



8<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the finishing line for this academic year appears on the horizon, I thought it time to bring you up to speed with the recent work of the school's Governing Board.

In my letter in February, I detailed the process of considering what strategic leadership path the school should aim for and through that process over the past 18 months we identified joining the Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust (DMAT) as the best option going forward for our school. Having spent the last two terms working closely with DMAT under a Service Level Agreement, we have got to understand better how DMAT works and to see their vision and ethos at work in the primary schools we have visited. We identified and discussed several areas of potential concern which were answered to the best of the Trust's ability and we were reassured by what we learnt.

Our deliberations involved an internal staff consultation which also identified areas that merited deeper consideration such as staff contracts, annual leave, staff mobility, curriculum and training. In finding answers to these questions we found DMAT to be open, helpful and knowledgeable and the answers given reassured the staff. We concluded the staff consultation process by asking staff whether they would wish to join DMAT or remain as a stand alone school. All of the staff votes were in favour of joining the Trust. At a meeting of the Full Governing Board on May 25<sup>th</sup>, I proposed that we seek to formally join DMAT for the start of the next academic year and a majority vote was achieved.

As we suspected back in February the 2022 Education White Paper does include a stronger push from the Department for Education (DfE) for all schools to look at joining an academy so we are on track in that regard. There remains plenty of work to be done behind the scenes to complete the application and transition process and the decision ultimately rests with the Regional Schools Director who has the delegated authority of the DfE to support or reject these applications.

These are exciting times and as a Board we are confident in placing the future path of our school alongside that of DMAT. Several of the Trust's primary schools have been inspected by OFSTED this term and the reports we have seen so far have all been good. Given how far we have come as a school in the past 3 years we are as certain as we can be that we would do very well when OFSTED come and see our amazing staff, their pupils and the school. OFSTED always seeks the views of parents and you can have your voice heard by filling in the Parent View survey here:

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/parent-view-results/survey/result/9706/12>

This past year the school has really flourished under Mrs Davies' leadership. Supporting her in this amazing transformation has been our fantastic teachers and Learning Support Assistants who consistently go above and beyond the normal in striving for academic excellence and progress. The SATS results this year are quite simply superb. In the Early Years phonics tests, Year 4 multiplication tests and the Year 6 SATS papers our pupils really delivered and our average scores are above the national average in every category. This is a phenomenal turnaround from the last set of externally set and audited test data in 2019 and reflects the school's drive to achieve the best academic outcomes for all of our pupils.

There is a real sense of pride in the staff regarding the classroom environments they have created, the quality of the curriculum they have delivered and the results they have achieved. The staff have sought out opportunities to develop their curriculum planning, their teaching practice and to see best practice at work in other schools. As a result of all this, we have achieved an attendance average of nearly 98% this term which reflects how keen our pupils are to come to school and learn. Our school environment is a safe place for our pupils in which they can flourish and we continue to attract in-year transfers from other schools. We took the bold decision in 2020 to remain a 3 class school when our pupil numbers dropped to nearly 50. Our predicted pupil numbers for next year are currently in the 62-66 range which means we will stay as a 3 class school and all teaching staff have indicated that they will remain in post for the next academic year.

I am of course very grateful to our fabulous PTFA who do so much fund raising for the school which helps to fund transport, activities, equipment and so much more. The rest of the school staff in the office, kitchen and on the sports pitch have all played their part in making the school the success it is and in securing the future of our school.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for playing your part in supporting your child's academic journey, helping the school be the best it can be and putting your faith in the leadership team to steer the school through this transition.

Wishing you all a great summer holiday.

Yours sincerely,

David Pestrige  
Chair of Governors