

Becoming an Academy

The Experience of St Margaret's CE Academy, Liverpool

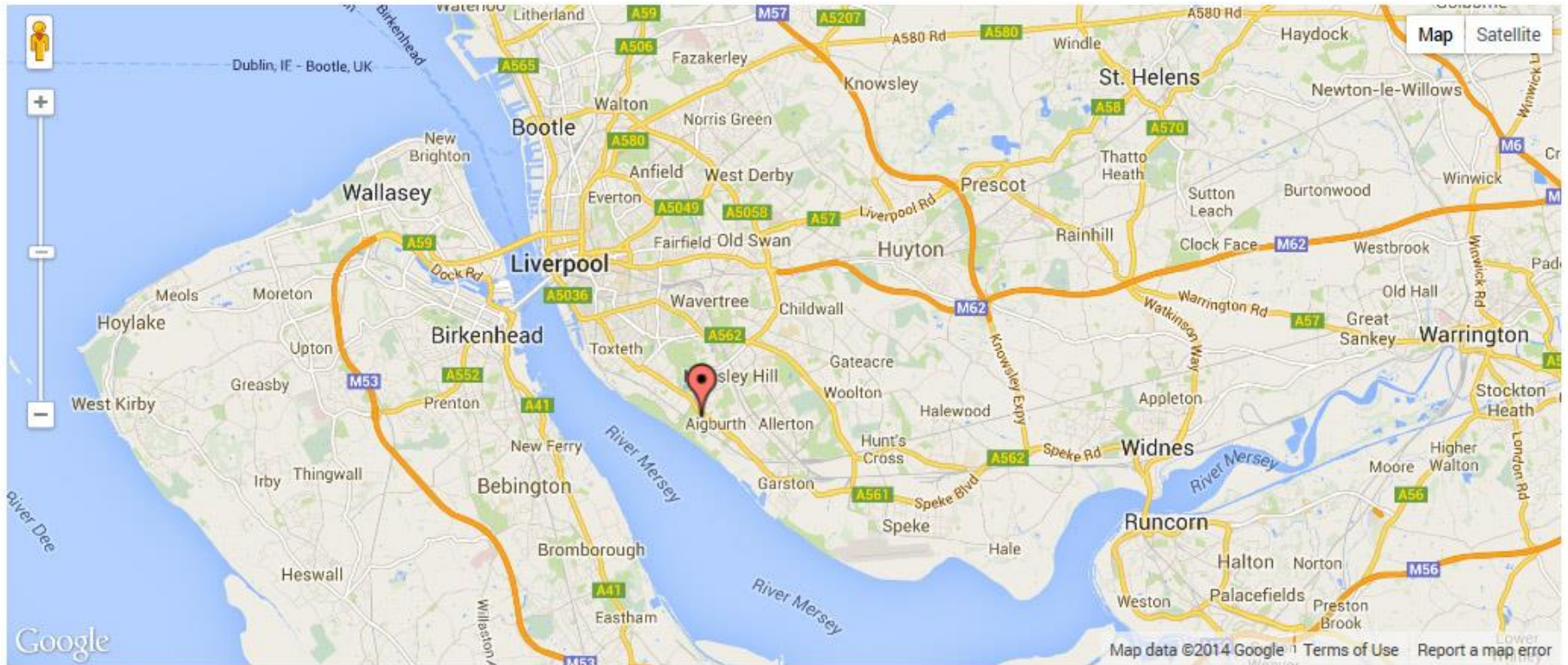
Dr Carl Gavin

Chair of Governors, St Margaret's CE Academy, Liverpool
Senior Lecturer, Executive Education, Manchester Business School

Dr David Dennison

Headteacher, St Margaret's CE Academy, Liverpool (1995-2013)
Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Liverpool Hope University
Interim Principal, Hope Academy, Newton-le-Willows

