



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Consultation on Academisation

The governors are consulting about whether our school should change from being a voluntary aided school to become an academy as part of the Xavier Catholic Education Trust.

*The consultation closes at **6pm on Friday 5th December 2025***

We want to hear your views on the proposal; these can be sent to consultation@stjosephs-dorking.surrey.sch.uk

What is an academy?

An academy is a publicly funded state school that is independent of the Local Authority and receives its funding directly from the central government.

Academies have more freedom than other state schools over their finances, the curriculum, length of terms and school days and teachers' pay and conditions.

Academies are still inspected by Ofsted and follow the same rules on admissions, educational needs and exclusions as other state schools and students sit the same assessments and exams.

Most academies work closely together with other academies within larger multi-academy trusts (MATs). Catholic schools like St Joseph's must join a Catholic MAT



Who are Xavier Catholic Education Trust?

Within the diocese of Arundel and Brighton, there are two multi-academy trusts (MATs). Xavier Catholic Education Trust serves schools in Surrey and Bosco Catholic Education Trust serves schools in Sussex

The MAT operates as a charitable organisation and a “not for profit” company limited by guarantee and has a formal agreement, or contract with the Department for Education (DfE).

The MAT consists of Members, appointed by the Diocese and a Board of Directors (or Trustees), who have overall responsibility for all the academies within the MAT

Xavier has been operating since 2016 and currently consists of 22 out of the 28 Catholic schools in Surrey including our local Catholic secondary school, St Andrews in Leatherhead



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Why is this being considered?

Becoming an academy would ensure that St Joseph's maintains the legal freedoms to protect its distinctive Catholic identity.

Due to its size, St Joseph's relies on strong collaborative working with other schools and we have enjoyed a long and successful collaboration with other Catholic primary schools in the Epsom and Redhill deanery. Four of the seven primary schools within the Deanery have now joined Xavier or will be joining shortly. By joining Xavier St Joseph's will be able to sustain and develop this partnership working.

Being part of a larger MAT would help St Joseph's be more resilient and efficient – enabling us to better focus the resources we have to benefit the education of our pupils



Why Xavier Catholic Education Trust?

Within Surrey, Xavier CET is the only Catholic MAT and, as a Catholic school, St Joseph's must join a Catholic MAT.

St Joseph's have established working relationships with a number of the schools which are now part of the Xavier CET.

St Joseph's already works closely with Xavier through the support they have been providing during the period of leadership transition since our previous head teacher retired

As a Catholic MAT, the ethos and aims of Xavier are closely aligned with those of St Joseph's.

Xavier is an established MAT with a strong track record of helping school deliver excellent outcomes for their pupils.



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What would change if St Josephs became and academy?

The formal legal responsibility for the school would transfer from the governing body to the MAT trustees. The MAT trustees would appoint a local governing committee to support them in overseeing the performance of the school. Staff would be employed by the MAT, not the governors.

The school would be funded directly by the Department for Education, not through the local authority as at present.

The support and services the school currently receives from the council would, in future be provided by the MAT. The MAT would also provide some services the school currently procures itself.

The funding currently retained by the local authority to support the school would be paid to the school by DfE. A small percentage of the schools funding allocation, currently 4.5%, would be paid to the MAT to cover the cost of the support services they provide.



What are the advantages of becoming an academy?

The greater freedoms available to academies allow schools to develop and build on individual strengths in response to the needs of the community. We feel that the additional freedoms and flexibilities would enable the Governors to better secure the long-term future of our school.

The formal partnership among individual schools within Xavier CET will have benefits for St Joseph's. These include a more targeted approach to the long-term future of Catholic education in Surrey, strengthening our Catholic identity, pooling of resources and skills which will improve teaching and management practice.

Being part of a larger group of schools will improve our resilience and enable us to more efficiently use the funds allocated to us, better focusing the resources we have to benefit our pupils.

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What are the disadvantages of becoming an academy?

The greater level of independence available to academies bring additional responsibilities including statutory duties under company and charity law. Joining an established multi-academy trust means there is already a framework in place for discharging these responsibilities

There are costs involved in converting to an academy. These would be funded by the diocese so that no funding will be diverted from pupil's education.



Will any changes be made as result of conversion?

There would be no changes to the way the school operates day to day as a result of becoming an academy.

There would be no changes to the school's name or uniform

Existing staff would transfer from being employed by the governing body to being employed by the MAT and their current terms and conditions would be protected.

The Catholic character, ethos and values of the school would remain unchanged.



What happens next?

The current governing body at St Joseph's is responsible for deciding whether or not the school should become an academy. No decision has yet been made.

The governors will meet to consider the response to the consultation and decide whether or not the school should become an academy.

If governors decide the school should become an academy, the diocese and trust would also need to consent.

If all parties agree, then an application to become an academy would be submitted to the Department for Education for their consideration.

If the Department for Education are content, they would make an Academy Order which is the formal legal instrument by which the status of the school would change.



Where can I find out more?

There is a more detailed Q&A available on the school website

There is a meeting for parents at **6pm on Wednesday 19th November** where you can ask questions

You can ask questions by email to consultation@stjosephs-dorking.surrey.sch.uk

Some links with useful information are provided on the next slide



Useful Links

The Xavier Catholic Education Trust:

<https://www.xaviercet.org.uk/>

[How the Xavier Trust serves its schools](#)

Diocesan website information:

<https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/academies>

[Diocesan FAQs about Academies](#)

Government information:

[Department for Education Types of school: Overview](#)

[House of Common Library FAQs: Academies and free schools](#)

