

ANSWER: This is not a financial based decision, nevertheless there are savings to be made in terms of the school benefiting from economies of scales. Other schools within the Trust have seen savings on utilities.

COMMENT: There have been discussions about the proposal on the 'WhatsApp' group which many parents are part of. Positive conversations have been emerging about the proposal on this forum.

Parent Feedback Received Through Feedback Form or Email:

COMMENT: I would like more information on how the teachers/teaching support staff at St Oswalds feel about converting to an Academy as it looks like it will impact staff the most with a change of employer.

As a parent I do not believe converting to an academy will change much for families and children at St Oswald's based on the information provided. However staff morale is incredibly important in all schools, especially after a very tough and turbulent couple of years during the pandemic. I would support a conversion to Academy status if current staff at St Oswalds also support this conversion

RESPONSE: There was a staff consultation meeting held on the 15th June 2022 at the school. Staff asked questions about the proposal which are detailed within this document.

Staff Meeting, Wednesday 15th June 2022, 3.30pm

Attendees:

Neil Dixon, CEO, CDAT
Dave Wallace, Headteacher, St Oswald's CE Primary
Marianne Sunter, Chair of Governors, St Oswald's CE Primary School
Shirley Snewin, Foundation Governor
Hardip Hayer, Senior Project Manager, AMF UK (Ltd)
Staff X8

QUESTION: How will the finance/ funding work in regards to the Government?

Answer: The money comes in directly from the Government. The money no longer comes from the LA. The school would have its own bank account as an Academy. School would pay suppliers directly.

QUESTION: What about PE/ PP funding?

Answer: There would be no change in levels of funding. The national formula does not change. The money comes to the school monthly. CDAT pays salaries on the 15th of each month. If the school converts, CDAT confirmed that staff would transfer across with the same terms and conditions and pay scales. Pensions would continue as they are now.

QUESTION: Can we still use same providers for training purposes?

ANSWER: Yes if they are providing value for money.

QUESTION: Has there been any feedback received from parents?

ANSWER: To date the school has received two completed feedback forms from parents. One parent is in support of the proposal and the second parent is asking about how staff would be impacted by the conversion.

St Oswald' CE spoke to the Headteacher at Christ Church which is a CDAT school and asked her about how her staff reacted to converting to academy status and joining CDAT. The Headteacher responded that there was initially no difference for staff but as time went on it became more positive for staff, for example, more opportunities presented themselves to staff if they wanted to take advantage of them.

The Governing Body are keen for the proposal to go ahead; the feedback received from the consultation phase will help inform their decision making. The Governing Body met with CDAT and another Trust to find out how things worked at the Trusts. Lots of questions were asked by the school. Based on this experience, St Oswald's CE felt that CDAT would be the best fit based on the assurances provided around provision for children.

Discussions on considering academy status have been taking place for around 15 months. The school had already made the decision to consider academy status prior to the White Paper being published.

QUESTION: How do we get the feedback form?

ANSWER: The feedback form is available on the consultation website <https://stoswalds-moll.academyconsultation.co.uk/> The completed feedback form can be submitted to the following email address: consultation@stoswald-moll.cheshire.sch.uk or posted in the feedback box in the school office.

QUESTION: Will there be a cap on the number of schools that will onboard CDAT?

ANSWER: There is a limit on how many schools CDAT will take. There is currently one Trust which currently has 40 schools which consists of 5 hubs. There are advantages to being part of a large organisation where schools within the Trust can make savings in terms of economies of scale and can draw upon expertise.

CDAT is currently aiming to have between 20 – 30 schools within the Trust.

QUESTION: What about secondary schools joining CDAT?

ANSWER: There are currently only six secondary church schools within the Diocese of Chester of which five are already academies. CDAT are primary school specialists. CDAT would be open to having discussions with the secondary school in terms of what each party would be able to offer one another. However, there are no immediate plans for this to happen.

Staff Feedback Received Through Feedback Form or Email:

COMMENT: I understand the desire to be part of an academy trust and the motives initially seem honourable in terms of educational expertise etc However, having experienced the transition and integration of an outstanding state school into the fold of an academy trust and witnessing a lack of autonomy of the school and weakening of teacher's terms, conditions and pay scales (which was predicted by the more experienced and established members of staff). The budgets seem to line the pockets of wealthy power-hungry CEOs and less autonomy is afforded the headteachers and SLT. I would not recommend this as a best solution for the future of this wonderful school.