



St. Werburgh's Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School,  
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Derby City Council

10<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you with an update on the proposed conversion to academy status at St Werburgh's Primary School.

At the end of the Summer Term, staff, parents and carers were encouraged to communicate their thoughts on the conversion proposals via the online and paper feedback forms. The Governing Body are extremely grateful for your responses and would like to address any questions or concerns raised from the consultation below:

**(DDAT) Seems to be a very large academy. What pupil age range and numbers on roll does each school in DDAT have? Will Werburgh's be a little fish in a big pond?**

There are 19 schools within DDAT, details of which are on the DDAT website: [www.ddat.org.uk](http://www.ddat.org.uk). The Trust is predominantly made up of Primary Schools with Derby Cathedral School opening this September as the first Church of England Secondary School in the Diocese. Each DDAT school is entirely unique and individual, with each having their own Local Governing Body to reflect the individual communities they serve. DDATs role is to provide bespoke support tailored to each school recognising that a one size fits all approach is not appropriate. Each DDAT school has its own strengths and areas for development and can access support and provide support to other schools within the Trust.

**A lot of DDAT schools appear to be more Derbyshire based i.e. Matlock/Belper. Is this a detriment to Werburgh's? How can resource sharing be effective with the distance?**

DDAT have schools throughout Derby City and Derbyshire. The schools closest to St Werburgh's are Bishop Lonsdale, Hardwick and Walter Evans Primary Schools. DDAT are in the process of establishing a 'Derby City Hub' to support school improvement and enable these schools to work more closely together.

**Not enough information available to make an informed decision**

DDAT are a transparent organisation and are more than happy to answer any questions you have.

**Why are the LA opposed?**

Governors are aware that the Government's academy agenda is to some extent a controversial one, although less so in recent years as more schools choose to become academies. The reasons behind the controversy relate to the weakening of the Local Authority as schools begin to operate independently of local government structures. As government funding for schools is now distributed through different channels (multi-academy trusts, Teaching School Alliances etc.) and directly to schools, this leaves less resource at Local Authority level.



**How will Werburgh's ensure it is allocated the appropriate level of funding for pupils? Will it be the same for all DDAT schools or will some receive more/less?**

All schools receive their own budget which is calculated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. DDAT, unlike some academy trusts, do not pool school budgets which means that all funds meant for St Werburgh's go to St Werburgh's and are not allocated to other schools within the Trust.

**Will there be an executive/new head overseeing Werburgh's and other DDAT schools and where will the funding for this new role come from?**

No, there will not be a new head at St Werburgh's. There are no plans for an Executive Head arrangement at St Werburgh's and any decisions regarding the leadership of the school would be delegated to the Local Governing Body as it is now. DDAT have secured some funding to pilot a new 'Hub Director' role in Derby City, however this is not an Executive Head model and this role aims to provide additional capacity to the school improvement team as well as lead and promote the close working between the Derby City DDAT schools.

**At present the SEN budget is small to Werburgh's, will this increase and how will the decision process be made on how much is allocated and which pupils are the priority. At present Werburgh's decide if a new level of approval is implemented this will add more time and bureaucracy to an already lengthy, time consuming process**

The SEN budget will work in same way as it does now.

**If it doesn't work or is not as successful as you thought, can St Werburgh's opt out and go back to the LA?**

The school can be re-brokered by the DFE and join a different academy trust, however this has never happened with any of the schools that have joined DDAT. As a church school, St Werburgh's are already familiar with DDAT and the Diocese as organisations, and Governors will make this decision in full understanding that this is a long-term partnership arrangement with a Church organisation.

**It would be great to have the opportunity to talk to parents/leaders at some other DDAT schools**

We can request this from another DDAT school who would be happy to talk about their experiences.

**This must not have a detrimental effect on funding and the school must benefit**

The Governors consider that joining DDAT will be a positive move for the school in terms of standards of support. Academy funding works slightly differently to maintained schools, however with the new National Funding Formula, the way schools are funded is changing to that similar to academy funding.

**Concerns re classes taught by non-qualified teachers**

This is a Local Governing Body decision but DDAT are firmly of the belief that classes should be taught by qualified teachers.

**Concerns re school holidays and term changes**

Any changes to term dates will be a decision of the Local Governing Body, as is the case now.

**How would funding be managed?**

The school budget will be managed in school in the same way as it is currently however, additional support is provided by the DDAT team to support ongoing financial viability and the management of additional tasks as an academy.

**Believe that the decision has already been reached and school will become an academy. I hope it is a positive move and we will see the desired changes. Would like more information of DDAT schools – did they voluntarily become academies or was it as a result of poor Ofsted?**

The academy conversion is not agreed until a Funding Agreement is signed by the Secretary of State for Education, usually around a month before the planned conversion date. Governors genuinely want to seek feedback from the community to inform a decision. DDAT has a mix of schools at different developmental stages. The first 3 schools who joined the trust under a directive Academy Order in Special Measures have now been re-inspected and are judged to be at least good in all areas. There are a number of 'Outstanding' Schools in the Trust (including Hardwick Primary School) who joined due to the enhanced school improvement support offered. These schools actively work with all other schools in the Trust, sharing knowledge and experience in any way that is required.

**Unnecessary changes increasing stress on staff**

Staff are fully supported throughout and there will be no changes to their terms and conditions. DDAT works closely with the Trade Unions to ensure staff are fully informed and protected.

Governors would now like to consult more broadly with parents and carers as to the best way forward for the school. We are therefore holding a consultation meeting on the **19<sup>th</sup> September 2018** where representatives of the Governing Body, Senior Leadership Team and Derby Diocesan Academy Trust (DDAT) will be on hand to discuss academy status with attendees and answer any further questions. **The meeting will start at 5pm** and last for approximately one hour. The meeting will be fairly informal allowing all parents / carers an opportunity to ask questions.

Yours sincerely

Ann Alton  
Head Teacher



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**Consultation Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – Academy Status**

Yes, I/we will be attending (please circle)

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_

No, I/we will not be attending (please circle)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_

