



# The Federation of The Downs & Northbourne Church of England Primary Schools



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13 September 2018

Dear Parents

## PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH THE DEAL EDUCATION ALLIANCE FOR LEARNING TRUST

As we begin a new school year we thought that it would be helpful to clarify the state of play with our proposal and to address some of the questions raised at the end of last year.

The proposal to establish DEALT builds on the effective collaboration we already have in place between our seven schools. Formalising this collaboration will mean that we become accountable for each other and no school will become vulnerable, whether in educational standards, staffing or finance. Best practice and resources will be able to be shared more effectively across the schools in order to raise standards. We will be able to offer further professional development for our staff and improved career progression. And we will be able to target resources to meet the needs of Deal families, which differ from the needs of children in surrounding areas.

Our consultation letter in April set out the proposals for the Trust and the implications for schools converting to academy status within the Trust. Each school held a meeting for parents and in response to requests we also issued a frequently asked questions document. All parents were invited to submit questions and comments and to say whether they supported the proposal or not. Parents at each school did so within the time available and in each case the majority of responses received supported the proposal.

Alongside our consultation, other information has been circulated which raises questions about the length and nature of the consultation process and about proposals for "academisation" generally. We understand that this additional information has caused some parents concern. As a result we have continued to provide information which seeks to reassure all parents about our aims in proposing to establish DEALT. Schools have placed information on their websites, including: answers to frequently asked questions; a timeline for the conversion; and a draft scheme of delegation which sets out the relationship between the DEALT members, trustees and each school's local governing body. We have held meetings for parents to discuss the scheme of delegation and the financial implications of our proposal and have advertised another to answer questions on the articles of association for the proposed Trust. We continue to be open to questions from parents.

As the timeline we have published sets out, we are continuing to progress the proposal. Each local governing body will decide this term whether it wishes to proceed with conversion, taking into account the response from parents and the outcome of our continued discussions on the scheme of delegation and the financial implications.



We understand that some parents may be concerned about information being circulated which suggests that academies will behave differently and pointing to the behaviour of academies elsewhere in support of that suggestion. Whilst, regrettably, some academies have behaved poorly, it is not necessary for academies to do so and there are many academies who continue to provide excellent education, care and support to their pupils and to their staff.

At the heart of our proposal is our determination to continue to work together as schools in Deal to provide the best education opportunities we can for primary aged children in Deal. The establishment of DEALT is intended to enable us to do that, in the ways described in the initial consultation letters and the information provided subsequently. Levels of funding for all schools continue to be challenging and as a result we cannot promise that there will be no staffing or other changes in the future, whether we convert to academy status or remain as a local authority maintained school. But we are not proposing to convert to academy status in order to be able to make more changes. As we said in our initial consultation letter, parents and children will see little visible change if we become an academy within DEALT. We will continue to teach the same curriculum as we do now, we will employ qualified teachers for every class and we will pay all our staff on national terms and conditions.

Schools stand by the information we have circulated to parents and the process of consultation and continued engagement with parents that we have followed. We hope that parents will continue to support headteachers, staff and local governing bodies as we seek to offer your child the best education we can.

Yours sincerely

Miss T Leighton  
Head of School

