

## St Francis and St Christopher's Academy Consultation

Invited to the consultation:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surrounding schools and special schools</li> <li>• LA, admissions, HR, Sheridan Dodsworth</li> <li>• Lisa Moreman, Adrian Humphrey (DFE)</li> <li>• People who rent space/use school</li> <li>• Nursing team</li> <li>• All Parents of both schools</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Key suppliers</li> <li>• Out of county children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors</li> <li>• MP</li> <li>• Governing Body</li> <li>• CIT head teachers</li> <li>• CIT operational Team Leads</li> <li>• Related community centres</li> <li>• Local doctors surgeries</li> <li>• Annual review contacts</li> <li>• School visitors i.e.- therapists</li> </ul>
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**Uploaded onto school websites and CIT website** - the invitation letter was sent out on 3.12.18 and the presentation uploaded onto all three websites by COB on the 11.12.18. A tweet has also been sent out from St Christopher's and CIT asking people to get involved.

### **St Francis and St Christopher's Academy Consultation Meeting record** 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018

8:20am, 13:30pm, 15:30pm and 16:30pm

Recorded by Mellissa McDonnell

<b>Meeting time</b>	<b>8:20am- St Francis</b>	<b>13:30pm- St Francis</b>	<b>15:30pm- St Christopher</b>	<b>16:30pm- St Christopher</b>
Total people present at meeting	72 (with 68 people signing in)	8	35	12
Governing Body	Ann Hoffmann	Ann Hoffmann, Nigel Sisley (Chair of Gov)	Ann Hoffmann, Nigel Sisley	Ann Hoffmann, Nigel Sisley Alan Goulding Kyna Adkins
CIT	Peter Bell (CIT CEO), Louise Perkins (Project and Conversion Manager) Mellissa McDonnell (Projects Assistant)	Peter Bell (CIT CEO), Louise Perkins (Project and Conversion Manager) Mellissa McDonnell (Project Assistant)	Peter Bell (CIT CEO), Louise Perkins (Project and Conversion Manager) Mellissa McDonnell (Project Assistant)	Peter Bell (CIT CEO), Louise Perkins (Project and Conversion Manager) Mellissa McDonnell (Project Assistant)
Parents ( from Signing in sheet)	N/A	1	N/A	4
Staff ( from Signing in sheet)	65 Staff		32 staff	
Public (from signing in sheet)	N/A	Bob Bushell (city councillor), Chris Burks (city councillor),		Bob Bushell (city councillor),

Slides presented by Ann Hoffmann, Peter Bell and Louise Perkins.

*This is a summary of the commentary to accompany the slides. The presentations were identical in all meetings and are on the websites.*

Slides presented by Ann Hoffmann –

Started the consultation by introducing what the consultation is about, and outlined it is the start of the conversion process. The majority of staff at St Francis have been a part of the long journey already, and thanked those involved so far. Also explained the reason for separate consultations for staff and parents as the questions that may be asked will be different.

Ann Hoffmann outlined that this is all about the federation [St Francis and St Christopher's] becoming an academy. Unfortunately, governors could not attend every meeting but did attend three. Ann Hoffmann introduced Louise Perkins as the Project Manager at CIT. Mellissa supporting the projects team and making notes of the meeting and Peter Bell CEO of CIT and who will also be presenting.

Why become an academy? From Ann Hoffmann/governors point of view. It is difficult to stay a standalone school, especially as times are changing. The federation feels that they are stronger as a federation but can be even stronger as an academy as part of a multi academy trust. When joining an academy, it can provide us with training opportunities, and we can be more flexible with the pupil's curriculum. St Christopher and St Francis will be able to share resources between them but also with other schools to benefit the children. Within CIT specifically, there are layers of expertise that can help the school and admin staff as CIT have a great staffing structure. They also already have the knowledge of our type of special schools. More information on what exactly an academy is can be found using the link at the bottom of slide 3, which takes you to the DFE website [Louise].

