



28 January 2015

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Re: West Kingsdown CE Primary School – Sponsored Academy Conversion**

We are writing to inform you of the progress that has been made towards the proposed academy conversion for West Kingsdown Church of England Primary School.

As you may be aware, after careful consideration, the Governing Body has agreed with the Department for Education's recommendation that the school should convert to academy status, sponsored by the Rochester Diocesan Academy Trust. The Secretary of State for Education has now agreed that the school can become an academy and signed the Academy Order.

Following the consultation set out below, it is anticipated that the school will become an academy in the Summer Term of 2015.

The Governors' decision was based on a careful analysis of the current position of the school, the benefits of becoming an academy sponsored by the Rochester Diocesan Academy Trust and above all, the interests of the children and community that the school serves.

#### **The benefits of becoming an academy**

West Kingsdown will remain a Church of England school with a Christian ethos and will continue to serve the needs of children and families within the local community; however, as an academy, the school will have more freedom and flexibility in terms of how it operates and how it will be funded:

- As an academy, the school will have the freedom to develop and deliver its own creative curriculum that engages all the children and enables them to achieve their true potential. The curriculum will be designed especially to meet the needs of the children at West Kingsdown.
- Budgetary responsibility will be transferred from the local authority to the Rochester Diocesan Academy Trust, so the school will have greater control over its finances. This will enable the school to continue to raise standards, supported by the existing staff, whose commitment, stability and expertise will help the school to continue to make the good progress achieved
- The school will join a wider group of Church of England schools within the Rochester Diocesan Academy Trust. Pupils and staff will benefit from new opportunities for learning and professional development through the sharing of good practice within the Trust whilst continuing to work closely with other local schools in Kent and the wider Diocese.



## **The Rochester Diocesan Academy Trust**

The Rochester Diocesan Academy Trust (RDAT) was set up as a multi academy trust in October 2012 by the Diocesan Board of Education. RDAT's purpose is to sponsor Church of England schools within the Diocese of Rochester who wish to become an academy, where Governors have decided that this is in the best interests of the school.

Our preference is for a multi academy trust model as this affords greater opportunities for collaborative support between member schools.

You can find more information about the Rochester Diocesan Academy Trust through their website at: [www.rdat.org.uk](http://www.rdat.org.uk)

## **Next Steps**

### **Staff Meeting**

We will be meeting with staff in the next few weeks as we undertake the TUPE consultation. "TUPE" stands for Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) which is a piece of legislation designed to protect the terms and conditions of staff when their job transfers from one employer to another. This is what happens when a school converts to an academy.

The staff are a very important part of the school, and will be at the heart of school improvement. It is important to us that they know, and that you know, at the outset that they will not suffer any adverse changes to their terms and conditions of employment by transferring to the Rochester Diocesan Academy Trust.

### **Community Consultation**

We now need to undertake a consultation process with staff, parents and the wider school community. This letter forms part of that process and provides more information about who we are, what has happened so far, and what we expect to happen next.

It is now really important that we engage with you as key members of the school community to hear your views and to respond to any questions you may have about what becoming an academy means.

There will be two community meetings held at West Kingsdown CE Primary School where you can discuss what our Academy conversion means with both the Rochester Diocesan Academy Trust and school leadership team. These community meetings will be on Thursday 26 February 2014, the first at 9-10:15am and a later meeting at 6-7:15pm. The content of each meeting will be the same.

In addition, you will also receive a factsheet that gives you more information about academies in general, the details of the consultation events, and also a questionnaire so you can return your thoughts in writing if you wish. At the end of the consultation, we will write to you again with a summary of the views expressed.



The Department for Education has some information available on its website that you may find useful in the meantime:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies>

We look forward to sharing our plans with you further and hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Tear".

Alex Tear  
Director of Education  
Diocese of Rochester