

SACRED HEART RC NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Head teacher: Mrs Helen Brown

  
Cecil Road, Paignton, Devon, TQ3 2SH  
Tel: 01803 558298 - Fax: 01803 664838



Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to you in regard to our school becoming an Academy as part of 'Plymouth CAST'. This new company is a single multi academy trust to support those schools that are part of the Catholic Diocese of Plymouth. This 35-school trust is the largest of its kind in the country and it is a model that has been applauded by government for its innovative design. It will allow us to retain local control about how the school is run but at the same time create a network of additional monitoring and support. In this way, development needs can be identified more quickly and resources within the school can be directed to where they will have most impact on the quality of education received by our pupils. You will find enclosed a sheet entitled, 'An Introduction to Plymouth CAST' that explains a little more about why we are proposing this change and the impact it will have on those within and outside the school.

Our Catholic schools have been Voluntary Aided since 1944 and so it has been a very long process for the Diocese to decide whether it wished to change the legal status of the schools. Diocesan and school representatives, with a wide range of professional advisers, have been working on the development of this model since 2010. The diocesan Bishop and Trustees, as well as the individual schools, had to be convinced that this was a genuine step forward for Catholic education - that it would be both more effective in its education and more financially and legally stable. After three years' work, it is now proposed that, along with the other diocesan schools, our school should become an academy within Plymouth CAST in April of this year.

However, the final agreement on conversion is not formalised until early March and so we want to use the next month to explain more about what academy conversion will entail and to give you an opportunity to ask questions and make your views known. Further details about how this will be done are set out below.

In brief, the advantages that this proposal brings are in the additional support and economies of operating within a larger network. As explained at the beginning of this letter, it is not about making changes to this school. Thus, oversight of the school will still be the responsibility of the governing body and day to day management will be the responsibility of the head teacher. It's just that, behind the scenes, we will have more support to fulfil these roles.

As a parent you will not have to deal with changes to the all the things with which you are familiar. The school terms, the timings of the school day, the school name and uniforms, the teachers and support staff, the curriculum etc. will all remain the same. We will also continue to work alongside neighbouring schools in the local learning community and retain the effective partnership working we have already established.

If you would like to ask any questions about this proposal, find out more information or tell us what you think, you can either:

e-mail us at: [brown@sacred-heart-primary.torbay.sch.uk](mailto:brown@sacred-heart-primary.torbay.sch.uk) or

speak to Mrs. Brown directly or write and mark your letters for the attention of Miss Kate McMillan (our Chair of Governors) and hand them into the office.

The governors will be meeting on 27th February 2014 to review all responses to this consultation so that, if necessary, they can raise any unanticipated concerns with the diocesan trustees before the final agreement to convert is signed. The Governing Body will make a formal response to the consultation on the school website shortly after 27th February which will be found at the following address: [www.sacred-heart-primary.torbay.sch.uk](http://www.sacred-heart-primary.torbay.sch.uk)

Best wishes,