



Sherburn CE VC Primary School

Supplemental FAQs relating to Church of England status

1. Will we remain a Church of England school following conversion?

Yes. Like the school, the academy will be designated with a Church of England religious character and the York Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) will remain the relevant religious authority.

2. How would the Church of England foundation of the school be protected in the new arrangements?

We are working closely with the DBE to ensure that the Church of England character of the school will be preserved and developed in the new structure. Some of the key ways this would be secured are:

a. Securing an important foundation presence in governance arrangements

Foundation appointments will be made at each governance level. These appointments will have a special role in, and responsibility for, ensuring that the Church of England character of the academy is preserved and developed and that the academy is conducted in accordance with any trust deed relating to the land.

The arrangements in Ebor Academy Trust are:

- i. **At Member level** - There are five members, including the Diocese of York Educational Trust (DYET), a DYET appointee, and York St John University.
- ii. **At Director/Trustee Board level** – There is an individual appointed by DYET to serve on the Board alongside other Member and Co-opted Trustees.
- iii. **At Local Governing Committee level** - The proportion of foundation local governors, and the way that they would be appointed, would be broadly the same as the position on the school's current governing body, save that both the Trust and the DBE will need to support a foundation appointment in order for it to be made.

b. Careful consideration of leadership appointments

When the headteacher of a Church of England school is appointed, the governing body considers matters such as the individual's ability and capacity to preserve and develop the religious character of the school.

In making appointments, the same kind of questions will be asked to ensure that any appointment is the right one for the academy, and advice from the DBE would be sought in connection with the appointment process. The DBE will also need to consent to headteacher appointments. Similar

provisions apply to the appointment of the Chief Executive and any Executive Principal or similar who might be appointed to oversee the work of a Church of England academy.

c. **Ensuring that the school converts to an academy on an “as is” basis**

When a Voluntary Controlled school like Sherburn converts to an academy, it ceases to have its Voluntary Controlled status. This is because the status can only apply to a school maintained by the local authority. However, the legal arrangements put in place with the Department for Education seek to ensure that the protections that apply in the Voluntary Controlled school context apply in much the same way to the school after it becomes an academy. For example, the legal framework would require that:

- **Religious education** continues to be taught **as previously** (any changes way from the local authority syllabus would be done in close discussion with the Diocese).
- The **daily act of Collective Worship** continues to be provided **in accordance with the trust deed/Anglican tradition**.
- The special provisions **relating to the appointment of staff** at a Voluntary Controlled school continue to apply in relation to academy staff.
- The academy continues to be **inspected** in the same manner under the SIAMS (and Ofsted) framework. (SIAMS stands for Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools and provides a process for evaluating the extent to which church schools are distinctively and recognisably Christian institutions.)
- **School land** (except the playing fields) continues to be **held on trust by Church trustees**.

3. **Would the academy change its admission arrangements?**

Following conversion, the determined admissions policy would simply be updated to reflect the change in status and revised governance arrangements. In this respect, the admissions authority with responsibility for setting admissions arrangements would change: the Trust would be the relevant admissions authority in place of the Local Authority.

It would be open to the Trust to consult on changes to the admissions arrangements in future, but changes could only be made where they are in compliance with the statutory admissions code and related legislation. Changes to the oversubscription criteria would need to be consulted upon in the usual manner. In considering the admissions policy and related arrangements, the Trust would also need to have regard to the DBE's guidance and advice.