St Margaret's CE Academy - Location



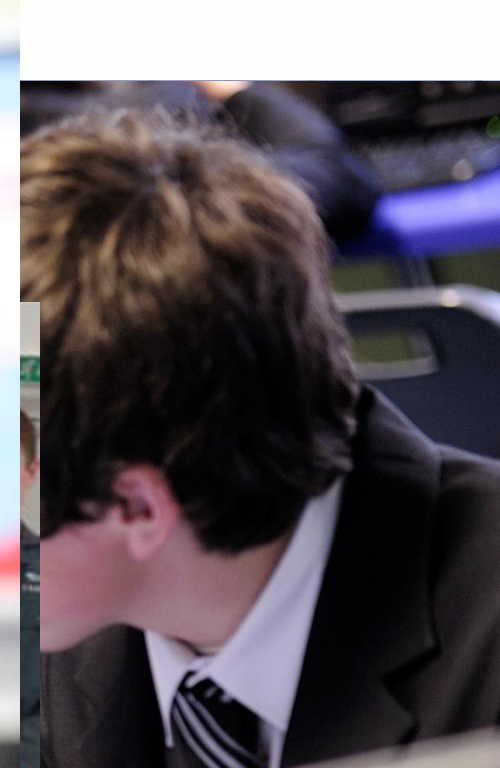
Aigburth Road, Liverpool L17 6AB
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About St Margaret's CE Academy

- Founded in 1879 in Anfield, Liverpool
- In 1963 the school moved from Anfield to Aigburth
- In 1980 the school became a four-form entry comprehensive school
- Grant Maintained status during early 1990s until 1998
- Awarded Technology College status in 1997
- The school increased its intake to five-form entry in September 1998
- Voluntary Aided until the school became an Academy on 1st October 2012 and changed its name to St Margaret's Church of England Academy
- Current Principal, Mr Stephen Brierley, appointed in September 2013.

About St Margaret's CE Academy

- School roll approx. 1,000 (approx. 240 in Sixth Form)
- Gender of pupils - 11 – 16: male; Sixth Form: mixed
- Mission:
"To be part of the Church's service to the Diocese of Liverpool, in the task of education, by working in partnership with parents and the wider community to create a stimulating and caring environment. To this end, Governors, Staff and Students feel involved as individuals and can develop their intellectual, moral, social, physical, aesthetic and spiritual potential to the full in the light of the Christian Gospel."
- Recognised as "good" by Ofsted in May 2012:
"This is a good school. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and achievement is good. There is pride in the school shared by all members of the school community and students."
- Recognised as "outstanding" in the statutory Inspection of Anglican schools in June 2012



Academy Status

- Directly funded by central government - Education Funding Agency (EFA)
- Independent of direct control by local authority
- Ability to set own pay and conditions for staff
- Freedoms around the delivery of the curriculum
- Ability to change the lengths of terms and school days
- Receive same level of per-pupil funding as would receive from the local authority plus additions to cover services no longer provided by the local authority

Why we became an Academy

- Ageing buildings requiring more and more attention – as Voluntary Aided school, finding 10% governors' contribution was crippling
- School budget tightening – used up reserves over recent years
- Predicted deficit annual budgets going forward
- Local schools were shedding staff – we wanted to protect staffing levels and jobs – no redundancies
- We foresaw a point in the near future when we would have no choice but to become an Academy

Key Principles

- As no dissatisfaction with local authority – we entered into early negotiations regarding the buying back of services including governor training. Biggest buyer of services. Overall cost <£25k
- We were clear from the outset that we wanted to maintain the same terms and conditions for staff – we worked with staff and unions in an open and transparent way
- Remain a church school to protect the ethos of the school

What's different (1)

- No outwardly noticeable differences
- No change to the curriculum
- No big launch
- Change in governance:
 - Report to The Liverpool Diocesan Educational Trust
 - St. Margaret's Church of England Academy Trust:
 - Members of the Academy Trust appoint the Governors
 - Governors are a school governor, a company director and a charity trustee
 - Increased responsibilities of Governing Body
- Changes in financial governance ...

What's different (2)

Changes in financial governance ...

- Now an independent school, a business and a charity
- Comply with company law and regulations of Companies House, Charity Commission and EFA
- Accounts prepared by accountants – different formats
- New annual audit regime – 2 weeks; £12k+; intense and *“over the top”*
- Tender for accountants and auditors
- More work for finance department → more staff

Useful Links

- DfE information for schools
<https://www.gov.uk/become-an-academy-information-for-schools>
- DfE documents for schools wishing to convert to academy status
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/academy-conversion-process>
- Charity Commission guidance on regulation of Academies as charities
<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/detailed-guidance/specialist-guidance/schools,-colleges-and-universities/academy-schools-guidance-on-their-regulation-as-charities/>