

The Saints Federation



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GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

JULY 2016

Maintained schools or Academies?? Earlier this year, there was a lot of publicity about the Government's proposals that all schools in England should become Academies by the end of the decade. You may remember in March/April considerable press coverage about the Secretary of State's proposals and subsequent press releases which were intended to clarify the position for schools. Then, of course, came the EU referendum debate so the matter of academisation of schools dropped out of public view. Although the Department for Education has toned down the earlier 'requirement' for schools to become academies, the issue has not gone away and the Government's aim is still that all English maintained schools will become academies in the foreseeable future.

Staffordshire Staffordshire County Council has now indicated that it will no longer maintain schools from, at the earliest, September 2017 or at the latest, April 2019. The SCC will only retain responsibility for school places, school transport, special educational needs and safeguarding. This means Staffordshire schools have no option but to make plans to convert to academies before the Council ceases to be responsible for them.

Uttoxeter Schools in the Uttoxeter pyramid have recognised the need to start planning now for the imminent changes to ensure we take advantage of any additional funding available to help schools convert to academies whilst also protecting the integrity and security of all the schools in the pyramid. Discussions by Headteachers and governors over the last three months have been extensive and, with guidance from the Department for Education and Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education, proposals have been formulated to create a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) which will eventually include virtually all the schools in the Uttoxeter pyramid. This new organisation will be known as **THE UTTOXETER LEARNING TRUST**.

How does it work? Proposals for conversion have to be approved by the DfE and a start date agreed. After that date, the funding for each school in the MAT will come directly from the DfE, bypassing the local authority. The funds received will also include a significant amount which is currently top sliced by the local authority together with one off grants to cover the cost of converting to an academy.

How will it affect my school/Federation? Each school will retain its identity and ethos within the MAT just as it does within the Federation. We've already experienced the benefits of collaborative working within the Saints Federation and this will be further enhanced within the MAT. Day to day work within our schools will continue as before—the changes that will occur will be chiefly to do with the governance of the schools. The proposals are that the MAT will have a board of Directors who will oversee the administration and development of the MAT. A Board of Trustees will be appointed, each member having a specific role and responsibility such as Finance, HR, School Improvement, Business Development, etc. All these posts will be non-paid, as are our current school governors. Each school or Federation who are part of the MAT will retain a local governing board whose remit will be to monitor pupil progress and school development in their particular schools, much as they do at present. However, some of their current responsibilities such as Finance and HR will be undertaken by the MAT Board of Trustees. Chairs of Governors will be represented on the Board of Trustees.

A busy first year for the Saints Federation

What a busy—and exciting—first year for the Saints Federation. Staff and pupils at our three schools have been working and learning together and so many new initiatives have come to fruition following the formation of the Saints Federation a year ago. The advantages of sharing expertise and creative ideas between our three schools have enhanced and enriched the learning experiences of the young people in our schools and there have been many opportunities for staff and pupils to come together.

Bees.....Bees.....Bees!

All three schools came to All Saints on Monday 13th June. They came for an assembly led

by Mr Paul Hand who is a STEM ambassador and an authority on bees (and all manner of other topics about nature!). Following the assembly all the children took part in creative activities and the older



children took part in a workshop with Mr

Hand. The children from Reception all worked in the Reception room and made decorated paper plates to look like a bee. The Year One and Two children all made Beeliboppers (unfortunately we couldn't all squeeze into one room so Alton and Draycott Yrs One and Two together, with All Saints Yrs One and Two). The Year Three and Four children took part in the workshop and designed their own tissue paper flower that could attract



bees. For the rest of the week all children across the Federation took part in different activities about bees, sharing what they found out with their counterparts in the other schools via email. The week came about from funding won from Rolls-Royce back in the Autumn term. We were able to use this to help fund some of the project. The Federation is very grateful to Rolls-Royce for their support in making this project feasible.

BACK TO THE STONE AGE!

Year 3 and 4 pupils from all three schools came together at St Augustine's First School Draycott to learn about and experience what life was like during the Stone and Iron Ages. Amongst the activities undertaken, pupils had a go at making felt from sheep's wool, learning about the tools used by our ancestors, making jewellery, what cooking implements were used and the kind of food they ate. Weapons played a big part in their lives, an activity which appealed to many of the pupils!



GOODBYE AND BEST WISHES to all Year 4 pupils as they move on to their respective Middle Schools. We wish them every success in the future and hope they will keep in touch with their First School! We also say farewell and thank you to Mrs Ashley, Head of School at All Saints, Denstone as she takes up a new post with the Local Authority's SEND team

On behalf of the staff and governors of the Saints Federation, I wish you an enjoyable and sunny summer holiday.

Terry Davies, Chair of Governors