



Dear parents

You may well be aware of the increase in the creation of Academies in our education system in recent years.

This is a time of major change in education, with a significant reduction in funding for schools which presents for all of us the challenge of how best to respond to these changes in order to continue to provide the best possible education for our pupils in the future.

The Croydon Catholic Schools Cluster has long been recognised as a strong partnership that collaborates effectively to support teaching and learning across all our schools.

This letter is to inform you that our Governing Body has taken the decision to join the newly formed Croydon Catholic Primary Schools Umbrella Trust consisting of:

St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School

St Chad's Catholic Primary School

The Federation of St Joseph's Catholic Junior, Infant and Nursery Schools

St Aidan's Catholic Primary School

St James the Great RC Primary and Nursery School

Good Shepherd Catholic Primary & Nursery School

Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School

Our governors see this as a great opportunity for all our schools to work together in an uncertain educational landscape to promote and develop Catholic education within the London Borough of Croydon

The Umbrella Trust has the following aims:

- To enable all Catholic schools within the Umbrella Trust to provide high quality education for all their pupils and achieve the best possible standards.
- To maintain, promote and develop the Catholic ethos in our schools.
- To support all the Croydon Catholic Primary Schools in their individual visions and to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential within a Catholic community.
- To identify areas of strength in our schools.
- To identify areas of potential difficulty in any of the schools and action appropriate intervention by offering effective and on-going support to any school within the Trust facing challenging circumstances within the capacity of the group.
- To broker support from external providers as appropriate.
- To share expertise and best practice.
- To secure cost effective resources and identify savings through economy of scale purchasing and negotiating services and agreements.

Our Partnership

With this in mind we have formed a local partnership of seven schools, committed to working together to share best practice and to provide the support and challenge which schools need to ensure success. Some of the schools within

the umbrella trust have already converted to academy status while others are in the process of doing so. Almost all of these schools are judged by Ofsted to be either good or outstanding and there is a huge amount of expertise and strength spread throughout the partnership.

Why an umbrella trust?

In order to secure a commitment across the partnership and working closely with Southwark Diocese and the EFA, we have established an Umbrella Trust. Under this model, each academy has its own separate governing body, as we do now, and will have its own individual funding agreement. This is not the same as the multi- Academy trust model. We have chosen the Umbrella Trust model as this allows us to continue to run our own schools independently within the overarching Trust. The Umbrella Trust will consist of members from each school and will support the strategic direction of the School partnership and shared initiatives such as the procurement of joint services.

Benefits

As a group, we consider the further benefits of this way of working to be as follows:

- Our partnership will commit to and benefit from robust systems of monitoring and evaluation, including challenge and support, to ensure that everyone aspires to be the best they can be.
- Our partnership will benefit from a shared commitment to staff development to ensure each member of staff has the opportunity to become an outstanding practitioner.
- Our members will collaborate to procure the highest quality services, at the best value, to meet the needs of all the partner schools and embrace future opportunities.
- Our schools will work collaboratively to nurture talent and develop sustainable leadership through quality training, coaching and mentoring.
- Our schools will work together with a range of multi-agencies to ensure the well-being of our communities.

We have been very keen to find a model which allows our schools the freedom to work together in a way which suits our individual needs and to retain the strong relationship we have fostered over many years. We are looking forward to embracing the exciting opportunities that this will bring to ensure the continued success of our schools in the future.