Why we have the opinion that CIT would be the best group to join. Because CIT are a larger academy (not too big and not too small), and they already have many special schools within the organisation. The proposal date of conversion is the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019, subject to this consultation. When you are in school, you will not see any visible changes day to day, but there will be more support in the background. Therefore, we are here to share our proposal of St Francis and St Christopher becoming an Academy and see what you all have to say.

The Governing Body have considered various options in deciding in which direction they think the schools should go. This is a journey that has taken some 5 years. We are very committed and have not taken any decision on the direction of the federation lightly. It is important for us [St Francis and St Christopher's] to maintain a good relationship with the Local Authority. It is especially important we do this due to the SEND review which we have been heavily involved in. The world is changing and we want something that is secure for the future. This is why we want to be an academy as we have this opportunity now, and feel like it is the right time. CIT also see the value and importance of maintaining a good working relationship with the Local Authority.

The proposal- The consultation is open until the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 to consider whether to convert into an Academy. There are opportunities to comment and ask questions on the comment slips provided and more information at the end of the presentation on how to have your say. The proposal is from the Governing body that St. Francis and St. Christopher's special schools will become academies and join the Community Inclusive Trust.

Why CIT? We initially met with a lot of trusts, and were once in a position to create our own Academy with 3 schools but it did not feel right so we did not do it. We also met with some small

trusts and bigger trusts including Gainsborough schools and the Priory group. Our values and visions are so important, and CIT seem to follow the same vision and values as we do. Ann Hoffmann has been to lots of meetings with heads and trustees within CIT and felt that we have shared values, and I also liked the way people work together at CIT. The final decision to become an academy is not made until the documents have been signed well into next year.

CIT have 7 special schools within the trust. Because of this extensive knowledge and experience they are able to provide support and guidance about our more complex children. There is an extensive understanding of expertise and unique needs within these special schools. This is fundamental to what St Francis and St Christopher's want to be part of. A good relationship with Lincolnshire County Council and maintaining this relationship is so important, and CIT have a proven positive relationship with the Local Authority. Ann Hoffmann has seen members of CIT working closely with the Local Authority already as part of the SEND review. CIT have used their expertise to support some challenging schools which is great!

What change will the children see? On the day of conversion, no one will see any difference. In the longer term- development opportunities to learning and training will be explored. Ability to work together and increased opportunities will build over time.

Peter Bell presented-

Change in the background- This consultation process is trying to establish, is it right for you? We are also still in the process stage as we have to think of the children we already have in our trust and decide if it is right for them too. It has to work both ways and has to be right for both the schools and the wider CIT family. One of the biggest changes is the financial control. An easier way of explaining this is that you become one big part of the family. All the money sits together in a pooled budget. There are huge positives for pooled budgets including that more resources can be brought in, and the peaks and troughs in a school's finances can be evened out. We share this pooled budget. The Trust Board are responsible for the compliance and finances as they are the legal entity. The Local Governing body are responsible for the pupils safety and their education. Local authority involvement- moves from "you must" to "can we talk about doing this" in a partnership way. The plus side to this is a lot more talking with CIT as equals. It flows both ways when CIT want to ask for something.

What do you want to achieve? We work together to make this happen with access to greater resources. There is somebody somewhere doing a similar job across the trust and we can spend time in each other's schools to share knowledge and experience. Full time fundraisers are available in the CIT central team who can help writing bids that you may never have had the time to do. We have a mixed skill set and there is always someone to support you. In our schools I always say "would that be good enough for my own children?" and if not, then it needs to change. We have increased opportunities- foreign trips, shared curriculum, apprenticeships and work experience in each other schools from ex-students to help them on their journey.

Ann Hoffmann presented-

Consultation - This is a legal process. We want to know how you feel about this proposal and any issues that you may see, it could change the process and we are open to this feedback. We are here to consult with all stakeholders and listen to their opinions. The key thing for staff, they may be worried about contracts but this will come later in the process under TUPE consultations with unions. All that is subject to this consultation. There is no intention to change anyone's conditions at this present time.

