

**Sand Hutton and Warthill
Federated Church of England Voluntary Controlled
Primary Schools**



16 January 2017

Dear parents, staff members and members of our local communities,

Important information about our schools

We are writing to you as you may be interested in an important potential development for our two schools.

At Sand Hutton and Warthill we are always looking at how to develop our schools so we continue to provide the very best learning opportunities for all our children. Our aim is to maintain all the good things that we do, improve where necessary and continue to strive for excellence. Over the past twelve months the Schools' Governing Body has been researching the options to help us achieve this aim.

During this process governors have come to see the advantages that are brought from being part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and the benefits of working together with a group of schools to improve teaching and learning.

A MAT is a partnership of schools who work together under a formal agreement for the benefit of all schools in the partnership. We are seeking to be part of a MAT where each school in the partnership benefits from working together whilst retaining its own leadership and day to day decision making.

Each local MAT has been researched and meetings have been held to establish the vision, values and commitment to delivering outstanding education for all children. In addition we have met with headteachers not presently part of a MAT. As a result the Governing Body has agreed in principle to consider this initiative further with the Pathfinder MAT, of which the founding member schools are Archbishop Holgate's, Badger Hill, Hempland and Heworth.

To help inform our final decision we will consult with parents and other stakeholders. This decision will not be made until the Governing Body has considered the feedback from the consultation alongside the wide range of information we will continue to gather and assess. Please be reassured that all feedback will be considered thoroughly and seriously before any decision is made.

Any decision as to whether or not to convert to a Multi Academy Trust will be taken by the Full Governing Body based on what is best for our children, our families, our staff and our wider community.

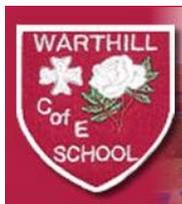
On the reverse of this letter we have included some Frequently Asked Questions which we will expand as our research progresses.

We would be pleased to hear any early views on these proposals. Please send correspondence to the schools or by email to WSHGovernors@hotmail.co.uk with your preliminary comments by 30th January.

Yours sincerely

R Desport
Chair of Governors

J Wardell
Headteacher



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What is an academy?

Academies are classed as independent state schools with the freedom to determine their own policies in areas such as the curriculum, school hours, term dates, staff roles and service providers. Academies are managed by their own academy trust. They may continue to work with but are no longer the responsibility of the Local Authority. Academies are given their funding direct from the government. This means that they get slightly more money per pupil, as money is no longer held back by the Local Authority to fund central services. This gives greater freedoms about how to spend the money.

What is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)?

In a Multi-Academy Trust, schools work together as a group of schools. The amount of governance (decision making) kept at a local level varies according to the trust. In Pathfinder MAT, each school retains their own governing bodies and headteachers, so there is autonomy that allows for the individual characteristics and ethos of each school to continue.

Are all MAT's the same?

No. They vary in format and size. Some are very close in the same geographical region; some are far apart across a wide area. Some contain a small number of schools, including primary and secondary and some are very large.

Are there other Academy schools in the area?

Yes, several schools have already converted and there will be many more in the near future. Many schools are considering how best to form MAT partnerships with other schools.

What would the changes be for my child?

It is very unlikely that you or your child would notice any difference in their day-to-day schooling. The ethos of the school and all the values that we hold dear would stay the same.

Would teaching standards change?

Academy conversion would support the continued training and development of our staff, and enable us to provide and extend the curricular and extra-curricular activities that are currently enjoyed by our children. Our schools would still be inspected by Ofsted.

How do I find out more about academies?

Further information generally on academies provided by the DfE can be found at: www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies Further details on the Pathfinder MAT are on website www.pathfindermat.co.uk

How will joining the MAT affect our relationships with local primary and secondary schools?

Our commitment to working in partnership with our cluster schools and especially with our current feeder secondary schools remains strong and will continue as it always has.

What happens next?

We are still exploring the pros and cons of converting to an academy as part of the MAT. We believe there is an opportunity for both our schools and for the Pathfinder MAT. Discussions are taking place to explore whether it will be a good partnership. If it is decided to convert there will be a period of formal consultation where all parents, carers and staff will be invited to write to and/or meet with the head teacher and governors to give their opinions and raise any concerns. **No decision has yet been taken** - your views will have a bearing on how we act next. We will of course keep you updated at all stages of the process.