



# ST BONAVENTURE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mrs. Sarah Ballantine MA

Wednesday 24 April 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

You may already be familiar with the visionary direction for Catholic education established by the Bishops' of England and Wales, which advocates for Catholic schools to join Catholic multi-academy trusts. The Bishops' vision highlights the importance of improving educational outcomes through collaboration between schools and reinforcing and strengthening Catholic identity.

The Newman Catholic Trust was established by Clifton Diocese two years ago, to realise the Bishops' vision by providing a strong local offer for Catholic schools. Over the past two years governors have been regularly reviewing when the right time would be to join the Trust, and we believe that this may be the right time. As such St Bonaventure's has submitted an expression of interest in joining the Newman Trust during its upcoming expansion phase. Before making any final decisions, our Governing Body would like to begin a consultation process with you, as well as with other stakeholders including our staff.

The potential benefits of joining the Newman Catholic Trust, for St Bonaventure's, are that our school would gain access to a broader range of resources and support. Some tangible examples include:

- Enhanced support services in important areas such as school improvement, specialist support for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and data analysis to drive pupil progress.
- Collaborative opportunities with other schools to enrich the continuous professional development of our staff.
- Realising efficiencies through economies of scale in centralised services and procurement, resulting in reinvestments that directly benefit our school community.

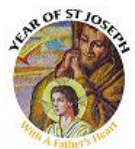
Furthermore, joining the Trust during its next expansion phase would enable St Bonaventure's to have a significant voice in shaping the Trust's development and ethos.

Recognising past shortcomings in our consultation process on this issue we are committed to fostering transparent and inclusive dialogue. As such, we have worked closely with our staff, prior to submitting the expression of interest, to enable them to meet with Newman Trust leaders, to have their queries and concerns answered, and to provide feedback to governors.

## So, what comes next?

The process for a school to consider joining a multi-academy trust is set by the Department for Education (DfE) and consists of several key steps:

- A school expresses interest to join a trust.
- Submission and discussion of an application with the DfE for consideration.



- A period of consultation and due diligence.
- A formal vote by the Governing Body on whether or not to join the Trust, followed by a proposal of joining date to the DfE and the Trust.

### How do I find out more?

To ensure transparency and opportunity for engagement, we have organised a series of meetings where you will have an opportunity to speak to governors and Newman Trust leaders to find out more about the Trust. We will share further details on proposed timescales, including when this will be considered by the Department for Education Advisory Board and the timescale for decision making. This will also give you an opportunity to ask any questions, or raise any concerns you have directly. We have scheduled the meetings across a range of dates and time slots to try to enable as many people to attend as possible.

Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 9-10AM	In person, at school
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2.15-3.15PM	In person, at school
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> May 6-7PM	Virtually (link to be circulated)

Additionally, we will be updating the frequently asked questions section on our website to provide you with more comprehensive information.

### How can I express my views?

Your views matter to us and we are committed to ensuring that they are heard and considered. A formal link to share your perspectives ahead of the DfE advisory board meeting will be shared when we receive it. We will also conduct our own stakeholder consultation, allowing time for feedback to be collected and reviewed by the Governing Body before any decisions are made.

If you have any questions or require further clarification in the interim please contact the governors via our clerk at [clerk.st.bonaventures@bristol-schools.uk](mailto:clerk.st.bonaventures@bristol-schools.uk)

We appreciate your continued support and engagement as we embark on the next step in St Bonaventure's growth.

Yours sincerely,

*K. C. Lavington*

Kate Lavington  
Chair of Governors

*Mrs Ballantine*

Sarah Ballantine  
Headteacher

