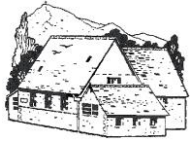




The Dartmoor Federation comprises:

- Boasley Cross Primary School
- Bridestowe Primary School
- Exbourne Church of England Primary School
- Highampton Community Primary School
- Lydford Primary School
- Northlew & Ashbury Parochial Church of England Primary
- Okehampton College



Lydford Primary



Okehampton College

15 September 2017

Dear Staff/Parents/Interested Parties

Last April the Governors of The Dartmoor Federation shared with you their proposal to join with a number of other schools to create a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) which would be named 'The Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust'. Since then, a steering group comprising a governor and the Headteacher/Principal from each school have been researching, evaluating and designing this Trust. The schools included in the proposal are:

Okehampton College
Bridestowe Primary School
Lydford Primary School
Tavistock College
Holsworthy Community College
North Tawton Primary School
Chagford C of E Primary School
Bradford Primary School
Highampton Primary School

Boasley Cross Primary School
Exbourne C of E Primary School
Northlew & Ashbury C of E Primary School
Queen Elizabeth Academy, Crediton
Okehampton Primary School
South Tawton Primary School
Black Torrington C of E Primary
Bridgerule C of E Primary School

The overriding driver is summed up in our Mission Statement.

'To provide the highest possible quality of education for all our children, in order to ensure pupils from all backgrounds are able to succeed'.

The educational landscape is changing more rapidly than ever before. We believe that by working much more closely together we will be able to navigate through those changes to the benefit of all our youngsters, whether they are entering early years provision or on the brink of leaving our schools to enter the world of work or higher education. We do not enjoy the luxury of each of our schools having the time to redesign the wheel with every change that is expected of us. By sharing expertise, professional development, leadership, teaching and learning, structures and resources, we will be able to ensure all our schools get access to the best opportunities and focus on what really matters – the best possible teaching and learning.

This proposal, therefore, involves a mix of co-operative schools, Church of England schools and one existing Academy. Each school, whilst becoming a member of the MAT, will maintain its own distinctiveness, ethos and values. By working together in a structured 'hard wired' arrangement, we believe we are able to meet our pupils' needs and therefore maximise their potential.

The vision for The Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust will be realised through the following:

- The Trust will have a co-operative ethos incorporating British Values and retain the individual identity and ethos of each school, including Church schools.
- The Trust will be cross-phase, from pre-school to Post-16. We aim to educate our pupils through a rich and deep curriculum.
- The Trust will be underpinned by our top quality teaching school, The Dartmoor Teaching School Alliance. The Teaching School status was awarded to Okehampton College in January 2016 and has grown rapidly since then. With over 70 partner schools, the Dartmoor Teaching School Alliance has rapidly gained an excellent reputation for supporting school improvement and continuing professional development.
- For staff, the Trust will mirror existing terms and conditions and will recognise from the outset the importance of retaining and attracting staff of the highest calibre.

What other advantages would creating a MAT bring?

There will be a number of benefits to The Dartmoor Federation:

- Better opportunities to share best practice and professional development programmes across the schools, adding real value to the education of all children through membership of the Dartmoor Teaching School Alliance.
- Opportunities for the students and staff to work together across the schools.
- More opportunities for staff retention, deployment and promotion, by keeping good staff within the Trust who might otherwise further their career elsewhere.
- A broader base for developing leadership.
- Increased economies of scale in the running of central services such as finance, HR, and premises management.
- A 'cluster' model, providing local solutions to benefit all of our pupils.

The proposal is to retain:

- Existing staff.
- Existing uniforms.
- Existing sites.
- Existing Parent Teacher and Friends Associations.
- Governance of our schools will continue at a local level. There will be an overarching Board of Directors (Trustees) consisting of many representatives from member schools' existing Governing Boards. Each school within the MAT will remain focused on delivering excellent Teaching and Learning within its local community.

We will implement ethos committees in each school to ensure local views are represented and feed the ongoing development of our schools and Multi-Academy Trust.

These plans were initially shared with staff, parents and the community during a series of open meetings which were held last April. Please refer to our website to see the questions and responses that were presented following those open meetings.

What is an Academy?

An Academy is a state school that is run by an Academy Trust. The Academy Trust enters into an agreement with the Secretary of State for Education that sets out its responsibilities and accountabilities for the effective running of the Academy. The Academy is funded directly by the Government not through the Local Authority. The Trust is given charitable exemption, which means it must operate much like a charity.

What is a Multi Academy Trust?

A Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is where a number of schools join together and form a single Trust with a Board of Directors (Trustees) answerable to the Trust's members. Members of the Trust are responsible for the strategic oversight of all academies within the Trust. They are the conscience of the Trust, ensuring that the objectives are upheld and they monitor the effectiveness of individual academies, manage central services and report to the Secretary of State. They work to ensure that individual academies are performing to the best of their ability and that they get the support and challenge that they require. The Trust will delegate many powers to a Local Governing Body (LGB) which will have a role similar to that of the current school Governing Body. Leadership of the academies will be undertaken by the existing head teachers with a CEO in place to maintain standards across all of the academies.

The formal consultation process – Monday 18 September 2017 to Friday 20 October 2017

We are now moving into the formal consultation stage and would welcome any further thoughts or comments that you may have. We will be holding meetings at Okehampton College for our various stakeholders on Wednesday 4 October 2017 at the following times. This will be an opportunity for you to find out more.

4.00pm	Meeting for Federation staff in the Octagon
5.30pm	Meeting for parents of pupils from the Federation Schools in the Octagon
6.30pm	Meeting for members of our community in the Octagon

If, as a parent, you are unable to make the 5.30pm meeting, please feel free to join the community meeting at 6.30pm.

We would also welcome written responses. Please address any correspondence to Ian Courtney, Chair of Governors of The Dartmoor Federation, using the email address below:

chair@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk

A post box for written responses will also be provided in the reception of each of our Federation schools.

Following the five week consultation period, the Governors of The Dartmoor Federation will meet to discuss the views of all parties before making a final decision. If the decision is to proceed with this proposal, the schools within The Dartmoor Federation will aim to convert to academy status on 1 January 2018.

Yours sincerely



Ian Courtney
Chair of Governors



Daryll Chapman
Executive Principal