The consultation presentation will be made available on the website.

Peter Bell presented-

The vision for the future- what is going to be different? As part of the deal, we all need to help and challenge other special schools, as well as mainstream schools to encourage improvement. We would expect you to help elsewhere at other schools on visits to share best practice and get support. A lot of building work is happening around the county because of the SEND review. Will know more in January 2019 in regards whether a free school will be opening in Lincoln. We would put a bid in to run that school. In theory, you will hear about this early summer/late spring should the Lincolnshire County Council be awarded this opportunity by the DFE. And if we were then successful we would manage that project in Lincoln over the next few years.

Ann Hoffmann presented –

The Free school in Lincoln will be an all age all needs school. If it all comes to fruition as part of one organisation, it will strengthen our position even more if all 3 schools are joined together by CIT. It will be a shame if 2 schools are linked (St Francis and St Christopher's) but not the free school.

Louise Perkins presented –

This is why we are here, *everything is subject to this consultation* - Should St. Francis and St. Christopher's school become an academy? It is time for questions now and Mellissa will document these and post them onto the website, so the information is available to you and those who could not come to the meetings. This is just the start of the consultation.

If you want to come forward with your thoughts or questions now then please do.

Comment slips will be left at reception and can be anonymous. Responders can email or write to Sue Eglinton, Clerk to the Governors. We are unable to respond to social media comments. Mel and I will be in one of the schools a day a week during the consultation if you have any questions please feel free to talk to us about CIT. Between Ann Hoffmann, Sue and I we will coordinate the responses and get them onto the website in the form of a Q and A.

What's next- the Governing body want to hear from everybody, please let people know who could not attend the meetings, they are just as welcome to take part and feedback. This also includes the Local Authorities for cross county children. There are 6 weeks for this consultation, so it is important to know that this is not your only time to make a comment.

Ann Hoffmann stated-

We want it to be a hearty discussion and include all our stakeholders in our journey.

#### **Questions from St Francis- 8:20am consultation**

*QUESTION- Will there be a published hierarchy on who does what at CIT?*

*ANSWER- Yes, this is available on the CIT website which outlines all the staff within the central team at CIT. <http://www.citacademies.co.uk/>*

*QUESTION- what will the nature of the free school in Lincoln be?*

*ANSWER- All needs, all through special school. The very fine detail will be known nearer the time. This is if the local authority are successful in their bid to the DFE.*

## **Questions from St Francis- 13:30pm**

*QUESTION- where are the other parents? If I were a parent of a child of this school, I would have come and I am concerned that they are not present.*

*ANSWER- Parents have already had some discussion around academisation through parents evening and annual meetings as the school has been on this journey for some time. Therefore, Ann Hoffmann was not surprised that not many parents have turned up to this meeting but they have all been invited via parent mail and are aware of how to contribute if they wish to. The school is outstanding, and there is a lot of trust between the parents and the school. There are also more planned meetings throughout the day, and this consultation is open for 6 weeks so there is plenty of time to consult further with parents should it be needed.*

*QUESTION- Has there been any resistance so far?*

*ANSWER- Not at the moment, however this is the first day of the consultation. The doors are always open and anyone can contact the governors if they have any queries/concerns/comments to make. Ann Hoffmann added that there have been discussions before this consultation as the school has been on this journey before, so becoming an Academy isn't a new idea.*

*QUESTION- were there a lot of staff that attended the consultation meeting this morning?*

*ANSWER- Yes, there were around 80 staff members this morning who attended the meeting.*

*QUESTION- You mentioned in the consultation presentation that you met with schools such as the Priory- do you still see these schools working alongside each other?*

*ANSWER- Yes, absolutely.*

*Question- Are parents going to be addressed individually?*

*ANSWER- Yes, we will discuss this with them further if needed. They have all been sent a letter and invited. The letter tells them that they have 6 weeks to feed in their views. We are all here for the pupils, so it is important to include feedback from all including the pupils who will be consulted.*

