

Proposal that Open Academy seeks designation as a Church of England academy

This document is designed to:

- Notify you that Open Academy is proposing to seek designation as a Church of England Academy
- Explain why this change is being proposed
- Invite your comments on this proposal

The Statutory Process

- The Department for Education (DfE) has set out the requirements and processes for making changes to an academy in the guidance [Making significant changes to an open academy](#). This consultation period is the first stage in that process.

Why are we proposing to seek designation as a Church Of England Academy?

- At Open Academy, we are proud of our community and for our community. Ofsted say we are “an inclusive school.” Our community has many children who face significant challenges. Nearly a third of our students have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is more than double the national average. Church of England status would help secure our ethos as an inclusive academy that serves all pupils in the Heartsease community.
- Open Academy is currently designated as a ‘Christian ethos school’. As a member of the Diocese of Norwich Education Academy Trust (DNEAT), we are one of only two academies in the trust that does not have Church of England designation. Our current designation is secure only under the current leadership and trust arrangements. We would like to secure the academy’s Christian and inclusive ethos for the future through Church of England designation.
- During a period of informal consultation on the matter of redesignation, we have been pleased by the positive responses received and have decided to move into a formal consultation.

What would change and what would not change?

Admissions

- Our pupil admission number, the number of new pupils we admit each year in Year 7, is 110 per year group. This will remain the case.
- There will be no change to our admissions policy. We will continue to welcome students of all faiths and none, seeing every child as a blessing.

Staffing

- DNEAT is the employer of all staff already. There would be no change under the current leadership save the vision of the academy would be tested regularly under the SIAMs church school inspection framework.

Governing Body

- There would be no change to governance.

School Uniform

- There would be no change to our uniform.

Denominational choice for parents

- While our goal is to secure our Christian ethos for the future, Open Academy will remain proudly and fiercely open to students of all faiths and none. DNEAT is very proud to be a Diocesan Trust. The Diocesan Board of Education also supports the proposal.

Buildings

- There is no proposal to change buildings.

Transport

- There is no proposal to change school transport arrangements.

Inspections

- As a Church of England academy, we would be subject to regular Church school inspections through the SIAMS inspection process alongside routine Ofsted inspections. At our most recent Ofsted inspection in March 2023, we were judged GOOD in all categories.

The next stage

- This consultation period provides you with an opportunity to express your views and ask questions regarding the proposal to become a Church of England Academy.
- The consultation period runs from 22 November to 20 December 2023.

Who will make the final decision and when could the change happen?

- After this consultation ends on **20 December**, DNEAT will review the comments received and use the findings to inform its full business case. This will be submitted to the DfE who will decide whether to proceed with the proposal.

How can I learn more about this proposal and have my say?

Tell us your views by:

- Emailing us at: office@open-academy.org.uk (please quote *Open Consultation* as the subject in your response)
- Write to Open Academy Consultation, Open Academy, Salhouse Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 9DL

We need all responses by 20/12/2023