



## Bicton C of E Primary School and Nursery

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Website: [www.bictonschool.org.uk](http://www.bictonschool.org.uk)  
Head teacher: Mrs Natalie Johnson BA (Hons)



5<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

### BICTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS AND JOIN SHROPSHIRE CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMIES TRUST.

For some time, the governing body of **Bicton CE Primary School** has been carefully considering the school's future in a fast-changing and increasingly challenging educational landscape.

The Church of England's ambition is for all schools to be part of a strong multi academy trust (MAT), as strong MATs are now a better vehicle for school improvement than Local Authorities. Over recent years, the support that Shropshire Council has been able to provide to us as a maintained school has diminished, as funding for their education improvement service has fallen dramatically. Maintained schools are also now feeling the impact of a reduction in other local authority support services to schools. We want our school to be part of a strong and sustainable group of schools so that we are well-placed to collectively meet the challenges we will face over the coming years and ensure we have the right support to continue to improve.

In October 2023, following our Ofsted inspection monitoring visit, the DFE's Regional Director for the West Midlands, made the decision that our school should join a multi-academy trust as a sponsored academy. Subsequently, at the DFE West Midlands Advisory board on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024, the formation of a new multi-academy trust in Shropshire was approved and it is this trust we are to join.

The trust it is proposed we are to join is a new multi academy trust being established in Shropshire through a joint project between Hereford Diocese and Lichfield Diocese. We are a school in Lichfield Diocese. The values of '**Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust**' are closely aligned with our school, in particular their ethos around the inclusion of all pupils and enabling us to retain our individual school identity. Governors and school leaders at Bicton CE Primary School have been able to work closely with Lichfield Diocese and trust leaders to be involved in the formation of the new Trust. As a sponsored academy within the Trust, there will be dedicated funding from the DFE for the Trust to use to support further school improvement work at Bicton CE Primary School. Working with the Trust and its schools is something that Governors feel would continue to strengthen our school, providing new and further opportunities to pupils and staff.

The governing body view this as an opportunity for Bicton CE Primary School to formally strengthen existing working relationships with other primary schools within Shropshire who share our Christian ethos and values. The new Trust will adopt model Articles of Association (2023) approved by the Church of England and Department for Education. These articles ensure that the Christian foundation of each church school entering the Trust would be protected. Like any other state school, our school - as part of the Trust - would continue to be free to attend, we would be inspected in the same way, and children would take the same statutory tests.



## When would our school join the Trust?

We anticipate that the Trust will open on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024. We hope to join with seven other Shropshire schools on or soon after this date, as part of the founding group of schools. There are about 25 schools who are interested in joining the trust and so there will be more schools joining in phases over a rolling period. This will ensure that there are enough pupils in the trust to make it financially viable to support effective school improvement work through a small central team, initially comprising of a Chief Executive Officer and Chief Finance Officer who can help the trust achieve its aims and vision.

## Gathering your views

Whilst this is a decision of the DFE through the Regional Director, and there is no statutory requirement as a sponsored academy to consult stakeholders, we would like to receive your views. Governors believe that the new Trust is the best home for our school, but they want to find out what you and other stakeholders think too. We have also prepared a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document to help answer some of the questions we anticipate you may have. This accompanies this letter.

We will also be hosting a meeting which will help you to understand what becoming an academy and joining Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust means for the school and for the children and the staff. We will answer any questions you may have and, most importantly, enable you to share your views.

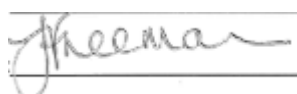
**We invite parents to attend an information meeting at the school on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July at 3.30pm.**

The meeting will be an opportunity to ask questions about becoming an academy and joining the trust, and how this will affect the school. Representatives from Governors, school leadership and Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust will be available to talk to you and you will also be able to register your comments, queries and any thoughts on opportunities or concerns.

You can also have your say by completing our online survey via [this MS Form](#).

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours sincerely,



Juliette Freeman

**Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body**

Enclosed:

- Academy consultation FAQs
- 



I/we will be attending the information meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> July at:

Child's name ..... Class .....

Parent(s)/carer(s).....

