

# Academisation

Where are we now?

# Do we have to become an academy?

- No, at present we don't, but.....
- If the County can't provide us with the support we need, then we would.
- The vast majority of secondary schools in Bucks are already academies.
- If enough primaries become academies then the County might not find it worth while to provide various services.
- Failing schools can be forced to become sponsored academies.

# What happens to Foundation Schools?

- Many of the small rural schools such as ours are too small to become stand-alone academies and would go into a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT).
- Foundation schools need to join a Foundation MAT – we can't join a non-foundation MAT but non-foundation schools can join a foundation MAT.
- The DfE can direct a failing foundation school to join a non-foundation MAT.

# Could we join an existing secondary school MAT?

- Virtually none of the Bucks secondary schools are church schools so their MATs are not suitable for us
- We are not a feeder for a particular secondary
- If we joined eg Great Marlow or Borlase many Frieth children would not go to that school
- Most of the local secondaries are much bigger – we would feel outnumbered
- Even if we could join a non- church MAT would we want to give up/dilute our ethos as a foundation school?

# What is the Diocese doing?

- The Diocese of Oxford set up its own Multi-Academy Trust in 2012.
- ODST is the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust
- Originally set up to be a sponsor for a few failing schools, now has nearly 20 schools.
- No geographical boundaries but mainly in Oxon with a few in Maidenhead
- A new 'sister' trust has been set up, mainly for Bucks schools and will start taking in schools next year.

# What are our choices?

- 1. Do nothing (yet).
- 2. Join ODST.
- 3. Join Bucks-based Diocesan MAT.
- 4. Form our own MAT with like-minded local schools.

# Choices - 1. Do nothing ....yet

- We are not forced to do anything yet so we could wait and see what happens.
- Government policy appears to be that all schools will become academies in due course.
- The risk is that if we delay we will be left with fewer options and have to go where we can.

## Choices - 2. Join ODST

- The 'easy' option, it's already running.
- We can talk to other schools in ODST.
- We know who the trustees are, who the staff are, what the deal is.
- But – we can't have any say in how it works.
- Most schools are in Oxon.
- Not geographically convenient for governor training, sharing staff training etc.
- It's getting full.



# Choices - 3. Join the Bucks MAT

- A fairly 'easy' option, it's similar to ODST.
- We can talk to other schools in ODST.
- We know who the trustees are, who the staff are, what the deal is – to start with many of the staff will be shared with ODST.
- But – we can't have any say in how it works.
- First schools to join might be in Aylesbury or MK.
- Could be just as geographically inconvenient.

## Choices - 4. Form our own local MAT

- We already work with the Marlow liaison group of schools
- Other local schools could be interested.
- We could design the MAT to work the way we want it.
- But – it would be more work to set up.
- Which schools would we want to work with?

# Some benefits of academisation

- More control – over money, curriculum, teaching hours.
- Economies of scale.
- An improved career structure for staff.
- Sharing skills between schools.
- Sharing staff and governor training.
- Save time – look at each policy once for the group, not for each school.
- Bigger pool of potential governors.

# Some drawbacks of academisation

- Teething problems.
- Some loss of local control.
- Some loss of governor representation.
- Fear of loss of identity.

# How is a MAT governed?

- There are members of the trust
- Then there is the governing body of the MAT
- Below that the individual governing bodies, more like committees, dealing with day-to-day matters in individual schools

# Next steps

- When/if the governors feel ready to go ahead, they must decide which route they want to take.
- They make a formal resolution to become an academy or join an existing trust.
- There is a period of consultation for parents, staff and others.
- The Diocese will do everything they can to support us whatever we decide to do.
- An academy order is issued.
- In due course we begin to think of belonging to the trust, not just to our individual schools.

# What's happening with Ibstone (1)?

- Ibstone is an Infants school, they want to become a Primary as well.
- 2 places available at Frieth for Yr 3 children.
- Most other leavers go to Stokenchurch.
- If Ibstone becomes a Combined School, Stokenchurch won't make provision for yr 3 intake.
- Mary Towerton thus forced to also become Combined school.

# What's happening with Ibstone (2)?

- We have formally objected to Ibstone's plans as they will create more school places and there are over 200 spare places locally.
- This may affect the viability of our school.
- There is a Representation Period running from 21/10 – 18/11. See local press.
- Please make comments and objections to **wwest@bucksc.gov.uk** by **18 November 2016**
- Bucks CC will make a decision by 18/01/17



# Full circle

- The first church schools were set up by the Church of England to educate children who wouldn't otherwise get an education – any children, not just C of E.
- C of E schools including Frieth welcome pupils of all faiths and none.
- It seems possible that the C of E will end up as the main provider of education for primary age children as they were originally.

# Some useful links

- <http://www.odst.org.uk/>
- <http://www.ibstoneschool.org.uk/about-us/primary-expansion>
- <http://www.marytowerton.co.uk/primary-school-expansion/>