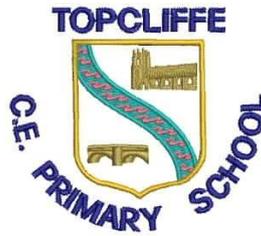


Topcliffe C of E (VC) Primary School

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Growing, believing, achieving together

24th April 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are writing to advise that the Governing Body of Topcliffe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School (Topcliffe) is actively considering conversion to academy status.

Much has been in the news over recent months about academisation and the government's recent 'U-turn' on forcing all schools to become one. However, it is clear that an academised system is still very much the direction the government wishes schools to take.

With this in mind, we have been presented with an opportunity that we believe could further develop the high standards and special ethos our children and staff currently enjoy and thrive in. Specifically, we have been invited to join a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) that is in the process of being set up.

The working title of the MAT is Elevate Multi Academy Trust and the foundation partners will be Meadowside Primary School and Aspin Primary School (which are both in Knaresborough and which are both classed as Outstanding schools by Ofsted), alongside Knayton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School (which is a similar size to Topcliffe and another Church of England school). The intended governance structure of the proposed MAT will reflect its collaborative arrangement between Church and non-Church academies and we would work with the York Diocesan Board of Education to ensure that Topcliffe's Church of England foundation would be protected in such arrangements.

Nigel Ashley, who is a National Leader of Education; the head of North Star Teaching Alliance; and the headteacher of Meadowside Primary School in Knaresborough, is leading the project. It is also intended that Nigel would become the Chief Executive of the MAT. Nigel is a highly respected member of the education community - at a local and national level - and is someone who shares with us similar values and ideas about teaching and education.

There will clearly be different requirements in terms of administration, finance, management and governance, and Topcliffe's governors will need to ensure that the school will be better off in the long term if it converts. Being part of the process at the beginning would mean we have the golden opportunity to have a voice and help shape the values, ethos and policies of the MAT, and ensure that Topcliffe's vision and standards are not only maintained, but enriched.

We would propose to convert on 1 July 2017.

Please find attached some more information about the process and the consultation document that outlines our plans and gives more information about how you can share your views and be part of the consultation process.

Yours sincerely,

Abigail Clay – Headteacher

Mrs Tara Rose – Chair of Governors

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