

Kingsley St John's CofE (VA) Primary School

Academy Conversion Engagement Questions & Answers

Parents/ Carers Meeting, Wednesday 15th February 2023, 5.00pm

Attendees:

Rachel Jones, Head teacher, Kingsley St John's CofE (VA) Primary School
Gail Fullbrook, Chair of Governors, Kingsley St John's CofE (VA) Primary School
Neil Dixon, CEO, Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT)
Hardip Hayer, Project Manager, AMF (UK) Ltd
Emily Comyn, Project Support Officer, AMF (UK) Ltd
Parents X4

QUESTION: The Regional Director and Advisory Board has acknowledged a glut of schools wanting to join CDAT – does the proposed conversion date of 01/12/23 take this into account?

ANSWER: Yes – the process is taking longer than normal, but 01/12/23 is realistic.

QUESTION: Does CDAT have a limit to the number of schools it will take on in mind?

ANSWER: It is envisaged that there will be six regional clusters of approx. six schools each – ie: 36 schools in total. This brings the benefits of being in a bigger trust but keeps the family/local feel.

QUESTION: School staff have been striking recently – the fight is with the government and so solidarity is needed – will striking still be possible once part of CDAT?

ANSWER: Yes – unionisation is allowed and staff in CDAT schools took part in the recent strikes. CDAT meets with Trade Unions on a regular basis and has a Trade Union Recognition Agreement.

QUESTION: Will the school be worse off financially once it's joined CDAT?

ANSWER: No – all schools that have joined CDAT are in a better financial position now than they were at the point of joining.

QUESTION: Can you clarify how this is possible?

ANSWER: Currently the LA takes 15% of all funding provided to schools to provide services such as Behaviour Support and Educational Psychologists, which schools are really not able to utilise properly due to lack of capacity in the LA. CDAT takes 3-5% in top slice, so immediately schools have more money.

Joining CDAT provides benefits such as economies of scale in outsourcing services such as buildings maintenance, HR and finance.

All additional grants will go directly to the school – nothing will be kept by CDAT.

QUESTION: Is the top slice likely to change?

ANSWER: (Head teacher) Technically it can, yes.

ANSWER: (CEO) CDAT has a moral safety net that comes from its Christian ethos – morals are paramount – it has no plans to become a 'business', it is run to provide a high standard of Christian education.

QUESTION: Is the government's agenda of academisation too far down the line for there to be a U-turn?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Parents don't want good staff to be moved out of the school permanently/out of school more – will there be redeployment of staff?

ANSWER: CDAT doesn't force people to move but can help with new opportunities if staff want to progress – the career progression opportunities are better within CDAT.

QUESTION: Will staff pay stay the same?

ANSWER: Yes – and all T&Cs/continuous service will remain too.

QUESTION: Will SEND arrangements remain as they are currently?

ANSWER: Yes – responsibility for SEND funding etc remains with the local authority and the process will continue as it is now.

QUESTION: Will staffing capacity within CDAT grow as the number of schools grows?

ANSWER: Yes.

Parent Feedback Received Through Feedback Form or Email:

COMMENT: To support the decision to keep this lovely school open and strong for the future

QUESTION: Will converting to academy status affect your acceptance of summer born children starting school at CSA (Compulsory School Age), age 5?

ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: Will there be a change of staff/ head?

ANSWER: No.

.