

**Proposed Academy  
Conversion of St Margaret  
Clitheroe Catholic  
Primary School**

**Consultation Report for  
the Governing Body**

February 2026

### ***Document Control Sheet***

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FAQ**

**APPENDIX B – ST MARGARET CLITHEROW CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL CONSULTATION  
PRESENTATION**

**APPENDIX C – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE CONSULTATION MEETINGS**

## **1. Introduction**

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In September 2017, the Diocese of Westminster published its strategy for Catholic Academy Trusts <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/academies-/>

The aim of the Diocese's CAT Strategy is to protect, secure and develop the Church's mission in education.

The Governors and Headteacher of St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School (SMCCPS) have been considering the benefits of converting to an Academy for some time and have thoroughly researched the implications and benefits of converting for the school, including commencing collaborative work with The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust (DOWAT).

A first step to taking this further was to complete the Diocese's Due Diligence process, including independent Finance and Standards reports. The Diocese Project Board subsequently confirmed that the school had met the requirements and issued the Diocese Letter of Consent to convert allowing the school to submit their application to convert and join DOWAT in December 2024.

In parallel to this, the Governors and Headteacher of the school passed a resolution to submit a conversion application to the Regional Directors (RD) Headteachers Board (HTB) to apply to become an Academy within DOWAT.

The school applied to convert to the Regional Director in December 2025 and subsequently received an Academy Order in January 2026.

The school embarked on the conversion process in January 2026 including a consultation exercise with the school's stakeholders in January and February 2026.

The purpose of governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight, and assurance for educational and financial performance. The Governors of SMCCPS firmly believe that they know what is best for the school and wished to invite comments from stakeholders on this proposal.

This report therefore sets out results of the consultation exercise commissioned by the Governors to listen to the views of stakeholders.

A meeting of the Governing Body in March 2026 will consider the findings of this report.

## **2. Scope and timing of Stakeholder Consultation**

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The Governors devised and implemented a consultation exercise which sought the views of parents, staff, and the wider community on whether the school should become an Academy and join DOWAT.

The consultation period opened on Monday 19 January 2026 and ended on Friday 13 February 2026.

## **3. Methodology**

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The Governors of SMCCPS developed a consultation plan and FAQs leaflet, which identified all the school's stakeholders to be contacted at the start of the exercise and provided them with background information about the Diocese CAT Strategy and DOWAT to inform the debate.

The Headteacher wrote to all parents and staff on 19 January 2026 to start the consultation exercise, invite them to attend consultation meetings and direct them to accessing the consultation leaflet on the school's website.

Staff and parents were invited to attend consultation meetings to find out more about the proposed conversion to an Academy and DOWAT.

Staff had previously received regular updates from the Headteacher on the Governing Body's research into the benefits of Academisation over many months at regular staff meetings and had the opportunity to ask questions.

Emails were also sent to both officer and elected representatives of Hertfordshire County Council, as well as the local MP, neighbouring Secondary, Primary and Nursery Schools and other partners.

The consultation materials also contained a response form which stakeholders were invited to complete and submit by the end of the consultation period.

The Consultation Leaflet produced by Governors is attached as **Appendix A** to this report.

#### **4. Consultation Meeting Chronology**

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The letters to parents and staff invited them to submit questions, and to attend the appropriate consultation meetings scheduled below:

- Staff – Monday 26 January at 3.30pm; and
- Parents – Monday 26 January at 5.30 pm

The meetings were attended by the Headteacher, Governors, and Director of Primary Improvement for DOWAT and the Academy Implementation Officer from the Diocese.

The staff meeting was attended by 17 members of staff, and the parents meeting was attended by 6 parents and 5 Governors.

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors gave a presentation covering issues such as the Diocese's vision for the CAT programme and the advantages of joining DOWAT, why this is being considered now, the conversion process and next steps.

The Director of Primary Improvement for DOWAT explained the vision, values, and approach of the CAT.

The full presentation is enclosed as **Appendix B** to this report.

Attendees were then given an opportunity to ask any questions they might have.

The questions asked and answers provided at the above meetings is included as **Appendix C** to this report.

#### **5. Completed Questionnaires**

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2 completed questionnaire was returned

- 2 stakeholders (1 parent and 1 employee at the school) 'Strongly Agreed' with the proposal

#### **6. Findings from the Consultation Questionnaires**

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Neither respondent offered any further comments on the conversion.

## 7. Reflections on the Consultation

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Both respondents (100%) 'Strongly Agreed' with the proposal.

Whilst the number of completed and returned response forms was very low the Governors and Headteacher created opportunities for stakeholders to engage with the consultation by offering a link on the consultation page on the school's website for questions, issuing staff and parents with a FAQ and hosting meetings to give a presentation and answer questions.

At the meetings the Headteacher, Governors and Trust addressed these points and offered re-assurance on preserving staff terms and conditions, as well as Admissions, Curriculum and Finance matters.

Both meetings covered a wide range of issues and were positive and engaging in nature.

The lack of opposition to the proposal from staff and parents who did not complete an online response form indicates that St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School community has been well informed on the proposed changes and benefits of joining the DOWAT.

In the course of the consultation, no significant concerns were identified which had not been anticipated by Governors, DOWAT and the Diocese and addressed by the Diocese's CAT strategy and approach of DOWAT.

## 8. Summary

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This report summarises the findings of the genuine, open, and honest consultation exercise undertaken by Governors to ascertain the views of parents, staff, and other stakeholders on the conversion of SMCCPS to an Academy and to join DOWAT.

This report evidences the comprehensive approach taken to raise awareness of the consultation exercise in the community, to provide background information on the issues and to host staff and parents' meetings to allow stakeholders to find out about the Diocese's Strategy and ask questions.

The consultation findings summarised in this report are one of a range of factors that the Governors will consider when making a final decision on the way forward. Other factors include the benefits the school stands to gain, as well as the request by the Archbishop that school convert to 'protect, secure and develop' Catholic Education.

The range of questions asked at the parents and staff meetings (and listed in **Appendix C**) was wide ranging, reassuring and positive. The questions and answers illustrate the willingness of attendees to engage with the Headteacher, Governors and the DOWAT on this matter.

The School and Trust should continue to communicate with staff and parents about this to ensure that the community remains updated and engaged.

## 9. Acknowledgements

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The Governors and Headteacher of SMCCPS would like to express their gratitude and appreciation for the staff and parents who took part in the consultation by listening to the presentations, asking clarification questions and who took the time to contribute their views.

## 10. Recommendations

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It is recommended that the Governors of SMCCPS:

- (i) Approve the contents of this report.
- (ii) Recognise that they have fulfilled their duty to undertake a compliant Statutory Section 10 stakeholder consultation exercise on the proposed conversion.
- (iii) Publish this report on the school's website as a record of the consultation and feedback to the participants and wider stakeholders.
- (iv) Continue to work with DOWAT to ensure that the fears expressed by consultees about loss of independence, personal touch and sense of belonging are avoided; and that the school retains its ethos, charism and uniqueness within the CAT.
- (v) Continue to monitor progress, share updates and engage with staff and parents on this matter;
- (vi) Proceed to the next stage of the conversion process not having identified any barriers to the schools' conversion and proposal to join DOWAT.