



Let your light shine!

Frieth CEC Primary School
Frieth
Henley-on-Thames, Oxon
RG9 6PR
☎ 01494 881554
Email: office@friethschool.co.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

Consultation on Frieth CEC School becoming an Academy as part of the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST)

The Governing Body of Frieth CEC School is consulting regarding the school becoming an academy as part of ODBST. We have, for some time, been considering the future of Frieth school and would like to share our plans, giving parents and members of the community a chance to hear about our proposals, ask questions and give their opinions.

To enable you to be a part of this, we have arranged a meeting on **Thursday 28 January 2021 at 7pm**. This will start a period of consultation which will end on Friday 19 February 2021. Due to current government restrictions on gatherings and travel, we have had to arrange this meeting as a virtual opportunity to hear about our plans and to ask questions of the Trust. The link to the meeting is:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/3590955730?pwd=a3Z5ZEZXc2ZGRE1zTR4UOVxcOpFZz09>

Meeting ID: 359 095 5730

Passcode: 186364

If the proposal is taken forward, it is anticipated that Frieth School would become an academy in June 2021. The Governors of Frieth School are making this proposal because:

- The Full Governing Board of Frieth School has spent some time over the last few years investigating the possibility of becoming an academy. We considered forming our own Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) with other local schools, either with other local Church of England primary schools, or with both primary and secondary schools within the Marlow Liaison Group. The problem with creating our own MAT with local primary schools is that all the church schools are small; we would probably need about 6 schools to provide the necessary pupil numbers, and we felt that we just did not have the necessary skills to form such a MAT. An alternative would be to join with some of the Marlow schools, who were considering forming what is now the Marlow Educational Trust. However, the majority of the schools are considerably bigger than Frieth and we felt that our voice would be lost. In addition, virtually none of the secondary schools in Bucks are church schools. We want to join a trust which respects our status as a Foundation school, but none of the Marlow secondary schools are church schools, and we felt very strongly we would be constantly struggling to maintain our church principles.
- In the past, the school received support for such things as HR and personnel, staff and governor training, school improvement, and legal advice from Bucks County Council. The Council had set up Bucks Learning Trust in 2013 as a separate company to offer such support, but as more and more secondary schools became academies and no longer bought these services, the Trust lost key employees and eventually went into

Headteacher: Mrs Tina Nowell *BEd (Hons), MA, NPQH, EYPS, NPQEL*

Website: www.friethschool.co.uk



liquidation in March 2019. By this time the school had been getting most of its support services from the Oxford Diocese, and the governing body came to the conclusion that its only real option of becoming an academy was by joining the Diocesan Trust.

- When we started talks with the Diocese about joining their Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) the only possibility was to join the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust, ODSST, which mainly covered schools in Oxfordshire, was nearly full and geographically was not entirely convenient for us. In due course, the new Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust, ODBST, was set up and began to admit schools. Individual members of the governing body met with other academy Chairs of governing boards and Heads of schools both in and outside the ODBST, and then Mrs Reid and our Bursar also met their opposite numbers in other schools within the Trust.
- In March 2020 the then Headteacher, Mrs Jo Reid, resigned, and the governors appointed Mrs Tina Nowell as an Interim Head for the year 2020-21, with one of the key aims being to oversee the move to academy status. Mrs Nowell and the governors have taken part in a number of meetings with David Cousins, School Improvement Manager and former CEO of the ODBST, and other members of his staff, and the Trust has now in principle agreed to support our application to join them. We feel that this is the only way that we can obtain the support we need as a small school, that the ODBST will respect and support our foundation status, and that the school will be able to retain its own individuality and ethos.

Where can I find further information? How can I have my say?

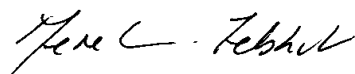
More detailed information and Questions and Answers are available on our school website

https://www.friethschool.co.uk/website/odbst_mat/513390 or from the school office. Materials from the presentations will also be available on the school's website after the consultation meeting. Further information about academies is also available on the Department for Education website (www.education.gov.uk/academies).

You can have your say by:

- Emailing any questions to office@friethschool.co.uk
- Attending this meeting for the parents and the community of Frieth CEC School on Thursday 28 January at 7pm.

We hope that you can attend the meeting and support us in our decision making.



Mrs Merelina Tebbot
Chair of Governors

Headteacher: Mrs Tina Nowell *BEd (Hons), MA, NPQH, EYPS, NPQEL*

Website: www.friethschool.co.uk

