



**29<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you are aware, the governing body of St James' Catholic Primary School has recently applied for any academy order and is considering joining the Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust. The governing body is now consulting, **until Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025**, on whether the school's conversion to academy status should take place. Further information about what becoming an academy means, and how to comment on the proposals, is set out below.

**Will St James' Catholic Primary School definitely become an academy?**

The governing body has submitted an application to convert to academy status and is working towards a conversion in September 2025. However, the school is not obligated to become an academy until the contract between the Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust (CCCAT) and the Department for Education (known as the Funding Agreement) is signed.

The CCCAT will not sign the Funding Agreement until parents and carers of pupils at the school, parents of incoming Reception and Nursery children, staff at the school, and pupils themselves have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals. We will also be writing to local primary schools and the Parish of St James' the Great, inviting them to join our consultation. A meeting for parents and carers will be held on **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 2:45pm** to discuss the academisation consultation and process.

**What is an academy?**

An academy is essentially an independent school which is funded by the state. It is independent of the local authority and receives its funding direct from central government.

**What are the benefits of being an academy?**

- As academies are independent of local authority control, they have more freedom about how they conduct themselves
- Academies receive their funding direct from central government which means schools receive more funding
- Academies have more freedom over the curriculum taught
- Academies can set their own pay and conditions of service for their staff, subject to normal employment law protections for staff
- Academies have more freedom to undertake innovative projects
- Working closely with other schools in the trust provides greater collaboration and support

**Are there any disadvantages to becoming an academy?**

- Once the school has converted there is currently no route to revert back to being a maintained school. Academy conversion is a permanent change.

**Will the admissions arrangements change?**

As a voluntary aided school, the governing body of St James' deal with its own admissions arrangements. As an academy, the CCCAT, will deal with admissions arrangements and would also still be bound by the national School Admission Code, and School Admission Appeals Code. The current admissions

arrangements will remain in place for the time being. If the academy wanted to change its admissions arrangements consultation would be required. As a Catholic academy, priority would continue to be given to children of the faith in accordance with the rules in the School Admission Code.

### **Will there be staffing changes?**

If the school converts to an academy, all staff currently employed by St James' will automatically transfer to the new academy on their current pay and conditions. Although the academy will have more freedom to amend those pay and conditions in the future, the governing body does not intend to take such a step in the foreseeable future and in any event, any change to pay and conditions would need to be consulted upon with staff representatives. CCCAT does, and will continue to, follow the Catholic Education Service's policies and guidance on employment matters.

### **Will St James' Catholic Primary School change?**

We are very proud of our wonderful school and its rich history. We are passionate about retaining our school's ethos and the feeling of belonging to a family school. For pupils, it is unlikely that they will see much, if any, changes in their day to day school lives. We do not intend to change the school except in ways which we think will improve the school even more.

Academies do have the power to vary their curriculum and vary the length of the school day, however, it is not intended to take such steps at this stage and would engage with parents/ carers, staff and pupils if we did ever intend to make such changes in the future.

### **How can I find out more?**

If you wish to find out more information, please attend our meeting on **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 2:45pm** in the school hall.

More information about academies can be found on the DfE website:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/academies>

More information about the Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust can be found at:

[Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust | We are His body, living and learning as one. \(corpuschristitrust.co.uk\)](http://corpuschristitrust.co.uk)

### **How can I respond to the consultation?**

To respond to the consultation on whether the conversion of the school to academy status should take place representations can be made in writing to:

The Governing Body  
St James' Catholic Primary School  
Cheriton Close  
Hattersley  
SK14 3DQ

Or by email to:

[admin@st-james-hyde.tameside.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-james-hyde.tameside.sch.uk)

If you wish to email your response please ensure the subject of the email reads: **Response to Academy Consultation**

The closing date for representations to be made is **3:30pm on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025**.

Best wishes,

Kevin Toms  
Chair of Governors