*QUESTION- Did the closure of Queens Park have an impact on St Francis and St Christopher's?*

*ANSWER- St Francis took on around 15 students, a group of PMLD students. St Christopher's got more children and were more challenged as a result- they have 240 children in tight spaces so they had seen more of an impact there. The positives of this is that it made us review our current practices and adapt more to the different needs of the children.*

*QUESTION- Will the free school that is being discussed take these students on?*

*ANSWER- Yes, that is the plan but only if the pupils wish to move and over time.*

*QUESTION- External relationships are very important. With Academies, there has been some negative press on their reputations due to over competitiveness, and being run more like a business. How are relationships going to be maintained taking all this into account?*

*ANSWER- We have more of a voice by being an Academy with 7 special schools. It helps build a better relationship between the Local Authority and the Academy Trust as sometimes the Academy Trust can help the Authority. Academies are also able to achieve economies of scale, and draw on expertise that we have within the Academy across our 7 special schools. Sometimes people need to*

*be reminded that we are not here for politics, but for the children and ensure they achieve the highest level of education.*

*QUESTION- I understand changes in financial arrangements if the school becomes an Academy, but do you envisage your Governing Body changing?*

*ANSWER- Peter Bell advised that the Governing body is slightly different to the others in CIT but CIT would enable that in the terms of reference if needed.*

*QUESTION- Is the free school that is proposed for Lincoln going to be a general school or a special school?*

*ANSWER- A special school to fit the capacity need – all ages and all need.*

*QUESTION- If I have any more questions to ask at a later date, who do I contact?*

*ANSWER- Sue Eglinton who is the Clerk to Governors. At email [sue.eglington@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:sue.eglington@lincolnshire.gov.uk) And address Sue Eglinton, St Francis School, Wickenby Cres, Lincoln, LN13TJ. There are also comment slips at each school at the reception area. All this information will be on each schools website, as well as CIT's website.*

#### **Questions from St Christopher's 15:30pm consultation**

*QUESTION- So you mentioned in the presentation that you can have the opportunity to be moved to a different setting within the Academy- would you be able to move people around to different schools eg from Lincoln to Grantham schools?*

*ANSWER- [Peter Bell] No. If you are good at your job, why would we force you to go elsewhere as you will not be happy or do your job the best you can do. It is in our interest to keep staff within CIT. The only time where we could suggest this to you is if there are redundancies and there is a position in another one of CITs schools - but we can't force you to do this and it would also need to follow a consultation process. We also can't make you redundant if there are job opportunities in other local schools within CIT. The free school may be different as if the free school is built, then there may be reduced numbers here so opportunities may be at the free school. This will also need to be consulted before we would move anyone.*

*Louise- reminded everyone that all this conversation is about life after the end of this consultation and is very much subject to the consultation. We could not go into TUPE talks as this stage is still an academy consultation.*

*QUESTION- How do you split the money in the trust?*

*ANSWER- It is pooled. If there is a school that needs more funds for a specific need (ie a child needs a new chair) then this responsibility would fall on the trust and they can take the funds out the central pot which the school normally may not have been able to fund this. This also helps the school budgets be managed easier.*

*QUESTION- If you are bidding for a free school- where does the money come from?*

*ANSWER- This comes from the government. Free schools are now about "are there enough school places for the students?" This school has to be built, Peter Bell points out that St. Christopher's currently have too many pupils in this building and there is a need for this type of school within the area. Over time, this schools numbers will come down, and free school will fill up. This will be done*

*comfortably, and not rushed.*

*[Ann Hoffmann added] – The finances would come from the central team and the local authority so will not impact the school budget.*

*QUESTION- If you have been here a long time and are at the top of the pay scale, will you get rid of them to get lower paid people in to do the same job?*

