



Unity Church of England Multi Academy Trust

Dear Stakeholder

Consultation on Great Barford Primary Academy gaining a Faith Designation

You are aware that Great Barford Primary Academy (GBPA) was granted Academy status on 1st June 2017 as part of the Unity MAT (Multi-Academy Trust). The MAT currently comprises two schools: Alban Church of England Academy and Great Barford Primary Academy. For reasons about which most stakeholders are aware, there is a proposal to close Alban Academy from September 2018, largely due to organisational changes that have taken place in Bedford Borough and parts of Central Bedfordshire Local Authorities over the last 12 months or so.

This will mean that the Unity MAT will comprise just a single school (GBPA) in Great Barford from September 2018, which is currently deemed as having the status of a former community school. In other words, Great Barford Primary Academy is not considered to be a church school even though the overall governance structure of Unity MAT has a majority of Members and Trustees appointed by the Diocese of St Albans.

In June of this year, the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE - which has oversight of all Church schools in the Authority), discussed the situation in Great Barford; it was agreed that there should be a move to establishing a single primary school in the village, catering for pupils from Year R to Year 6, and that this should be a school that has Church of England status.

In order to become a Church of England School, it is necessary for Great Barford Primary Academy, through Unity MAT, to obtain the Secretary of State's permission. The Secretary of State will want to see that there is support from the school and wider community for the change and that there is support from the 'relevant religious body' (i.e. the Diocese of St Albans) for such a move. Whilst the Diocese has indicated its in-principle support for such a move, it wishes to consider the outcome of the consultation process before committing to a final decision. To this end, it will take that decision at a meeting of the DBE in November.

The implications for GBPA of gaining a faith designation are:

- The school will be designated as a Church of England school, under the umbrella of the Diocese of St Albans, as Alban Academy is now;
- The school will be subject to an additional inspection process, as a church school, under SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools);
- Religious education and worship will be distinctly Anglican.

Since the school is already part of the Unity MAT, there are some things that will not change:

- Staff will continue to be employed by the Unity MAT;
- There will be no changes to the admissions policy that applies to the MAT. If any future changes are proposed, these must be consulted upon;
- The majority of governors on the Trust Board are appointed by the Diocese.

If the change goes ahead, there will continue to be a church school in Great Barford.

Registered Office & Address: Alban Church of England Academy
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The purpose of this document is to seek your views on whether Great Barford Primary Academy should seek faith designation. The consultation period starts on **Tuesday 3 October 2017** and finishes at noon on **Tuesday 14 November 2017**. Apart from this consultation letter, there will be the opportunity to attend consultation events where the process and implications can be explored in more detail. These will be held on: **Wednesday 1st November, 2.45pm in GBPA school hall (all stakeholders) and 3.30pm (Staff only)**. It would be helpful if, when you have gathered all the information you require, you could respond to the following question. To email your response, please send to publicconsultation@unitycemat.org :

'Should Great Barford Primary Academy seek faith designation, as a Church of England Academy, as part of the Unity Multi-Academy Trust?'

YES		NO		DON'T KNOW	
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Comments:

Yours sincerely

Nicholas Papé

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicholas Papé'.

Chair of the Trust Board

Sarah Evans

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Evans'.

Headteacher

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