

25th April 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

PROPOSAL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS

I am writing to describe our proposal for our school to become part of a Multi Academy Trust to be established by a group of primary schools in the Deal area who already work closely together. More information about what this means for our school and for your children is attached to this letter.

A Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company established to be responsible for a number of Academies. Each Academy remains a separate school, with its own Local Governing Body, but the governors are responsible to a board of trustees established for the Trust as a whole. This model is becoming more common, particularly as more primary schools seek academy status and the Government has encouraged primary schools to choose this route.

Academies are state maintained schools free to all children. They are run separately from the local authority, and have an agreement with the Government which provides funding directly to the Academy Trust. They follow the same rules as all other state-funded schools over admissions, pupils with Special Educational Needs and exclusions. They are inspected by Ofsted.

We are choosing to make this proposal as a positive way forward for our school which will enable us to continue to improve the opportunities we provide for your children. Making this change now means that we can choose how we want our school to develop.

The Governors believe that academy status within our Multi Academy Trust is the best way to support the school in continuing to develop and improve and will bring benefits to teaching and learning and thus to your child's achievement. But you and your children will see little visible difference when we become an academy within the new Trust. We will still be called The Federation of The Downs and Northbourne Church of England Primary Schools and will retain our distinctive Christian ethos and vision. The school uniform will not change and we will not change term dates or the school's admissions policy. All children and members of staff will continue to be part of the school as they are now. We hope that you will continue to give the Governors and the staff your support.

We are holding meetings in school on Tuesday 8th May at 2.30 and again at 5.30pm at Northbourne, and again on Thursday 10th May at 2.30 and 5.30pm at The Downs. You can attend whichever meeting you wish. At these meetings we will say more about what this proposal means for our school. All parents, carers and members of the local community are welcome to come along to find out more and to ask questions. If you have any questions or comments about this proposal please complete the form attached and return it to school.

If you have any comments please send them by 25 May 2018. We will update you of our progress after this consultation through the school newsletter by the end of June 2018.

The Deal Education Alliance for Learning Trust (DEALT)

The Primary Schools in Deal have been working in collaboration (Deal Learning Alliance) for the last 6 years. Through this partnership we have been able to challenge, support and work together to raise standards, meet educational goals, develop staff and widen the extra-curricular opportunities we can offer the children. Some of these opportunities include the spelling and grammar bee, the Deal Detective Trail, subject focused workshops and a full programme of sporting events.

As Governors we have seen that the role of the Local Authority has diminished in terms of support and challenge and we strongly believe that the best way of maintaining our high standards is to build on and formalise the strong foundation of this successful partnership through the formation of a multi Academy Trust. The Multi Academy Trust will be known as DEALT (Deal Education Alliance Learning Trust) and each school will convert into an academy retaining its own name and individual ethos, vision and values.

The schools making this proposal are:

The Downs Church of England Primary School
Deal Parochial Church of England Primary School
Hornbeam Primary School
Kingsdown and Ringwold Church of England Primary School
Northbourne Church of England Primary School
Sandown School
Sholden Church of England Primary School

We believe that the geographical closeness of all the schools and a shared vision of “ By working together we realise the potential for all children and families in Deal” will be key to the future success of DEALT.

DEALT provides an opportunity for both Church and Community Schools to continue to work closely together. Each school will maintain its own ethos and vision and continue to have its own local governing body, responsible for ensuring that is the case. The Diocese of Canterbury will be a core partner so that Church schools can be part of the Trust. The Diocese will appoint three out of five members of the Trust, which are similar to shareholders in other types of company. The members appoint a Board of Trustees who will be local people with skills and experience to run the Trust and support its development. Although the Diocese of Canterbury will appoint the majority of members of DEALT, community schools within the Trust will have their community ethos protected in the legal agreements that establish the Trust.

The Board of Trustees will be fully supported and informed by the Local Governing Bodies of our individual schools. The Local Governing Bodies will continue to be responsible for monitoring and supporting the work within their own schools, working with their own Head Teacher. The Local Governing Body will include two elected parents and one elected member of staff as well as the Head teacher. A Chief Executive and a Chief Finance Officer, will manage the day to day running of the Trust. Strong and efficient leadership, supported by efficient financial support allows our teachers to do what they do best, teach our children!

The Trust will strive for excellence in all areas, but will pay particular attention to pupil attainment and progress; the safety and wellbeing of pupils; outstanding teaching and high quality Leadership and management.