

Friday 17th May 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to you to clarify the school's current position, our vision, and future developments. The governing body are working alongside the leadership team at Five Acre Wood and are exploring opportunities to ensure the continued success, future security, innovation of our school provision and our place within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system in Kent.

The National Academy agenda

There is clear direction from government that schools will, in due course, all be part of an academy trust. For example, in the 'Opportunity for All' White Paper, published in March 2022*, it is stated that

'The government has set out its plan for achieving its vision to see 'all children benefit from being taught in a family of schools, with their school in a strong multi academy trust (MAT) or with plans to join or form one' by 2030.'

In addition, the Department for Education has set out several proposals that are intended to move the education sector to a fully trust-based system, which will include the expansion and creation of strong MATs as part of the government's wider levelling up agenda. This fully trust based system will mean all schools being part of a MAT, covered by one regulatory approach.

There are also significant challenges being faced by Kent County Council which have been well documented regarding SEND.

Our School Vision

Five Acre Wood School is a stimulating and safe learning community in which we all work together to nurture and maximise the potential of each and every individual and celebrate their achievements. Firm foundations and strong partnerships provide the platform for dynamic, challenging and personalised learning pathways, preparing our students for their life journey.

Next steps

It is good practice to regularly explore all opportunities that enable us to secure and build upon the Five Acre Wood school vision, that is driven by our changing pupil need and ensuring staff are fully supported to grow and develop their expertise.

We are currently exploring two options regards to the academisation agenda and aim to report back to the full governing body who will consider the risks and benefits of each of the options by the end of this academic year.

Option 1:

Do nothing and revisit in the future as required. At this stage we are not being forced into an academisation route and there is not an immediate pressure to do so.

If this is recommended, then we will take no further action in the next academic year and continue to monitor the situation and revisit in the future as required.

Option 2:

Be part of a group of special schools in Kent that are looking to set up and establish a new multi academy trust.

If this is recommended, we will potentially be in a position during the next academic year to have a new MAT approved by the Regional School's Director and for us to work alongside the other Kent special schools in establishing the vision, values and ambition for the trust and our communities.

The governing body are very aware of the significance of any decision to join or form a multi academy trust. Once an academy order is finalised, there is not an option to undo this. At this very early stage in the process, we would welcome input from our parents and carers.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information, we value your input and challenge and please get in touch with any questions that you may have.

Yours faithfully



Margaret Fisher
Chair of Governors
Five Acre Wood School



Peggy Murphy
Principal
Five Acre Wood School

* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong-schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child>