

RE: New Catholic Academy Trust

2nd September 2021

Dear Parents,

Further to Mr Gaspare Nicolini's letter of 1st September, I am delighted to be writing to you as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust. Your Headteacher and Governors consulted with you and the wider school community last academic year and decided that joining the Trust was the right thing for your school. All other schools came to the same conclusion, and so we now form the new Trust together. It is my privilege and pleasure to serve you and the wider community as the CEO of that Trust.

I would like to confirm that last night the Trust Directors elected Gaspare Nicolini as the Chair and Cate Company as Vice Chair. Overleaf I have included the names of the appointed Trust Directors and a brief confirmation about how they will govern our Trust. I've also included some details on a couple of frequently asked questions which may be of interest.

In the first year of two of our Trust the main task will be to lay good foundations for the continued improvement of Catholic education for current and future generations; supporting each school to continue to flourish and be the best it can be. To continue to get to know each school I will be visiting in person and as often as I can, and at least once a fortnight to meet with each Headteacher. One of the things we will need to do in this first year is create a Trust Development Plan together, and I look forward to working with each school on that and publishing it in future.

I will stay in touch with you every term either via letter or via podcast, and through the launch of our website in due course. The website will grow over the years, with messages from the Trust Directors, linking to each of our schools, as well as publishing key details about the work of the Trust. Meanwhile, if you want to be in direct contact, please do always feel free to email me at a.celano@stfrancistrust.net

I will end my first letter by taking inspiration from St Francis himself. His words can encourage everyone on a journey - ***'start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible'***. These words of St. Francis have certainly provided an inspiration for me this summer, and I hope that by working together as a Trust we will now move to achieve things that as isolated schools we simply could never have expected to achieve.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Celano

CEO



St Joseph's
Catholic Primary



Sacred Heart
Catholic Primary School



St Augustine's
Catholic Primary School



St Joseph's
Catholic Primary School



St Thomas of Canterbury
Catholic Primary School



St Joseph's
Catholic Primary School



St Mary's
Catholic School



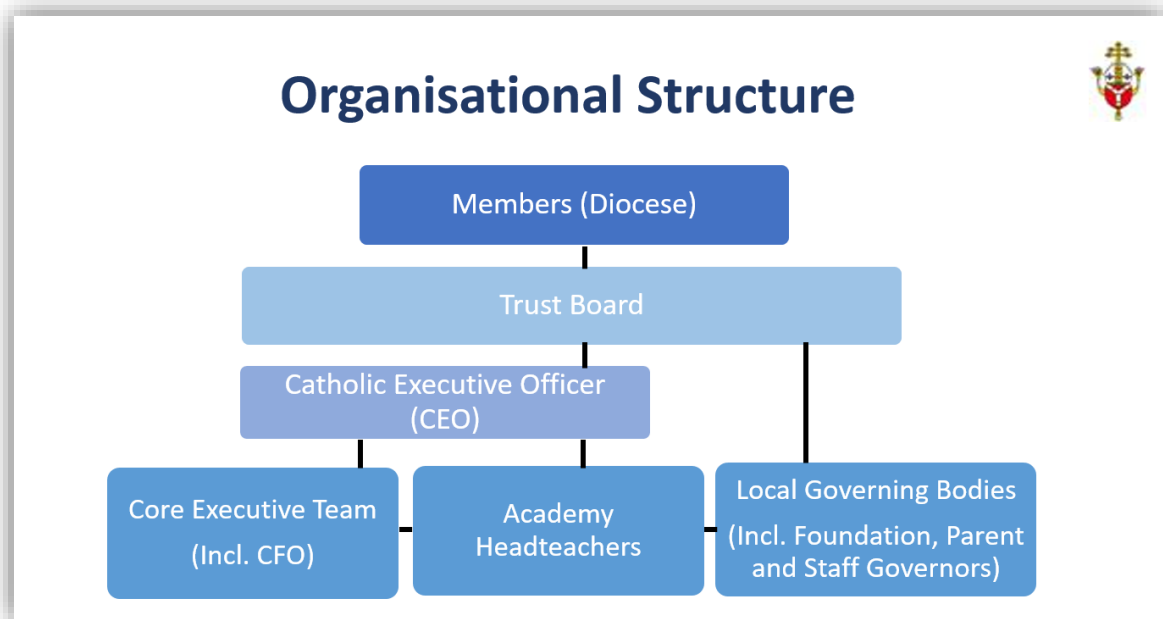
St Cross
Catholic Primary School

How is a Trust governed and led?

In a Catholic VA school, the local authority (LA) used to have some oversight of the school, as did the Diocese. As a Catholic Academy the Diocese remains in oversight (via a group of 5 Members who report to the Cardinal), but a new Trust Board of Directors now govern and lead across the Trust effectively in place of the LA. The registered Trust Board Foundation Directors are currently: Gaspare Nicolini (Chair); Catherine Company (Vice Chair); Gregory Hacksley; Fr Peter Harris; David Timson and Lavinia Willis.

The Trust Board are served by an executive comprising the CEO and a Chief Finance Officer (CFO). The CFO oversees financial performance in each school, and the CEO has overall responsibility for the work of the Trust, supporting the Board's strategic vision and giving leadership to the operation and development of the academies within the Trust.

Governing bodies now become 'local governing bodies', headteachers remain as they are, and new a Trust Board in effect become a 'governing body' for the Trust. The diagram below summarises how those layers fit together:



What are the vision and values of the Trust – and will this change our school(s)?

Whilst each school will retain its current and unique identity and autonomy, the Trust Directors have selected St Francis of Assisi as our Trust Patron Saint. This means that each school will continue to deliver an excellent and authentic Catholic education in mind, body and spirit as well as now emphasising where schools already foster the Franciscan charisms of being a caring community, showing compassion, reverencing all creation, and being active peacemakers. Our new logo (the olive branch) represents a symbol of that intention of peace-making.



What does a Trust do?

In short, a Trust helps each school to be the best it can be. That ambition is most fundamentally achieved through work to systematically and proactively support our headteachers to share the very best of educational practice across, between and amongst all schools. We are blessed in our Trust to have excellent schools, boards, headteachers, and staff, and therefore our sharing should be very fruitful for all pupils and the wider community. Whilst this sharing has happened to a certain extent in the past, the key difference a Trust brings is the infrastructure and governance to ensure a systematic and proactive delivery of this vital work. Of course there are also economies of scale and other harmonisations possible in the fullness of time, but it is the development of constant school improvement which should be the key driver for every good Trust.



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