*ANSWER- No, we are unable to do this. If the school needs 10 TA's to run, we can't get rid of the highest paid TA's to recruit cheaper ones. That approach would also not help keep experience in the trust or a blend of expertise and ability amongst staff to best meet the needs of the pupils or for succession planning.*

*QUESTION- Can you just cut wages if people are earning higher than the average for their job role?*

*ANSWER- Possibly, but it can happen at the local authority also. We have to stay competitive in the market otherwise we would not attract the right skill set. Any such steps would also involve consultation.*

*QUESTION- Personnel wise, will we have a permanent head by July and will there be more teachers to be recruited? Currently there are TA's filling in for teachers due to short fall of numbers.*

*ANSWER- We have done some due diligence, but not as much as we need to do. It won't be before the 1<sup>st</sup> July, as you may not have converted until then. If this were true with TA's filling a teacher role, we would need to sit down and look at the requirements to look into in more detail for the needs/requirements of the pupils. Ann Hoffmann pointed out that TAs only teach when they are covering for an absent teacher not routinely.*

### **Question from St Christopher's consultation 16:30pm**

*QUESTION- In terms of CIT and cultural ethos – what changes would you envisage in your other schools?*

*ANSWER- [Peter Bell] We have health checks which focus's on teaching standards and pupil safety. Bring in people externally so there is a balance. What happens is there is a Director of Education and they work with the Head Teacher etc. to implement a plan. By having our own teaching schools this can also be beneficial in providing further training if it is needed. If the health check is 'good' it is once a year. If not there will be an alternative timescale offered to improve. The other side of this is there is an expectation that you are a part of a family. The expectation is that heads should visit other schools to create a coaching culture- CIT have gone in to some broken schools and have been successful in making improvements. No matter where the children come from, and what their needs are they all deserve the best education. In CIT my expectation is also that good is not good enough and has to be the best. This is the reason why we have 4 outstanding schools from requiring improvement.*

*Health checks were completed and this helped with St Christopher's. What are you trying to achieve and what is stopping you achieve this? Kyna Adkins the Acting Headteacher added that it was challenging but very helpful as CIT made fair comments and also provided information to help make improvements which was inundated with support opportunities. [Ann Hoffmann] adds that the responsibility is still with the school to improve and make education better.*

*QUESTION- Within the trust, are there any secondary schools?*

ANSWER- *[Peter Bell ] No. It is not an area of expertise for us yet, but you would never know what the future holds for CIT. We do have secondary special schools within the trust but we don't have secondary mainstream schools.*

QUESTION- *Will CIT honour continuous service?*

ANSWER- *Subject to this consultation if it is agreed to continue with academisation then all employees will be invited to TUPE meetings along with their unions and at this time it is envisaged that there will be no measures I.E no changes to staff terms and conditions.*

### **Comment slips received**

**Comment-** *"Presents a brilliant opportunity for everyone involved with the CIT currently and for "the saints". Hopefully be looking forward to a bright new future together" 10/12/18*

**Emailed question** 17.12.18 related to a specific role and terms and conditions.

This was responded to with the following non-identifiable reply

*"...There would be no intention to change anyone's terms and conditions. Of course, this is all speculative, until the outcome of the stakeholders consultation is known. We would then follow the TUPE process."*

**Emailed question** 7.1.19 from local resident of St Christopher's

*Question - Will becoming a partner in any academy see the demolition of the existing St Christopher's school and the development/building within the existing school boundaries of a new school?*

*Abridged Response- "This is a consultation about becoming an academy.*

*The plans for any building works form part of the SEND Review in Lincoln so would happen if the schools join an Academy or not. The Academy Trust are fully supportive of these plans.*

*St Francis School – to remain on the current site with a small increase in size to increase the school roll by 15 to 20 pupils to 165 pupils from the current 150*

*St Christopher's School – to remain on the current site and to redevelop the existing building to make it more suitable for the needs of the pupils but to reduce the number of pupils on roll to about 150 from the current 240*

*The proposed new school – the plan is to build a third school on another site in the city to take around 150 pupils"*