

Frequently asked questions for parents and carers

What is an Academy Trust?

An academy trust is a legal entity that governs a group of schools through a single board of trustees. It is set up by a group of schools, usually a local collaboration, that share a common ethos and vision. An academy trust is accountable for all schools within the group. Schools within an academy trust are answerable to the Trustees and to the Department for Education (DfE).

An academy trust is a charitable company, limited by guarantee. This means that it is registered at Companies House.

The academy trust is the employer of all staff and holder of the school's land titles.

What is the role of the Diocese in making this decision?

The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) must be asked to provide its consent for any Church of England school to join an academy trust. There is a formal process to seek this consent and the Diocese has decided that the best home for St James' CofE Junior School. The DBE is assured that the change will not impact St James' Christian distinctiveness and that as the chosen Trust provides a safe and sustainable home for the school, now and in the future.

Will Hatherly Infant School have to become a Church school?

No. Hatherly Infant School will remain a community school and will be nurtured and cherished for its individuality in the same way as Church schools within the Trust are. The Trust already has a community school within its family, this is Whiteshill Primary School in Stroud.

Who will make decisions about the school?

Day to day decisions will continue to be made by the Headteacher, supported by the DGAT central team as and when needed. The DGAT Board of Trustees makes strategic decisions about all schools within the Trust but also delegates some local decisions to the school's local governing board. Hatherly and St James will continue to have one local governing board serving both schools.

Will there be any change to the school's name, logo, school day, or uniform?

No. There is no requirement from DGAT for the school to make any changes to the school name, logo, uniform, or school day. If the school joins DGAT we will include the DGAT logo on our website, letters, etc.

What changes will my child notice?

Your child will probably not notice any immediate differences. They will be in the same uniform, in the same classrooms, and with the same teachers.

Will the school get more or less money by joining DGAT

No. The school will receive the same amount of funding but will be able to benefit from greater financial efficiencies, gained from being part of a larger group of schools. The school will contribute a proportion of its budget to DGAT for central services e.g. finance administration support, buildings and operations, and school improvement but the school already pays this to external agencies.

Will my child's teacher be moved to different schools across DGAT?

No, not generally. Teaching staff will remain contracted to the school and will be able to attend joint training with other DGAT staff to benefit from shared practice. They will also share the good practice from our school to help develop other schools. Teaching staff across the Trust are offered opportunities to work in other schools within the DGAT family to share expertise and to support their professional development.

If you have any questions which are not covered here, please do attend the parent meeting on 22 January 2024 at 3.30pm when we will be pleased to answer them.